



The Journey

In the village of Bassar, Mayi Sirena and her parents, Napo, the village chief, and his precious wife Gora, lived peacefully. The people lived in harmony, joy, and affection for one another. Everything was in order.

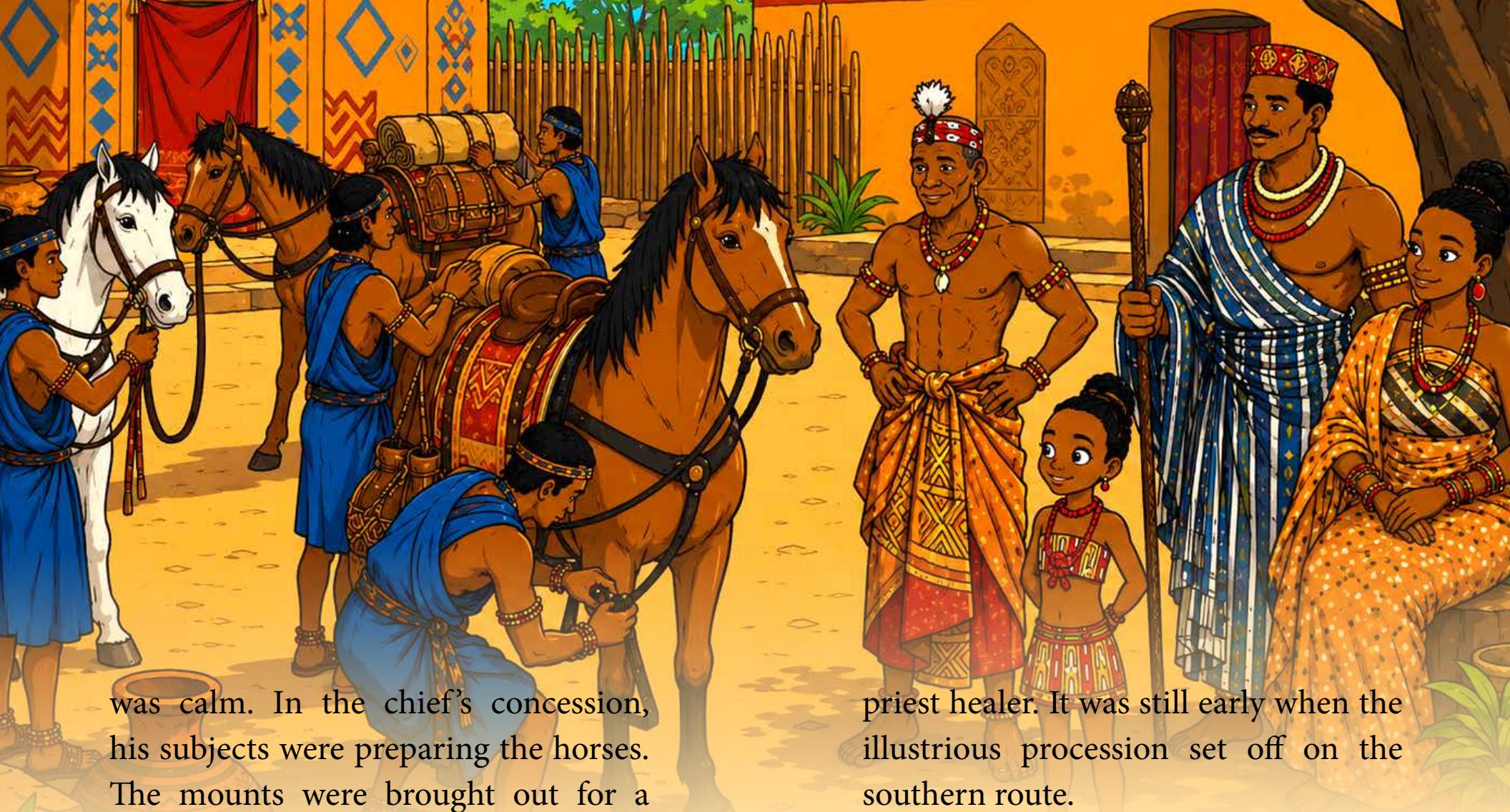
Mayi, born of a mermaid, was adopted by Gora and her husband and immediately became part of their family. She had three legs at that time. As she grew older, Mayi rediscovered her true mother, Afi Sirena, and her origins in the Djéri river, but she chose to live with the people of Bassar rather than joining Afi Sirena in the river. Thus, she lost her third leg, which made her different when Maman



Gora found her in the river. Mayi now had two legs like all the other children and lived happily among the people of Bassar.

The Bassars were always very welcoming. They received any strangers who came to visit them. Their chief, Napo, invited

many travelers passing through his village to his court and always organized a lavish welcome feast for them. Chiefs from other regions also enjoyed responding to his invitations during village festivals and other ceremonies. On that morning, the village square



was calm. In the chief's concession, his subjects were preparing the horses. The mounts were brought out for a grand escapade far from Bassar. Chief Napo was getting ready to embark on a journey with his wife Gora, their Princess Mayi, and their faithful escorts, including Master Zakari, the great high

priest healer. It was still early when the illustrious procession set off on the southern route.

A few days earlier, Napo had received a messenger from Chief Foley of Aneho. Foley invited him to Glidji for the annual '*Kpessosso*' ceremony, also known as '*the stone-taking*.' Honored to receive such



an invitation for this important event of the Guin people, Napo accept-ed. When he announced to Mayi that she would accompany him, she was thrilled at the idea to go on a journey. Mayi Sirena loved adventures. She adored the thought of traveling so far on horseback, crossing several villages she had not yet known. But what thrilled her the most about this journey was that the village of Aneho was located by the seaside. The little Bassar had never seen the sea. It was the first time she was going to see this ocean that she had so much talked about.

On horseback, seated before Master Zakari, Mayi asked thousand and one questions:



“It seems the sea sings? That there are huge fish of many colors?”

“Yes,” replied Master Zakari, amused by so much curiosity.

“And does it dance too? Is it vast until the end of the earth?”

“That’s the horizon, my daughter.”

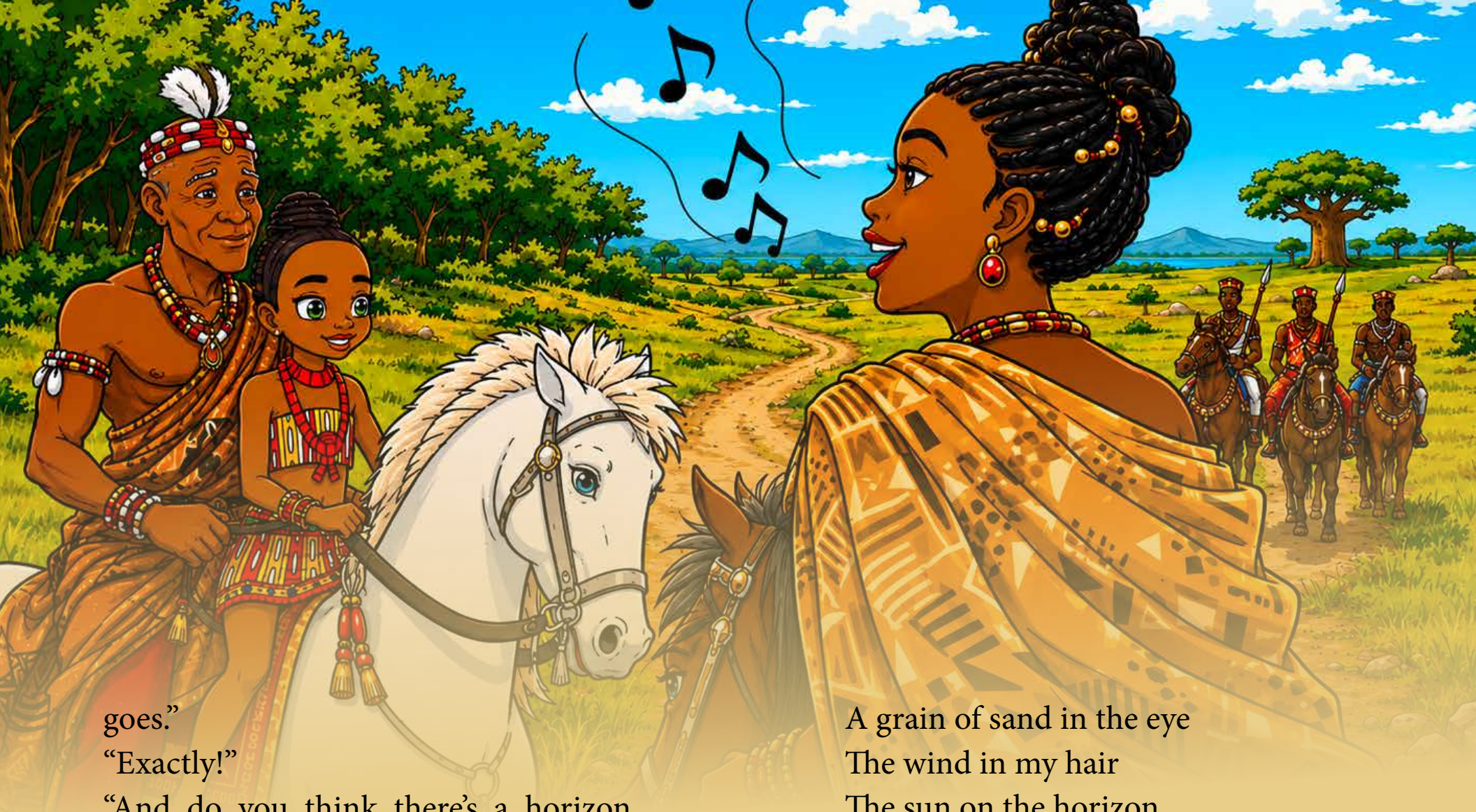
“Wow, the horizon?! Is it the end of the earth?”

“It’s the end of what the eye can see in the distance.”

“But then, there’s also the end of the earth in Bassar; you know, when we look from the mountain?!”

“That’s right, Mayi, you’ve understood it all!”

“But we can never reach it! Because the more we move forward, the Further it



goes.”

“Exactly!”

“And do you think there’s a horizon everywhere?”

Gora’s gentle voice rose to accompany the travelers.

She sang:

A grain of sand in the eye
The wind in my hair
The sun on the horizon
The sky in its beauty
The sky so close to me
Yet so far from me
There are days when