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THE SEA DARKENS



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The Sea Darkens



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Dear children,

This story is about tsunami waves. This would bring you information on tsunami through a story and illustrations. It is our duty to make you aware of natural disasters that affect our country. Singithi, a character in this story gets caught in tsunami waves. Two fairies take her and tell her all about tsunamis.

It is worthwhile for all of you to know the same details that Singithi had learned about tsunamis. Let us hope that tsunami waves will never come to our country or to any other country in the world.

Dear children, read this book and let us all be aware of the danger of a tsunami.

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September, 2005.

*To all children
on Earth
with affection*



Sisi is Singithi's pussycat. Singithi calls Sisi to play. Sisi is behaving very strangely today. Sisi runs about the room holding her ears up.

Unlike other days, Sisi raises her backbone up like a mountain.

What has happened to you today?

Singithi asks holding her up. Sisi screams 'meow', jumps down and flees out of the room.

Singithi looks out from the window. Sisi cannot be seen.

'The sea is beautiful' Singithi thinks.

Singithi's father ties up the boat to a coconut tree. Singithi watches her father.

'Where has Sisi gone?'

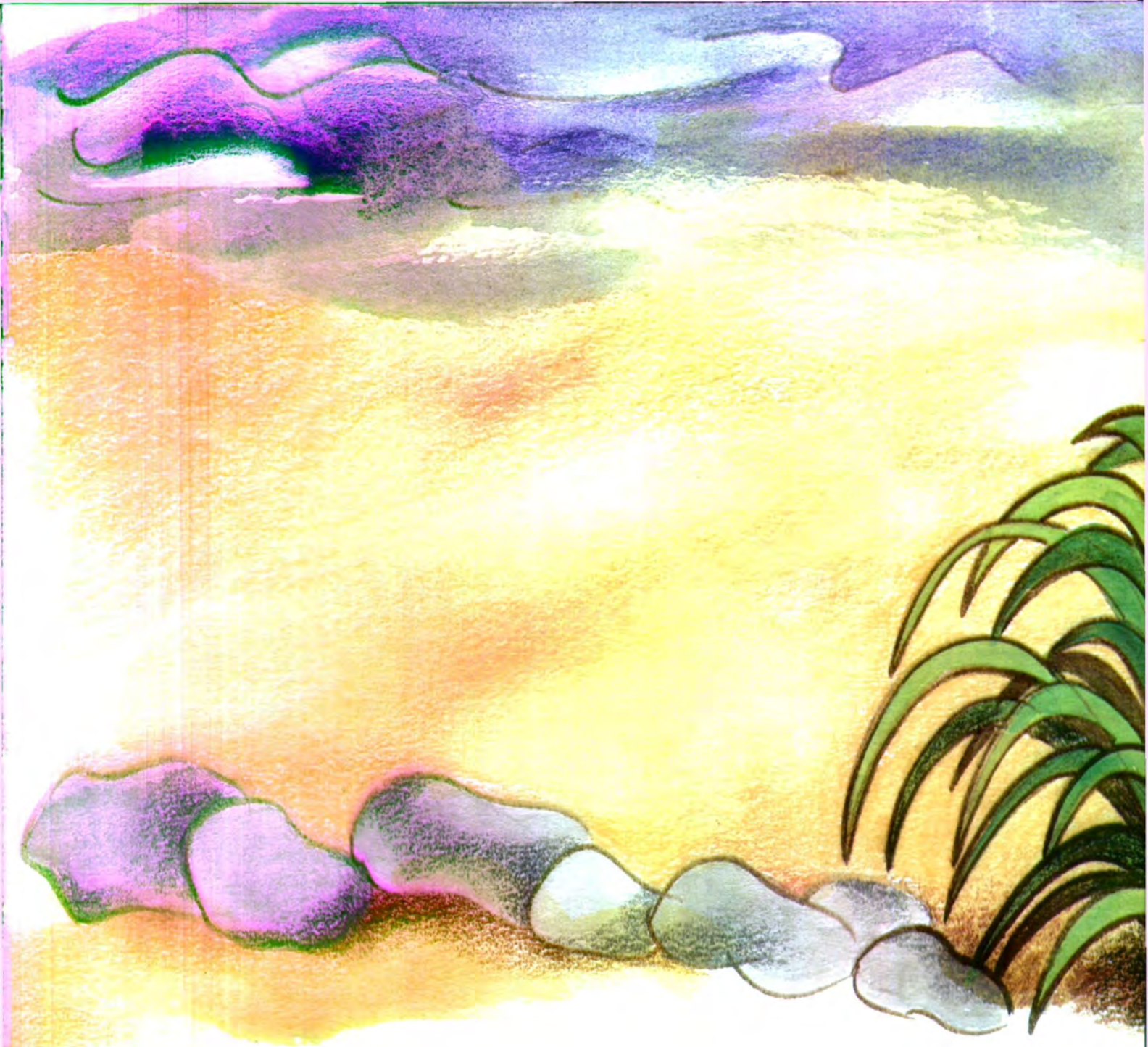
'Sisi, come here pussy'

Sisi is nowhere to be seen. Singithi comes out of the house. She goes to her father. Singithi's mother comes with a cup of tea. Father takes the cup of tea still fixing his eyes on the sea.

'The sea looks so strange today' he says. Both mother and Singithi look at the sea.

'The sea has gone far off the shore!' father says.





'It seems the sea has gone dry'

Singithi looks at the sea. Why does it go dry?

All three of them, the mother, the father and Singithi love the sea.

The great ocean that booms!

The great ocean that has dancing and rolling waves.

The great ocean that sings.

The great ocean from where the fathers fish

The great ocean which looks so beautiful.

Both mother and father look at the sea.

‘Amma, Sisi cannot be found’ says Singithi.

‘She must be somewhere around’ mother says, patting Singithi’s head.

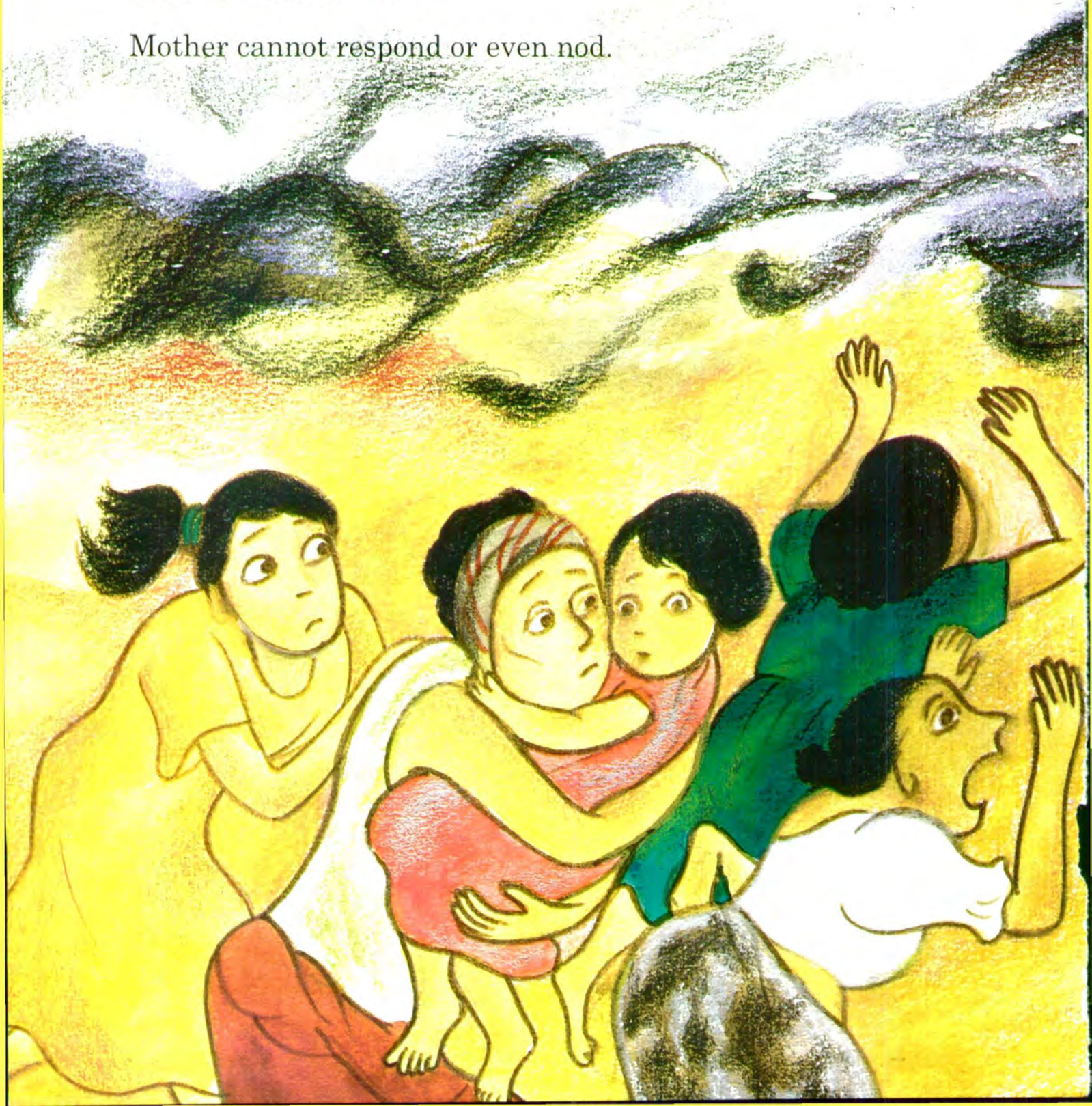
Father is worried. His eyes are wide open and his face looks gloomy.

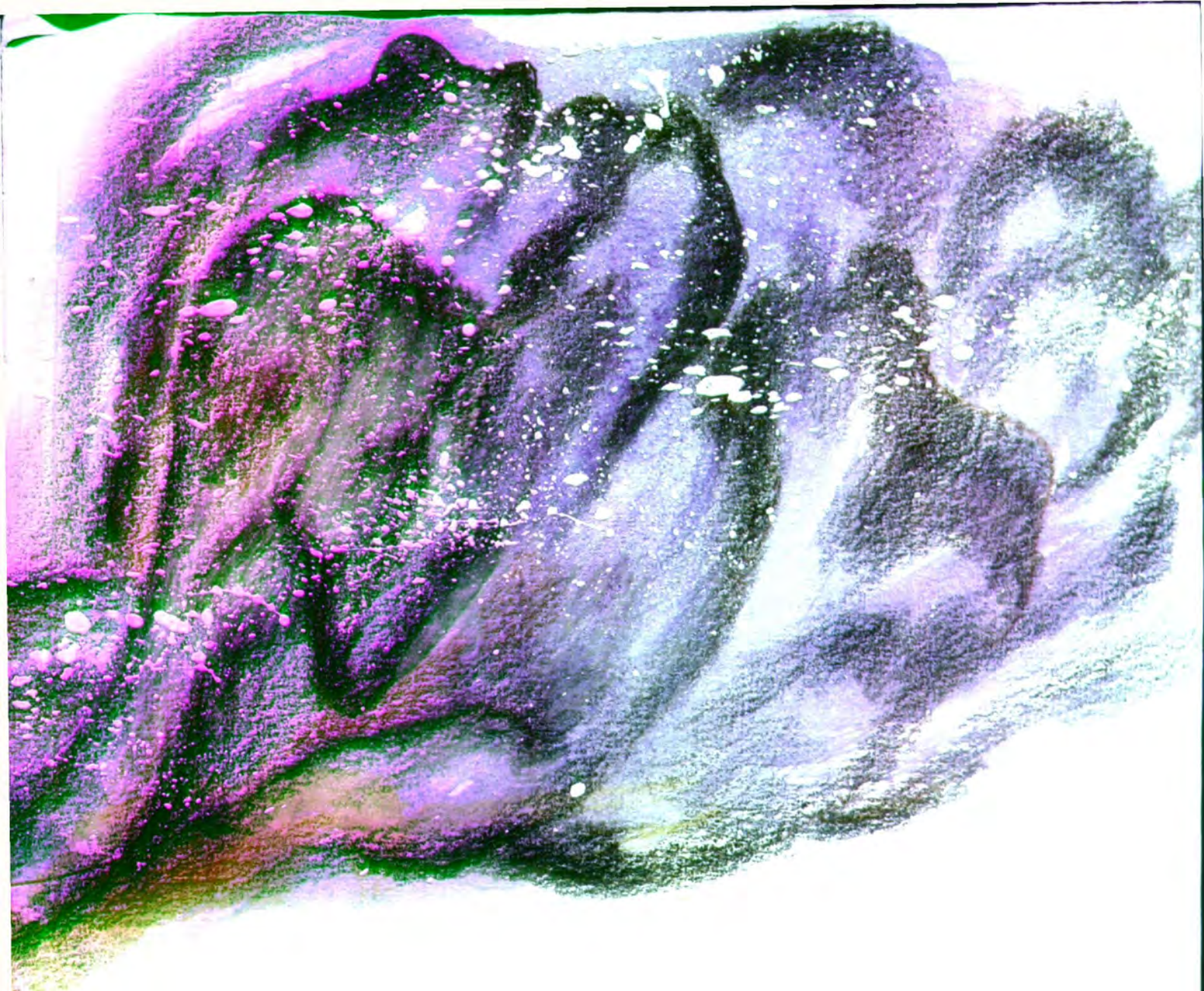
Has the sea gone dry? Is father sad?

Has a huge creature with a huge tummy has gulped all the water?

‘The sea looks very strange today’ the father repeats to mother holding Singithi’s hand.

Mother cannot respond or even nod.





Suddenly a chain of high waves starts rolling towards the shore jumping further up.

Mother lifts Singithi up in her hands.

Singithi clings on to her mother.

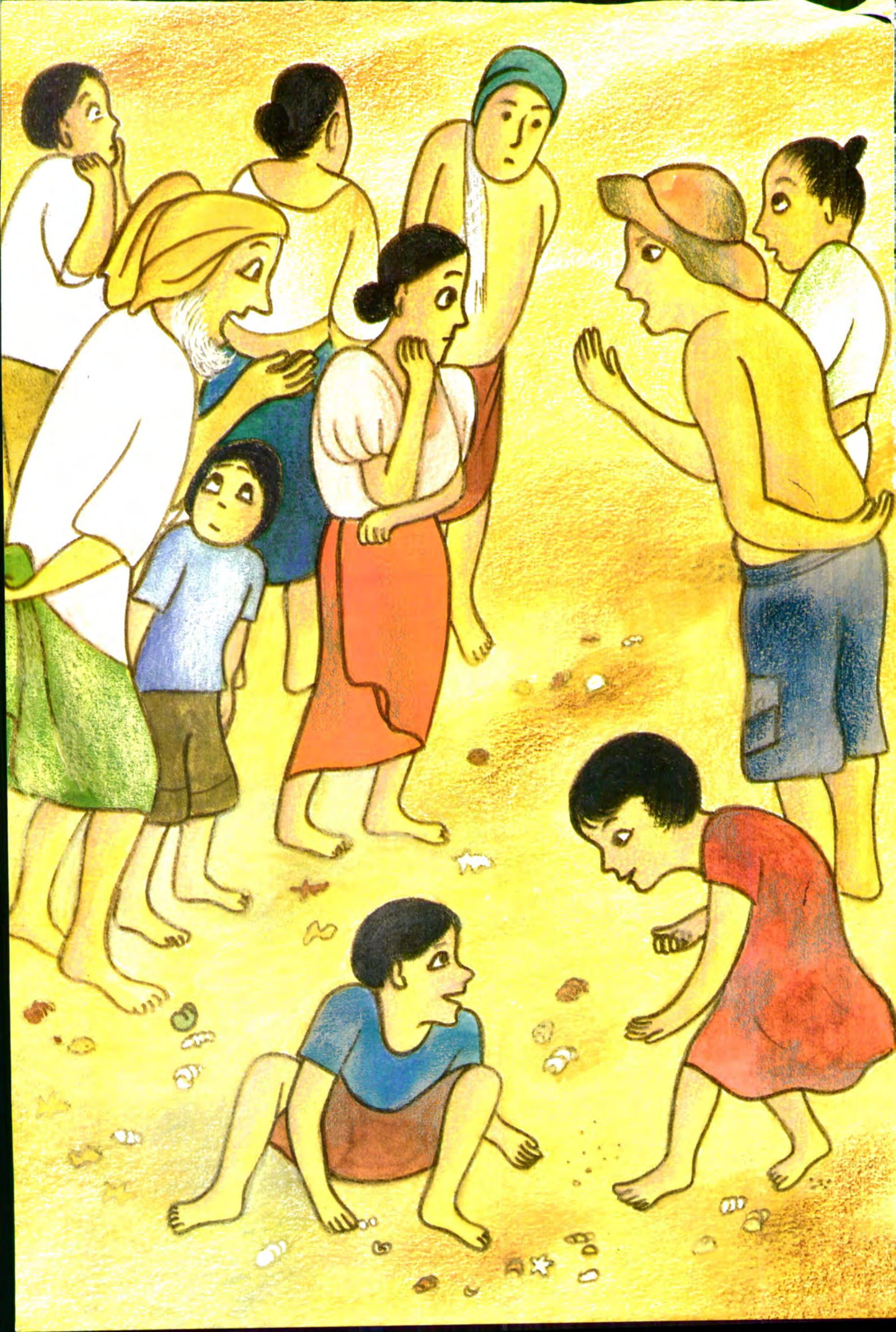
It is not the usual roar of the sea that is heard.

It is a massive rumbling.

People scream and run inland through torrents of water. They run and run.

Now father carries Singithi in his hands. Everybody starts running further inland. They run to high land.

They cannot go any further.



Everybody stops and watches.

People who are scared of the sea are scattered everywhere.

After some time rolling waves start going back, little by little, as if they were tired.

All mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers, uncles and aunts walk towards the sea.

Various things from the sea have washed up on to the shore.

Everyone is picking them up, looking at them and talking about what happened.

They say that the ocean swallowed the land.

'Oh dear! Where is Sisi?'

'Sisi, come here pussy!'

'It seems the ocean has swallowed the land' said the father.

An uncle said that this was the first time he had seen anything like this.

Everyone was busy chatting on the shore about the strange incident.

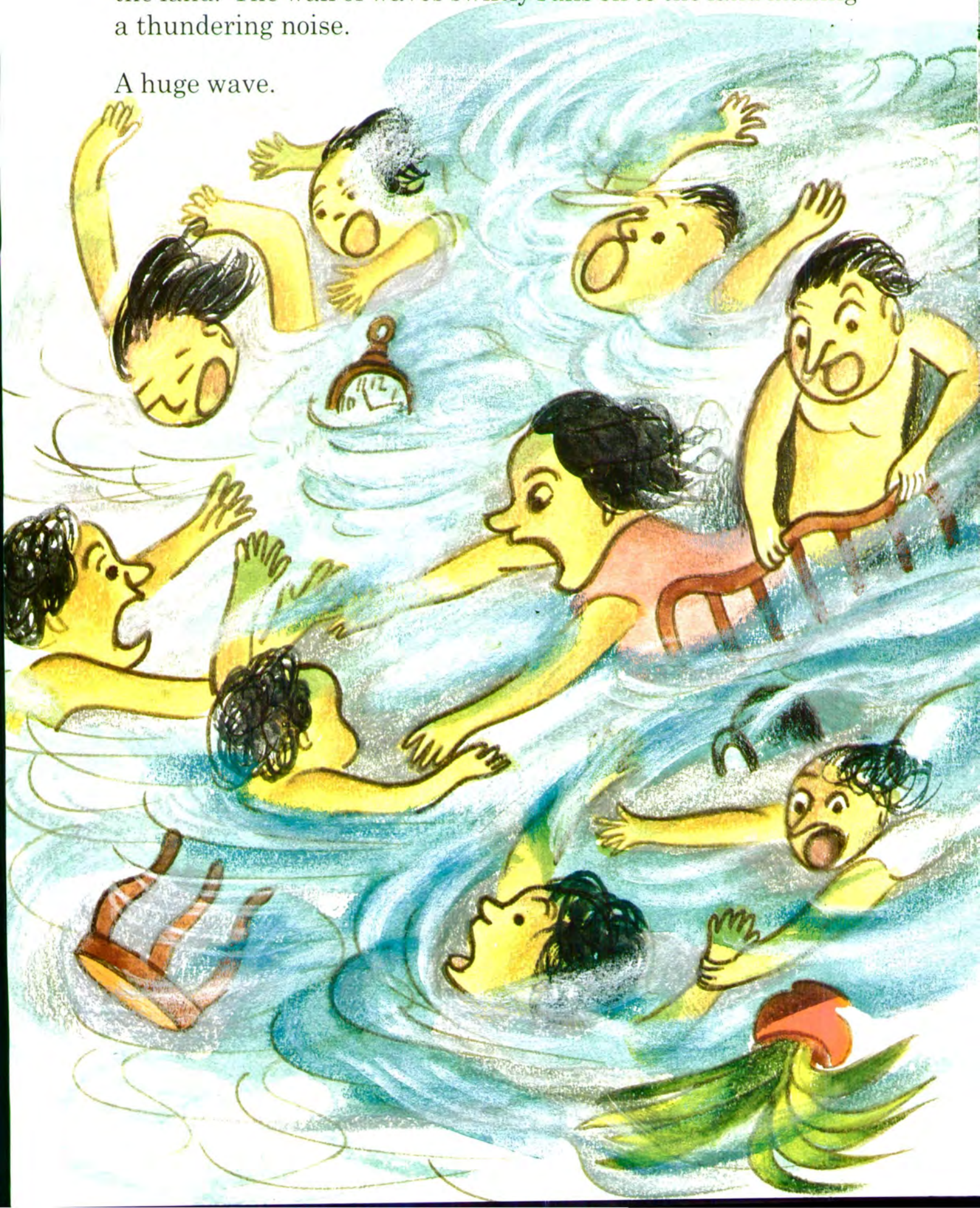
Singithi sees Thusara picking up sea shells?



That was it.

Within a wink of an eye a gigantic wall of waves comes on suddenly. And huge waves roll on to the shore and swallow up the land. The wall of waves swiftly runs on to the land making a thundering noise.

A huge wave.





Very fast.

That is all Singithi can remember.

Singithi is washed away by the water. She is washed off far, far away.

She is knocked about and hooked on logs, trees, and poles.

Singithi thinks she will die.

The ocean turns into tears.

Both mother and father will die. The sea is so cruel.

Singithi feels that everybody will die. Who will hear even if she cries?

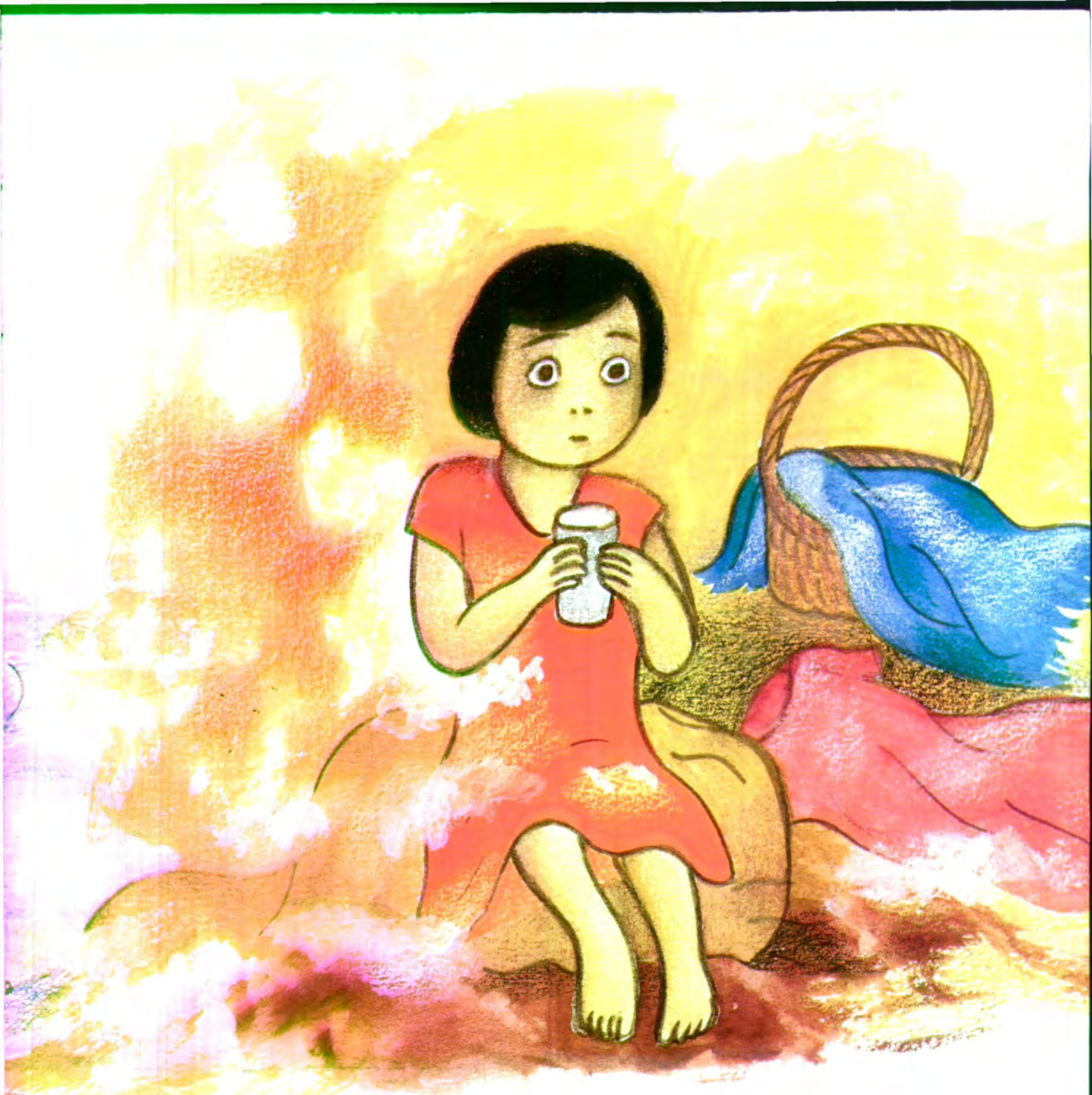
At once, a bright light reaches Singithi.

With that light comes a fairy with a heavenly smile on her radiant face.

She takes Singithi up in her hands with a lot of love.

'My name is Fairy.' she says kissing Singithi.





'Where is my mother? Where is my father?' Singithi asks. The fairy takes Singithi to high land.

She takes a towel from a big box and wipes Singithi's wet body. Singithi is dressed up in a beautiful dress brought from the fairyland.

A beautiful and colourful frock.

Singithi is offered a tasty glass of milk. Singithi drinks the glass of milk. But her eyes are filled with tears.



'Mother, father, Sisi' Singithi murmurs looking at the fairy. Then another fairy turns up. Thusara comes along with that fairy. Both the fairies get together and warm up Thusara, talking to him lovingly and dressing him up in warm clothes.

Thusara and Singithi hold each other's hands.

'Are you friends?' ask the fairies. Both Thusara and Singithi say 'yes'.

'Where are our parents?' both ask the same question.

'Let us find them' say the fairies.

'Are you fairy aunts?'

The fairies smile lovingly when Singithi asks the question.

'Yes we are'.

'Thanks for saving us.'

'Do you know what has happened?'

'Yes, the sea swallowed the land, didn't it?' Singithi asks.

'Yes, it did'

'Fairy Aunt, please tell us everything.'

'We'll tell you how it happened' said the fairies to Singithi and Thusara.

Singithi is very keen to hear the story, but she remembers her parents. She feels sad.

'Both of you will grow up. Isn't it good to know what has happened to the sea' the fairy asks and both Thusara and Singithi want to know everything.

'The sea has a seabed and it is now spilt. The seabed far away from here has been split,' the fairies say. Singithi looks surprised.

'Don't you understand, Singithi?'

'No' both of them reply.

'The seabed has been split.' Singithi's eyes open wide. Thusara is scared.

When there is a spilt in the seabed, huge waves rise up.





'They're very dangerous.'

These waves are one of the most dangerous disasters in the world.

They are called 'tsunami'.

In English they're called harbour waves. Tsunami is a Japanese word for harbour waves.

'What is the meaning of tsunami, aunt Fairy?' Thusara asks.

'Tsu' means the port and 'nami' stands for waves.

‘Tsunamis can destroy houses and drown people.’ When the fairies explain, tears come up in eyes of both Singithi and Thusara. But still they want to know more about tsunami.

Tsunami waves move very fast, hundreds of kilometers per hour, as fast as a jet plane.





'Tsunami waves are very high. They covered our two storied house' Thusara says, still holding Singithi's hand.

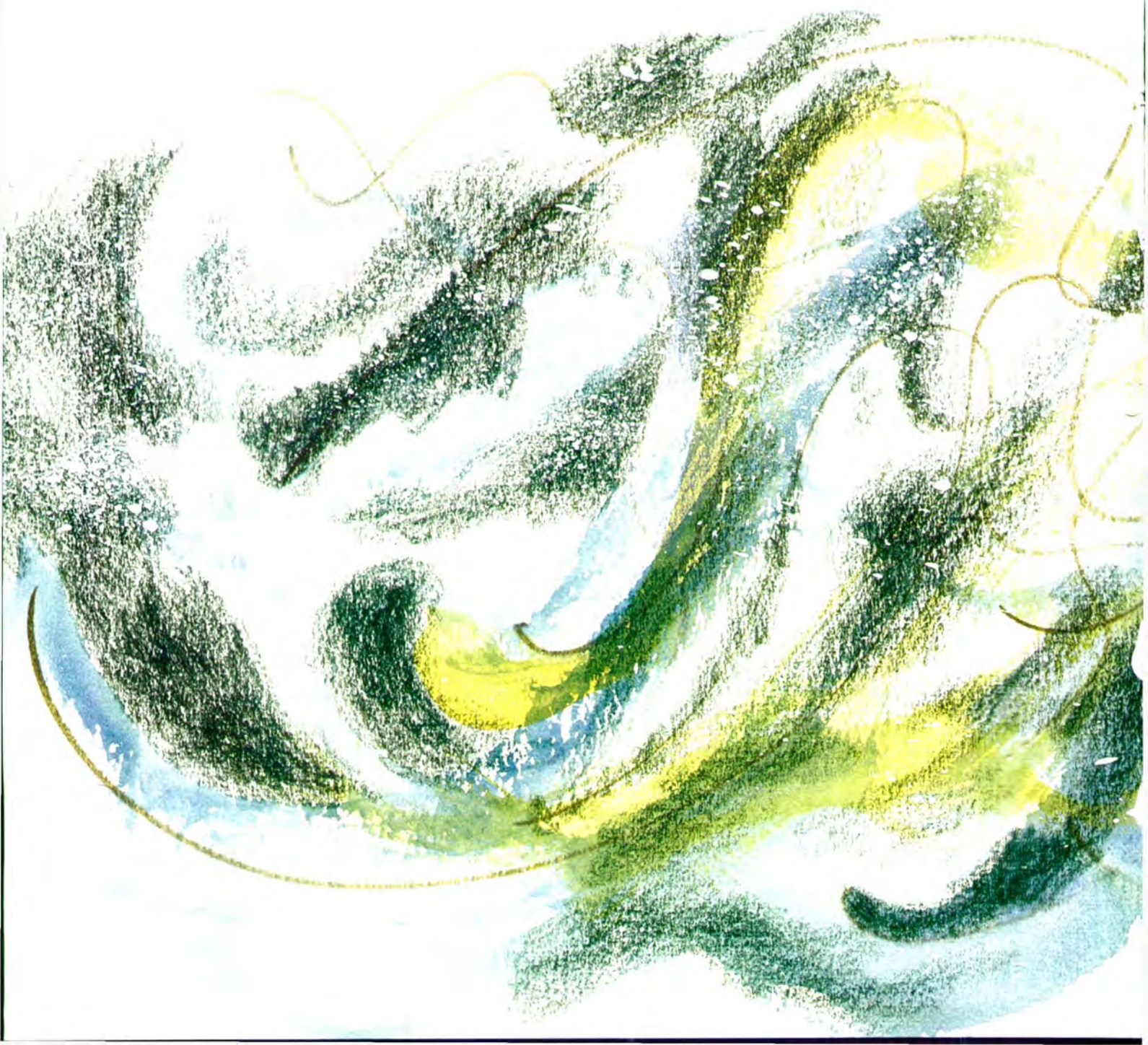
'Yes, Thusara, tsunami waves can mount higher than a coconut tree, higher than thirty meters. That is why they broke houses down.'

Thusara and Singithi hold each other's hands.

'Are tsunami waves created only by splits of the seabed?' Singithi asks, kneeling down by the fairies.

'No Singithi. Tsunamis can also be caused by earthquakes, by the rise of volcanoes and by earth slides of the seabed. I'll explain them later.' says the first fairy giving both of them a hug each.

'Look here.' the second fairy shows them a picture.

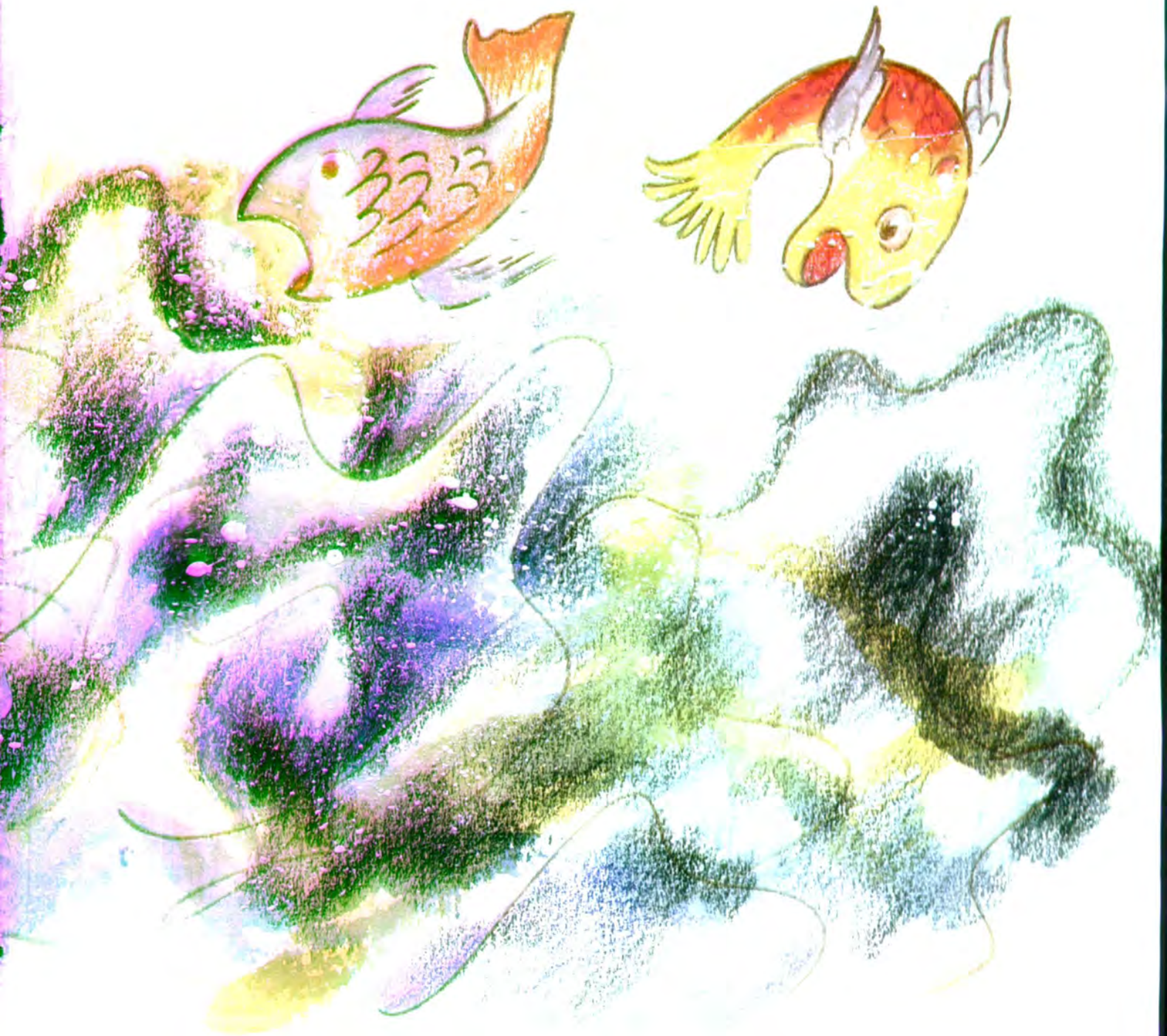


'Trees, houses and humans got caught in the tsunami'

Singithi and Thusara watch with tearful eyes.

'Tsunami is very cruel. It comes on to the land and washes away even small children.'

'Aunt Fairy, will there be another tsunami?' Thusara asks.



Both fairies pull Singithi and Thusara close to them and hug them.

'Tsunamis can start after massive earthquakes in the seabed. We can feel these huge earthquakes. They are felt like the shaking of the ground.'

'Singithi, what will you do if that happens?' the first fairy asks.

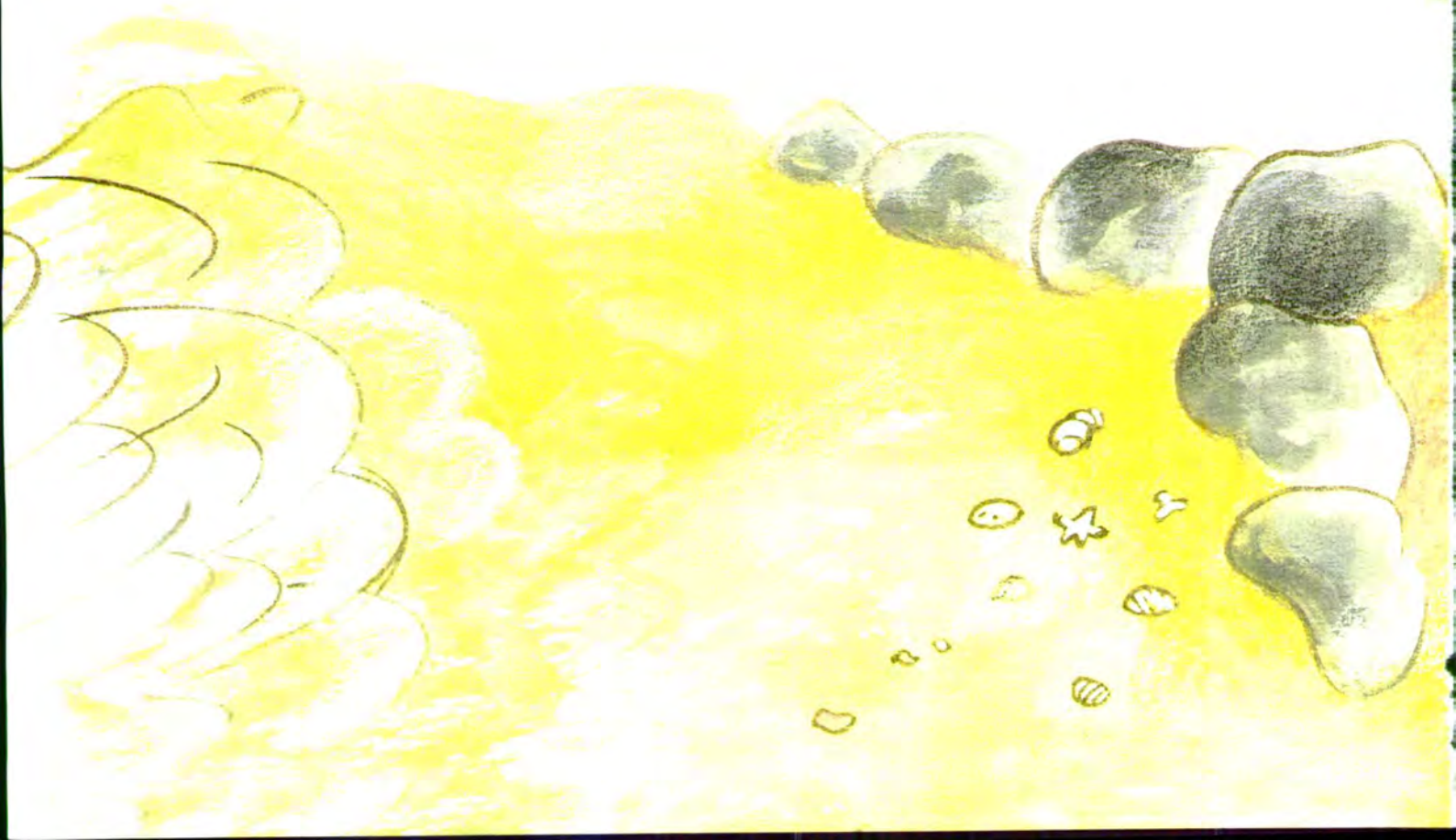
'I shall run to my mother', Singithi murmurs.

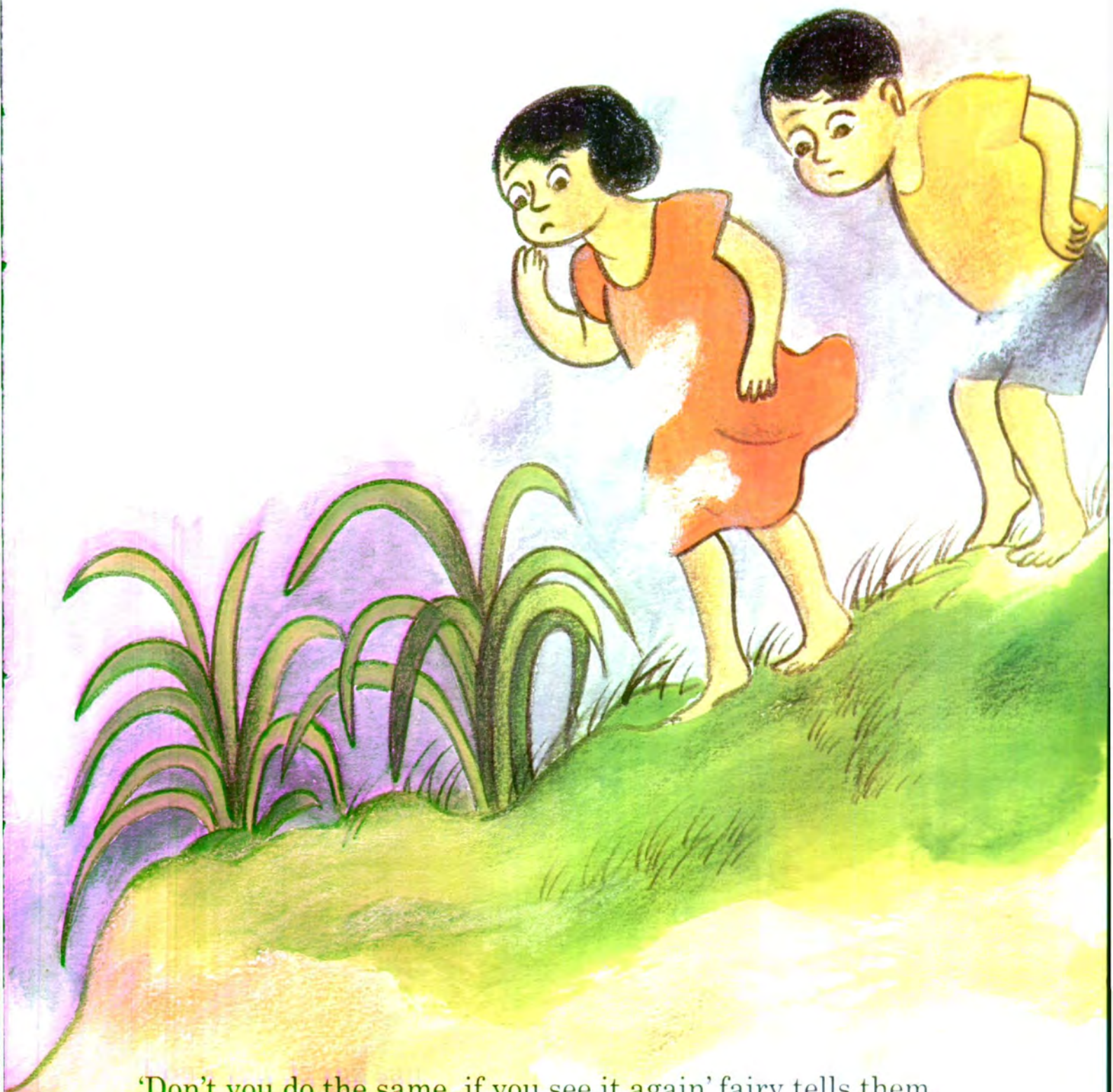
'But where is my mother?' Singithi feels so sad.

'It is good to run to your mother. But tell your mother to take you to highland as soon as possible' the first fairy advises.

'Sometimes, the sea might look as if it has gone dry. It is not a good sign. What will you do if you see something like that?'

'I saw it too when we went to the shore to watch.' says Thusara.





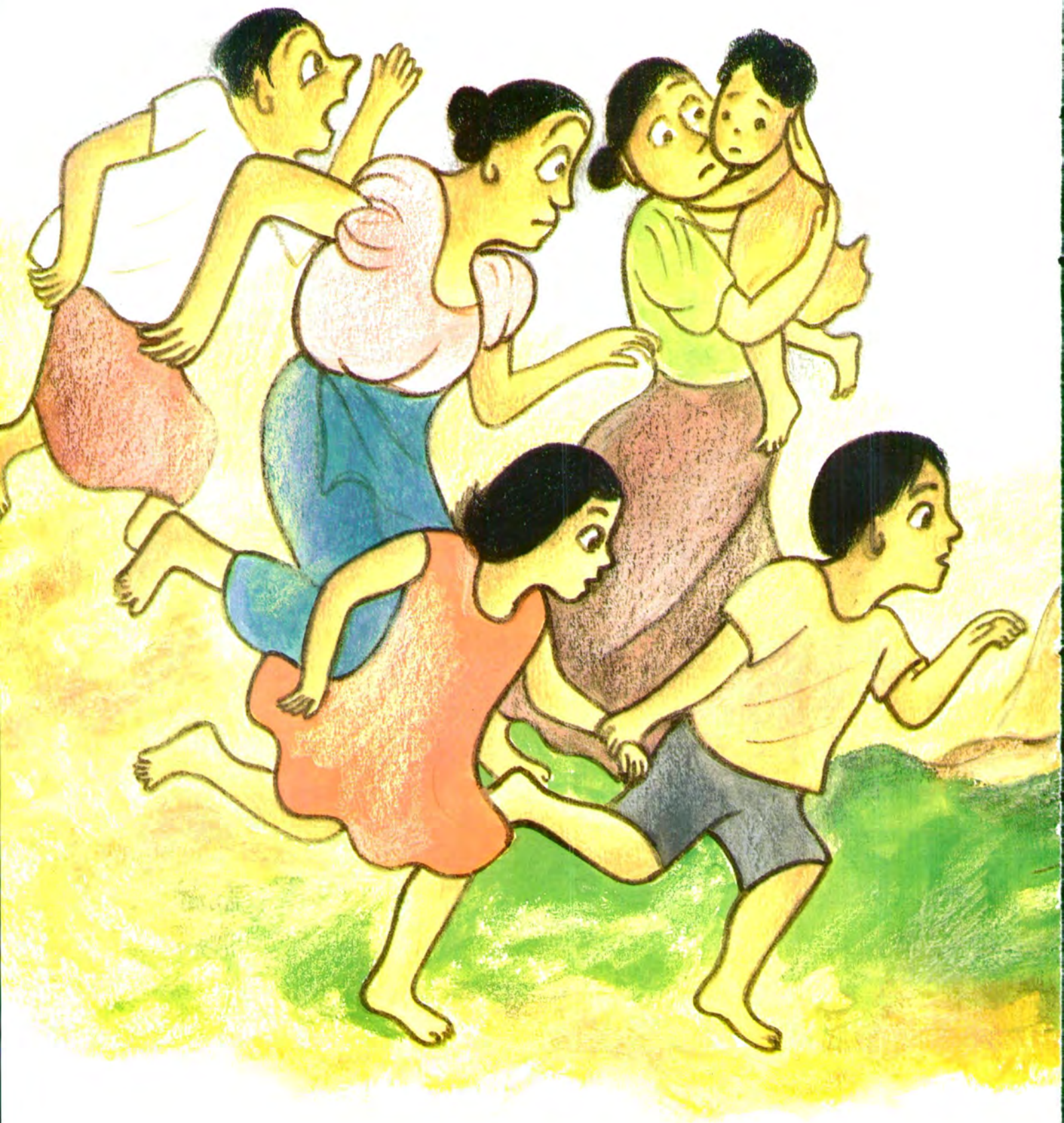
'Don't you do the same, if you see it again' fairy tells them.

'Yes, it is dangerous, Thusara' the other fairy says patting Thusara.

'Yes, if I see it again I'll run to a higher place. I will go to the higher place I can go'. Thusara says. Drops of tears fall on the fairy's hands.

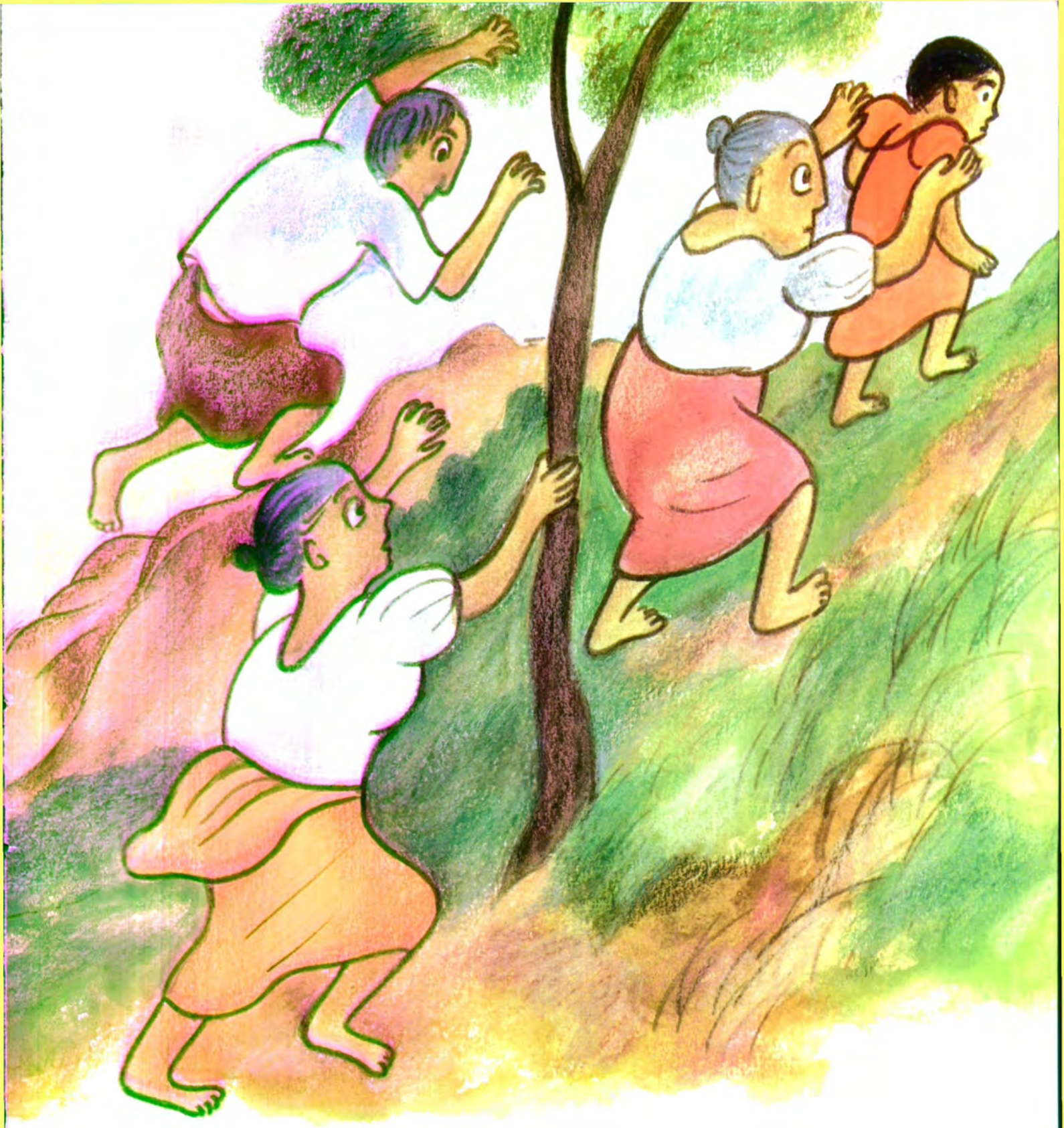
'Then?' Singithi asks cuddling with the second fairy.

'Tsunami waves will come with a huge noise as if a train comes or a jet is flying close by.'



'If you hear something like that you should run inland as soon as possible and should go to a higher place' the first fairy explains.

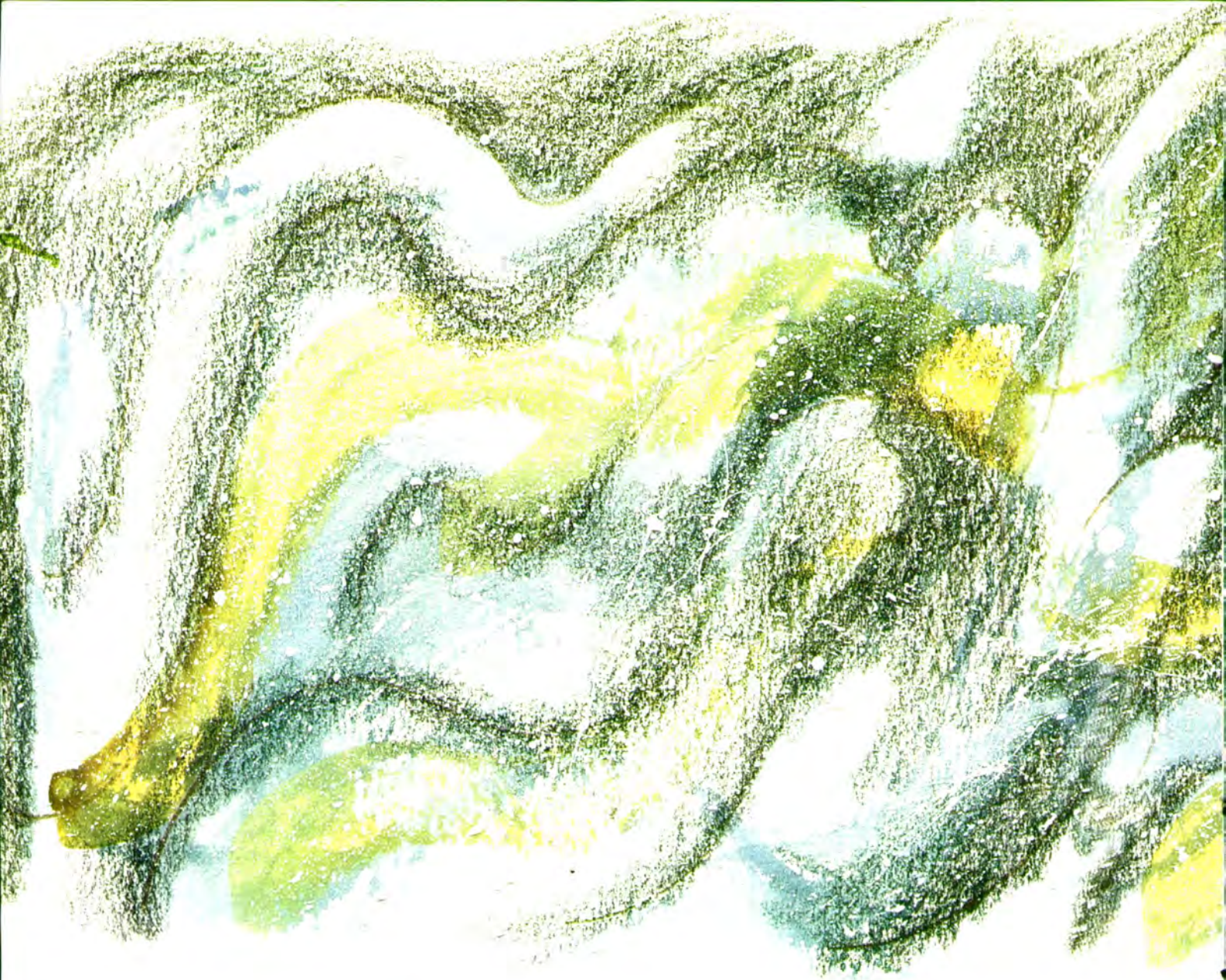
'Correct. If it happens Singithi should run inland.'



'In addition, there will be rumours about tsunamis.

There will be reports on radio and television on tsunamis. You should listen to them carefully.'

Singithi listens to the second fairy.



Singithi remembers the first and the second waves.

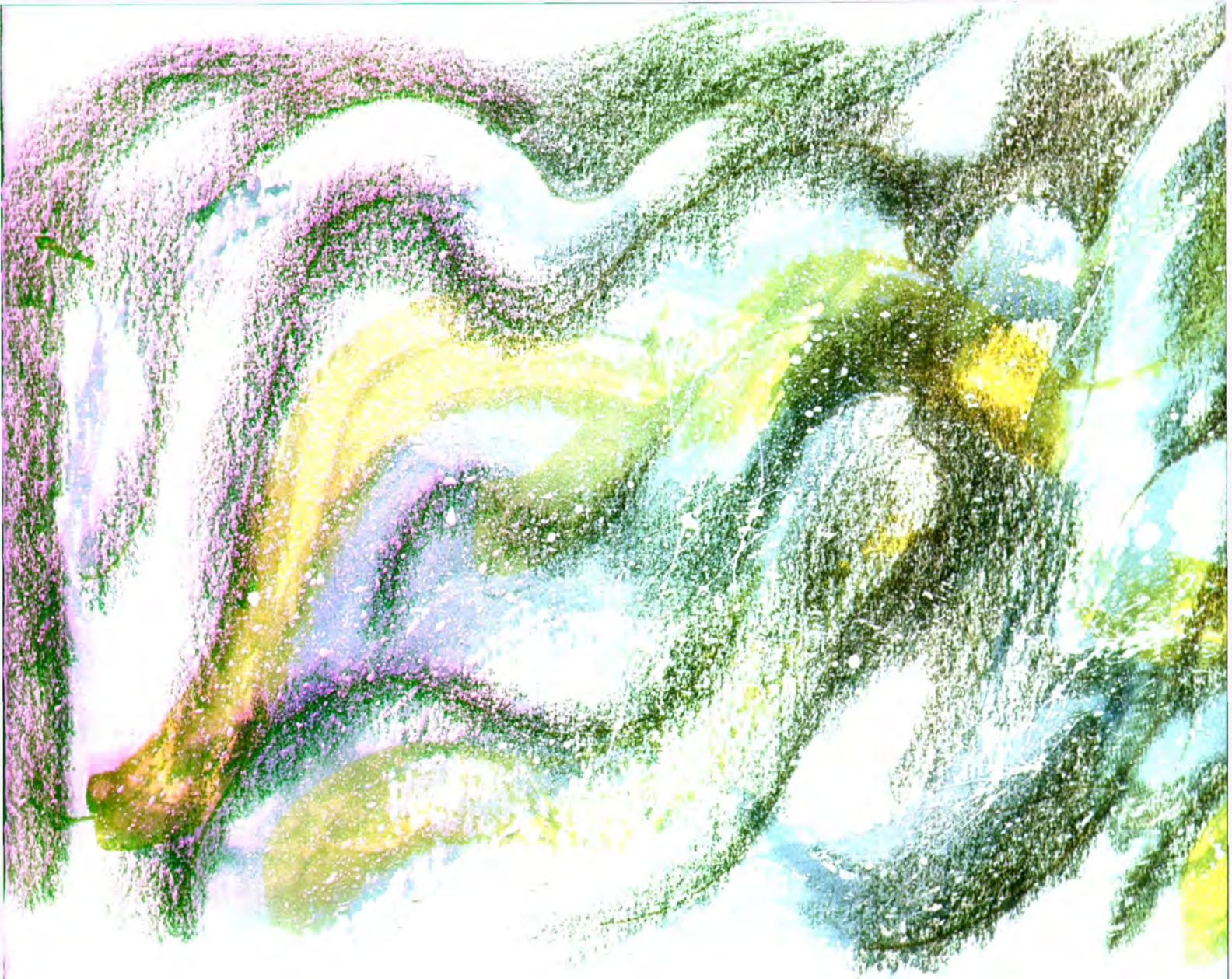
‘We should not go close to the sea when the first wave goes back, isn’t that so aunty fairy?’ Singithi asks.

‘Very true! Tsunami does not bring a single wave. There can be more waves’.

They can be even more harsh, taller and more cruel than the first one.

‘Tsunami is wicked. Truly wicked. Where is my mother, Sisi and father?’ Singithi starts crying.

‘Let us find your mother, father and Sisi.’



'First let us listen to the radio. We can find out about unsafe places and where the bridges are broken.' says the first fairy.

'Have our parents got washed away to the sea?' Thusara asks with tearful eyes.

'Many parents, uncles, aunts, brothers and sisters may have got washed away to the sea.'

Singithi, Thusara and the two fairies talk a lot about the tsunami.

'Now Singithi, tell me what is a tsunami?' asks the first fairy.

Both Singithi and Thusara start answering.

'Tsunami is a set of huge waves that can cause great damage to land. They are very big and they drag people to the sea. They bring down houses. They are strong enough to turn trains upside down and sweep away cars, buses and boats to the sea.'





‘How would you know that tsunami is coming?’

The fairies are asking so many questions.

‘There will be strange noises in the ocean, to warn us before the tsunami waves hit.’

‘What do we have to do if a tsunami breaks out?’

Another question from the first fairy.

‘It is not good to remain on the shore watching how the tsunami comes.’

We should be alert to what is going on in the coastline and coastal areas.’

All of us living near the sea, should be alert to what is going on in the sea and on the sea shore all the time.

We should run to a highland if we feel the outbreak of a tsunami.

'Sisi must have escaped' Singithi says to Thusara.

'Yes Singithi, animals get to know what is happening in the surrounding area much before we do. They are very sensitive.' the fairy explains.

'Let us find your parents.' the second fairy says hugging Thusara and Singithi.

'What about my Sisi?'



'Sisi will find you' the fairies say.

The fairies, carrying Thusara and Singithi along with them, go off looking for their parents and Sisi.

