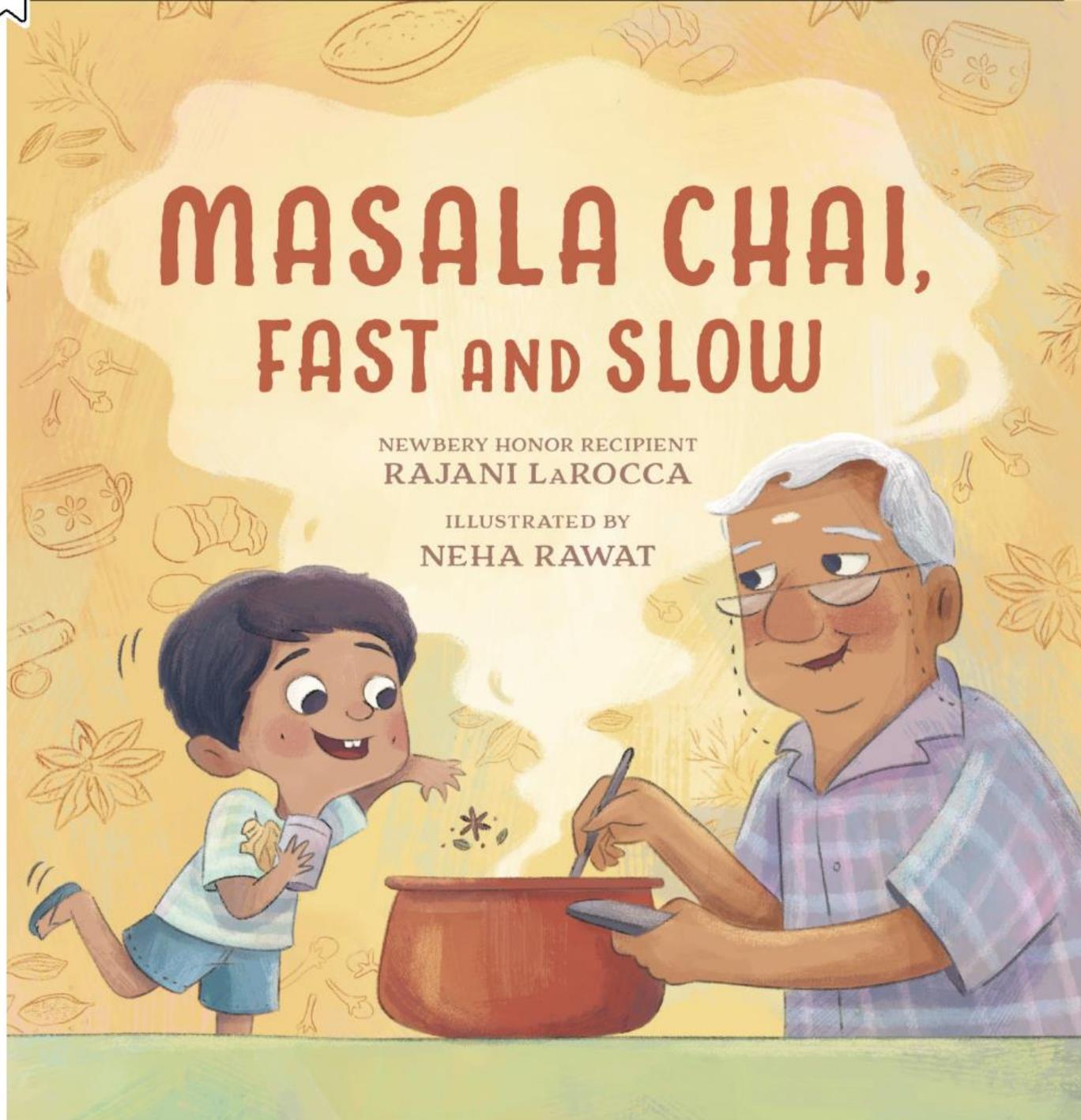


**Younger
Nominee**





Dr. Rajani LaRocca - Author



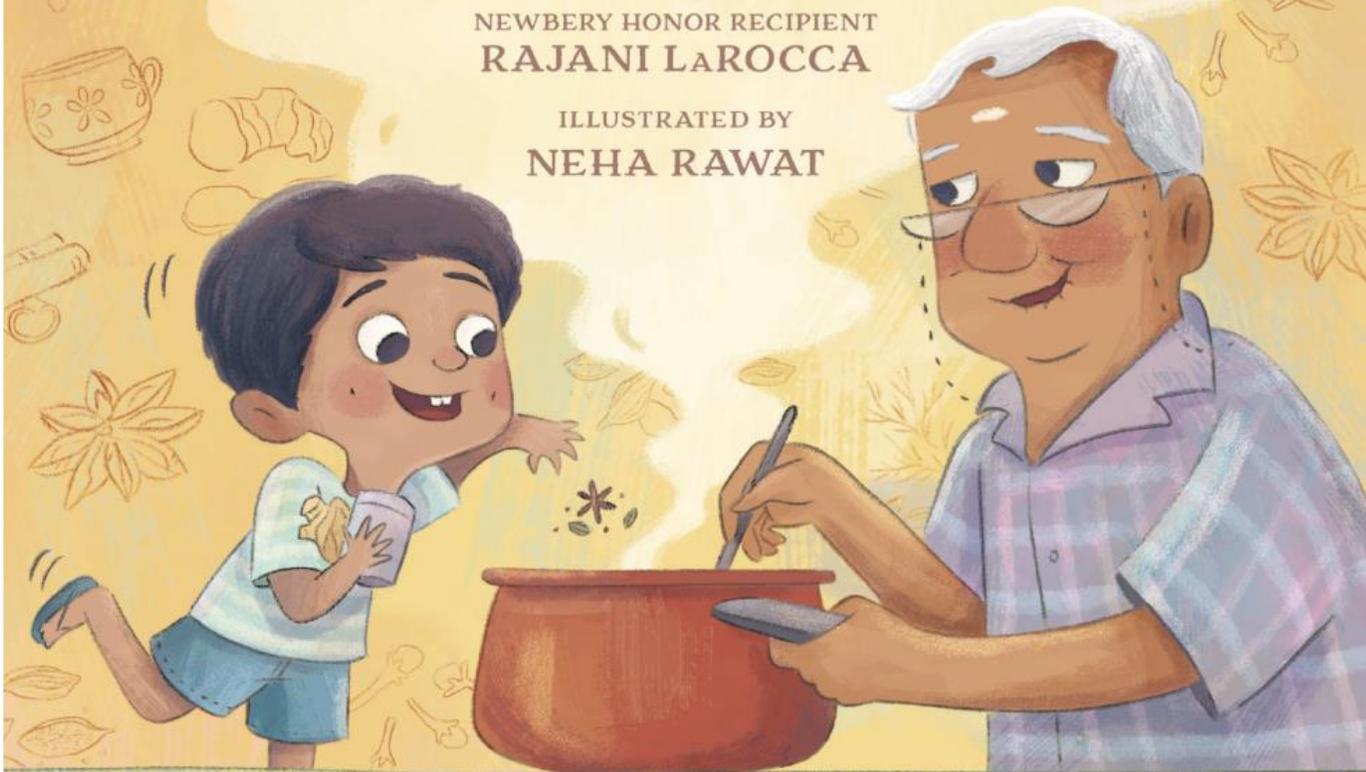
Neha Rawat - Illustrator



MASALA CHAI, FAST AND SLOW

NEWBERY HONOR RECIPIENT
RAJANI LARocca

ILLUSTRATED BY
NEHA RAWAT





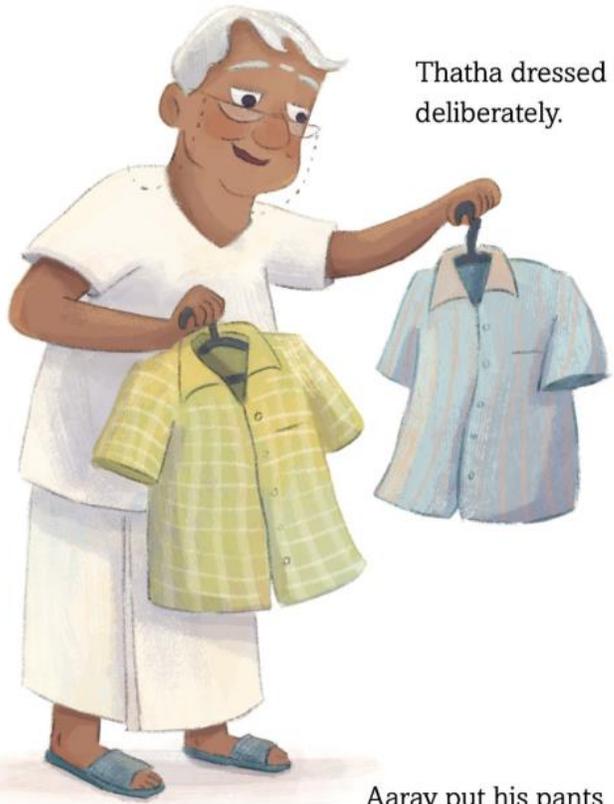
Aarav loved his thatha very much, although they were as different as water and molasses.

Thatha shuffled. He sauntered. He strolled.



Aarav ran. He rushed. He raced.

Thatha dressed
deliberately.



Aarav put his pants
on *two* legs at a time!



“Faster, faster!” cried Aarav.

“Slowly, slowly,” said Thatha.

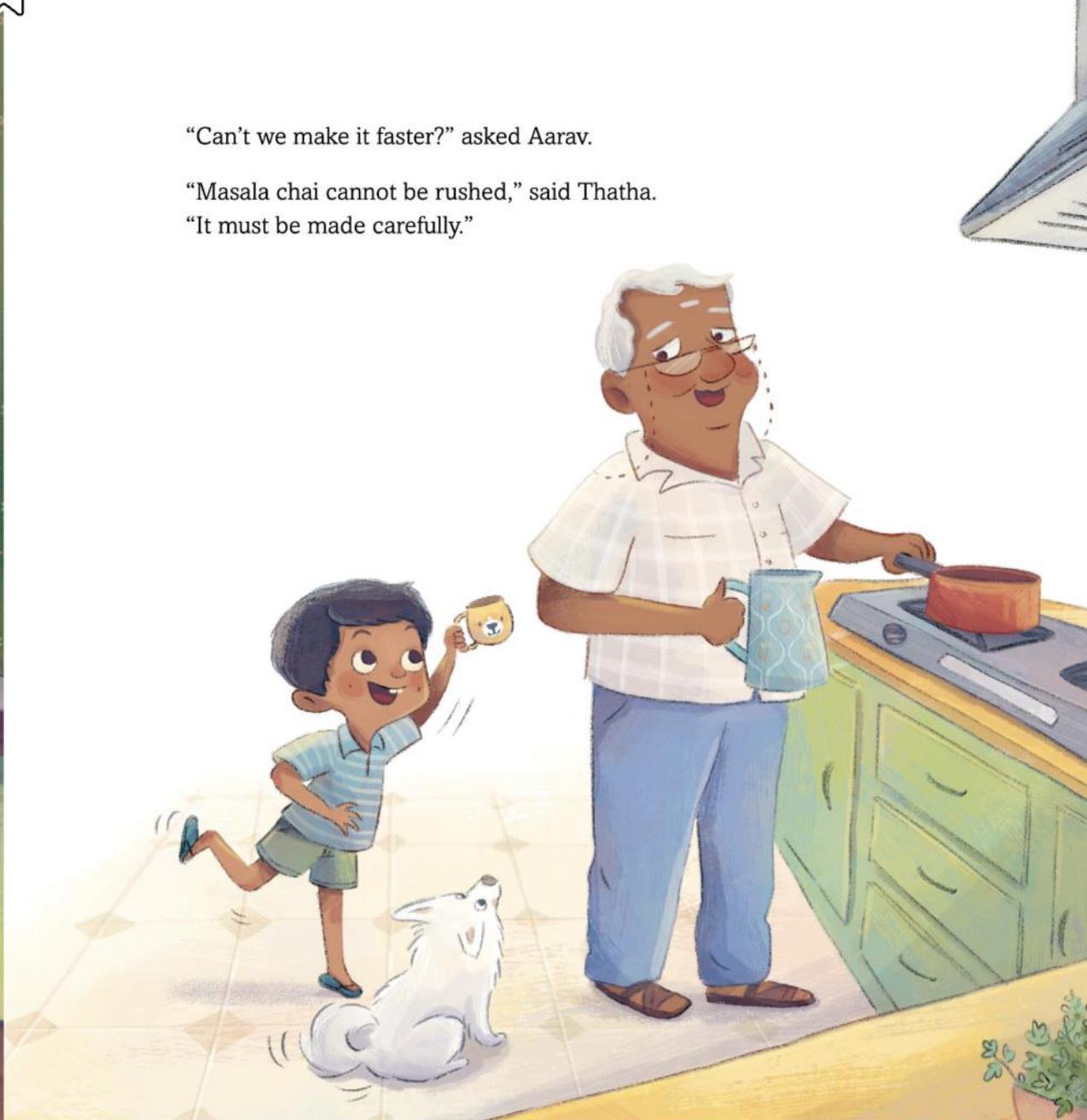




Thatha was the best at telling funny stories, taking afternoon naps, and making delicious masala chai, which he did every day at five o'clock.

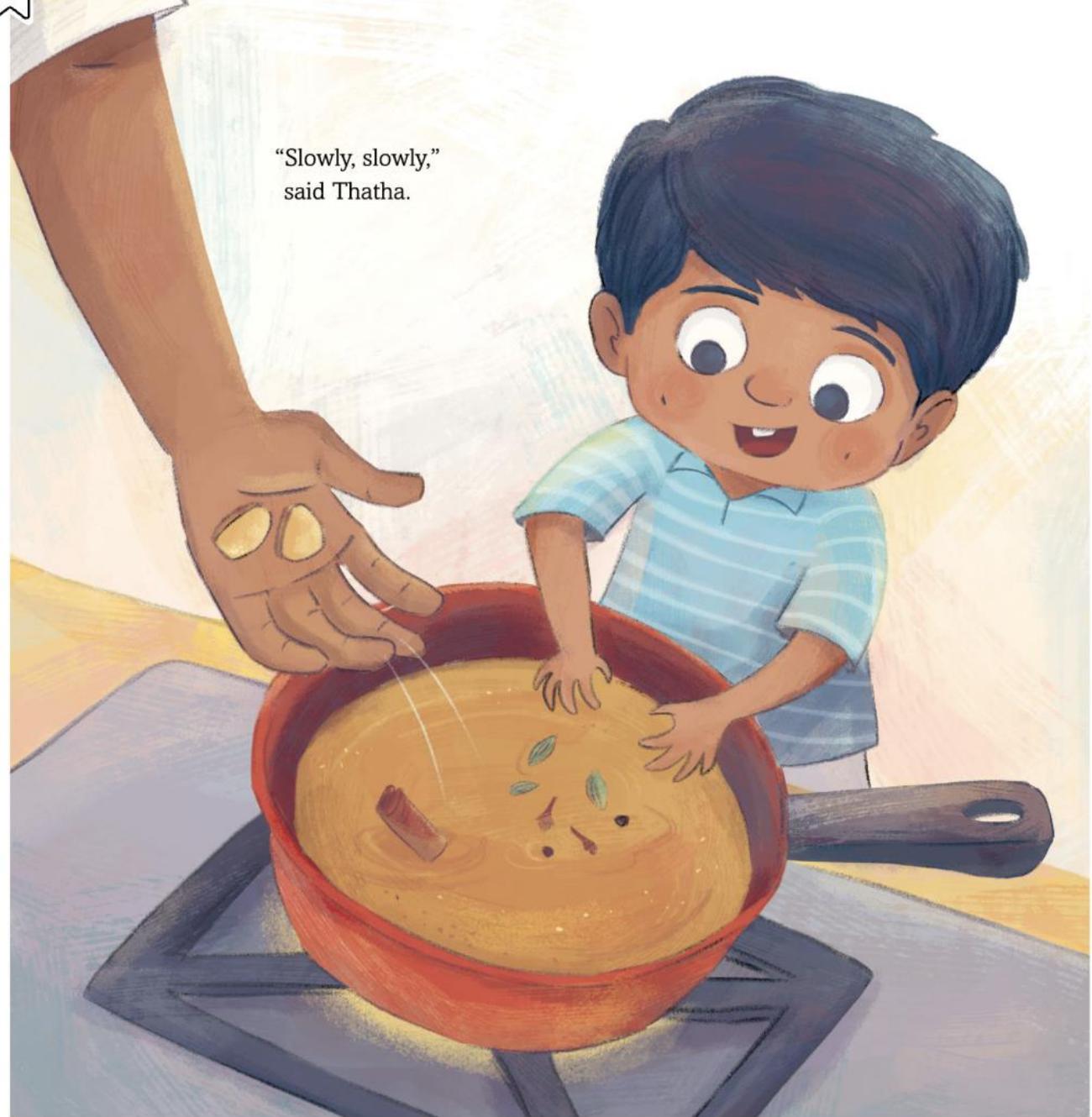
“Can’t we make it faster?” asked Aarav.

“Masala chai cannot be rushed,” said Thatha.
“It must be made carefully.”





Thatha heated milk and water in a pot on the stove and scooped in tea leaves. Aarav helped add spices.

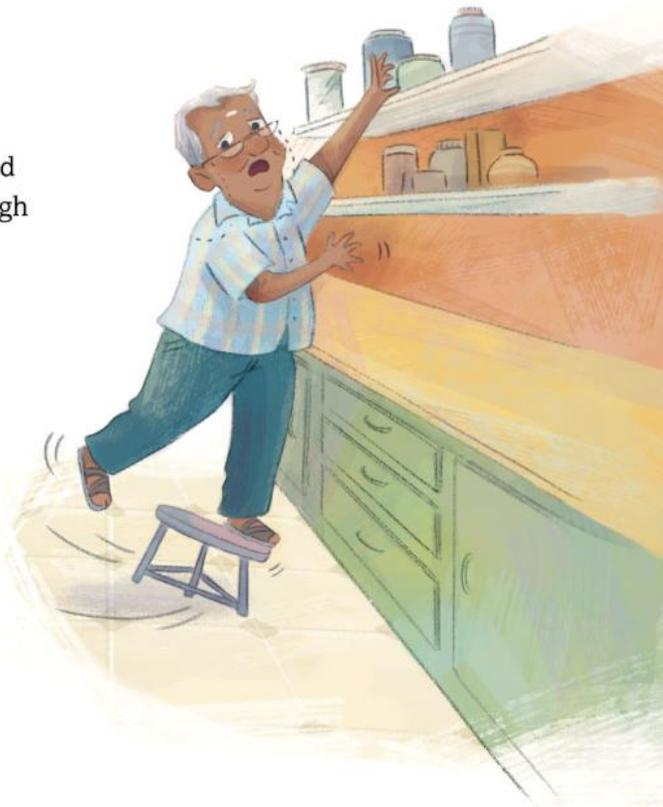


"Slowly, slowly,"
said Thatha.

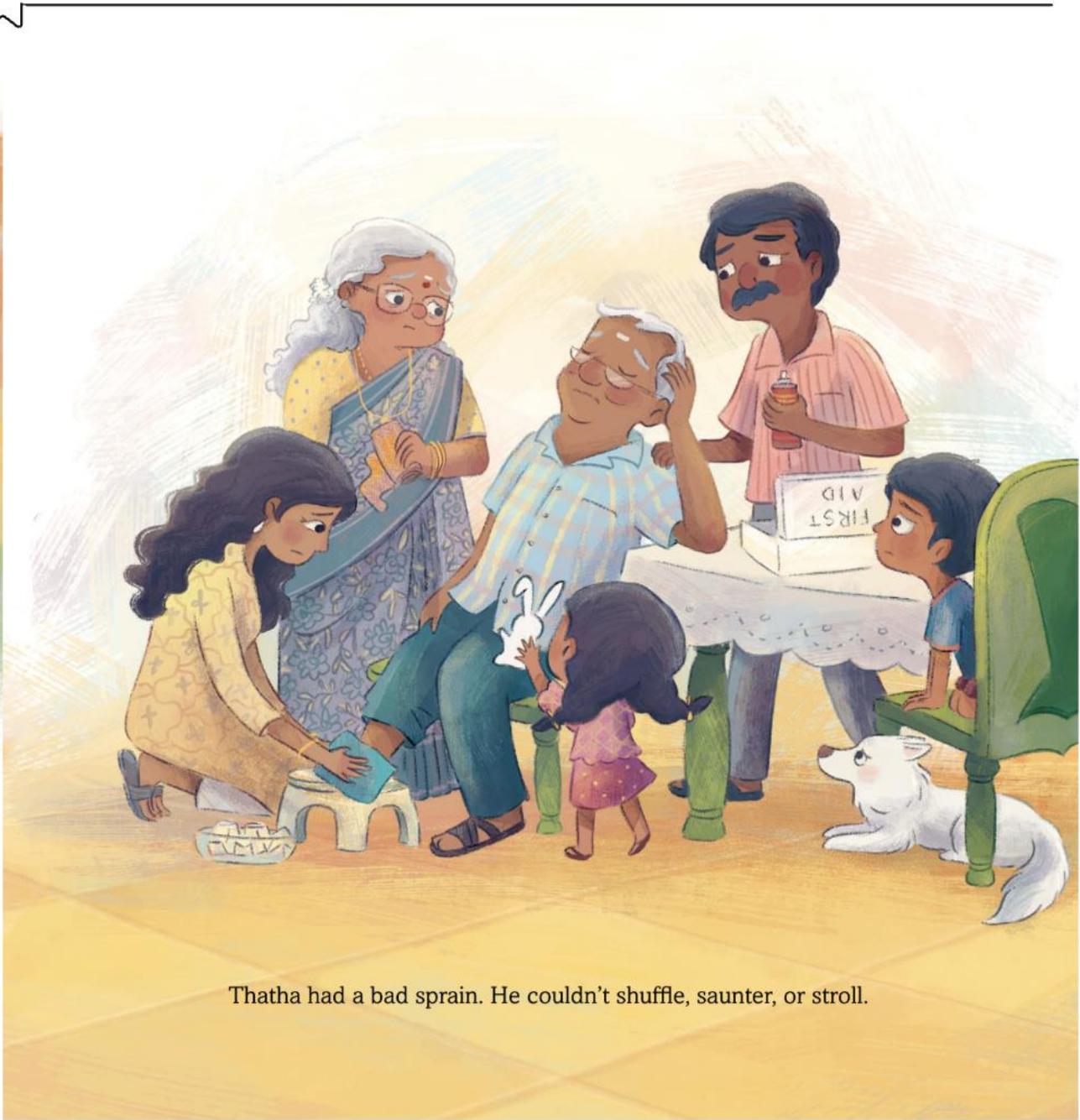
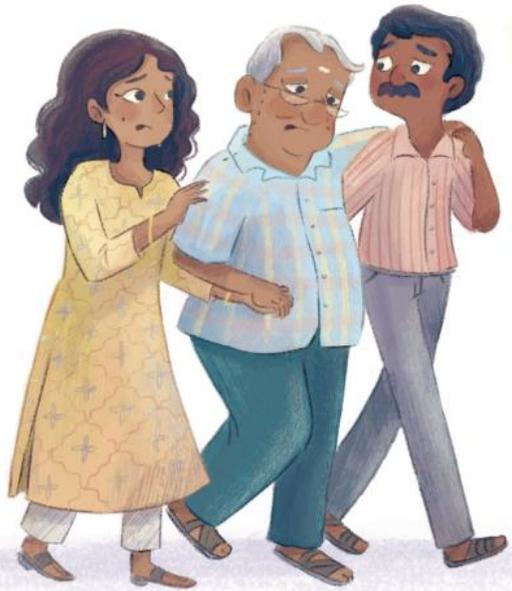


Aarav knew the masala chai was ready when it turned a warm brown and filled the kitchen with a wonderful scent.

But one day when Thatha reached for the cardamom pods from a high shelf, he slipped off the stool.



When he tried to get up, he couldn't stand on his foot.



Thatha had a bad sprain. He couldn't shuffle, saunter, or stroll.



Thatha wasn't just slow—he was completely still.
He didn't tell his stories. All he did was nap.
And he couldn't make masala chai.

Aarav had an idea: maybe he could make masala chai himself! He'd been helping Thatha for so long, he was sure he knew how. And what would make Thatha feel better than a cup of the warm, spiced sweetness?

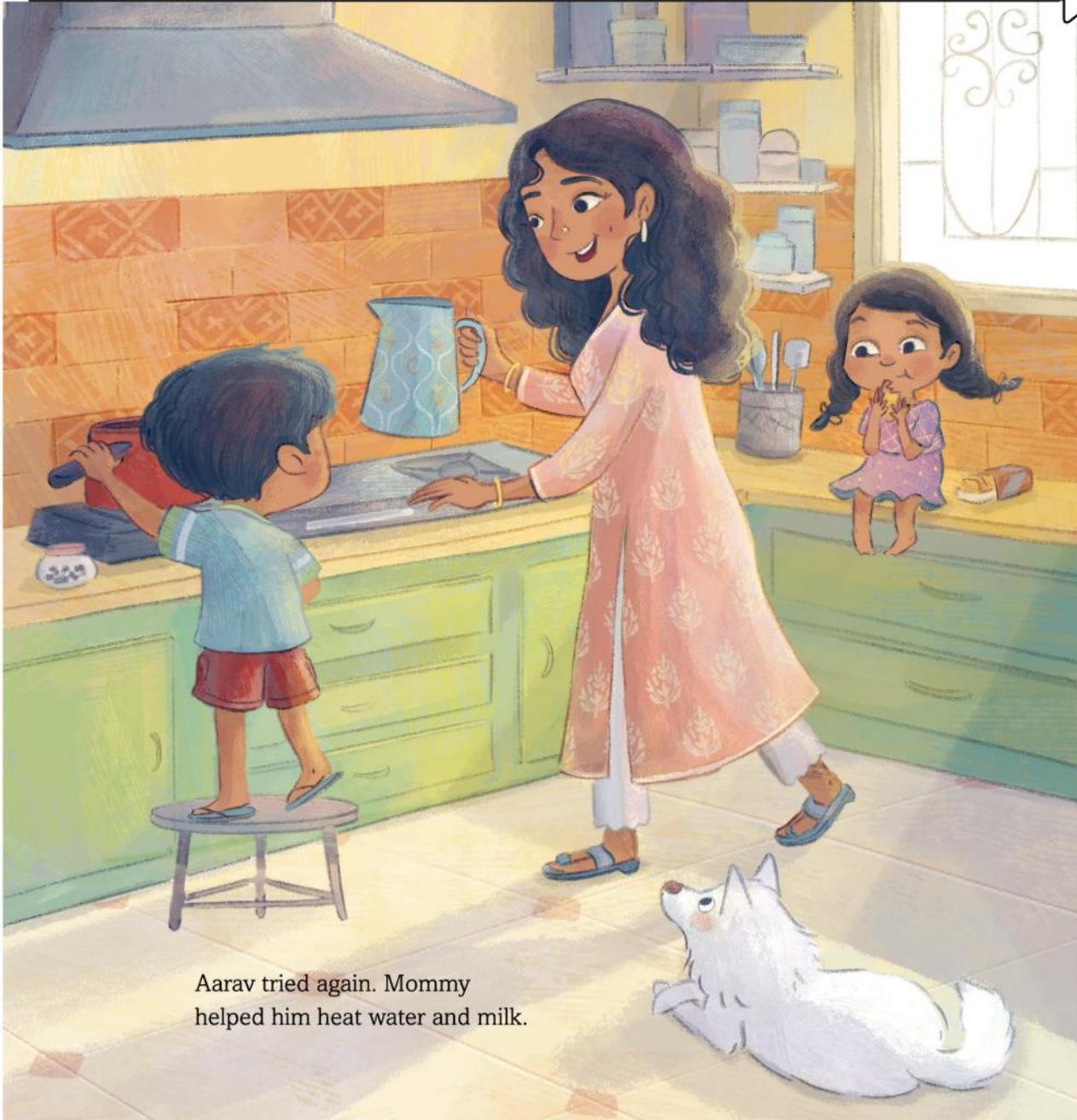


Aarav couldn't wait. Daddy helped him gather ingredients.



Aarav dumped everything into a pot, picturing Thatha's face when he tasted it . . . but all he made was a big mess.





Aarav tried again. Mommy helped him heat water and milk.

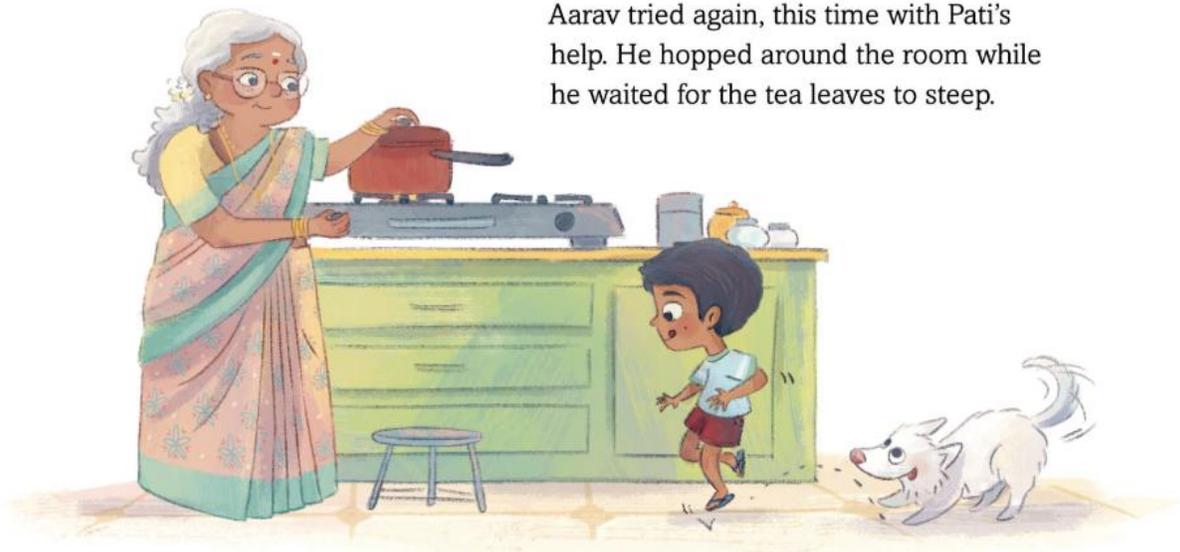


He scooped in tea leaves and then strained them out, just like Thatha did . . .

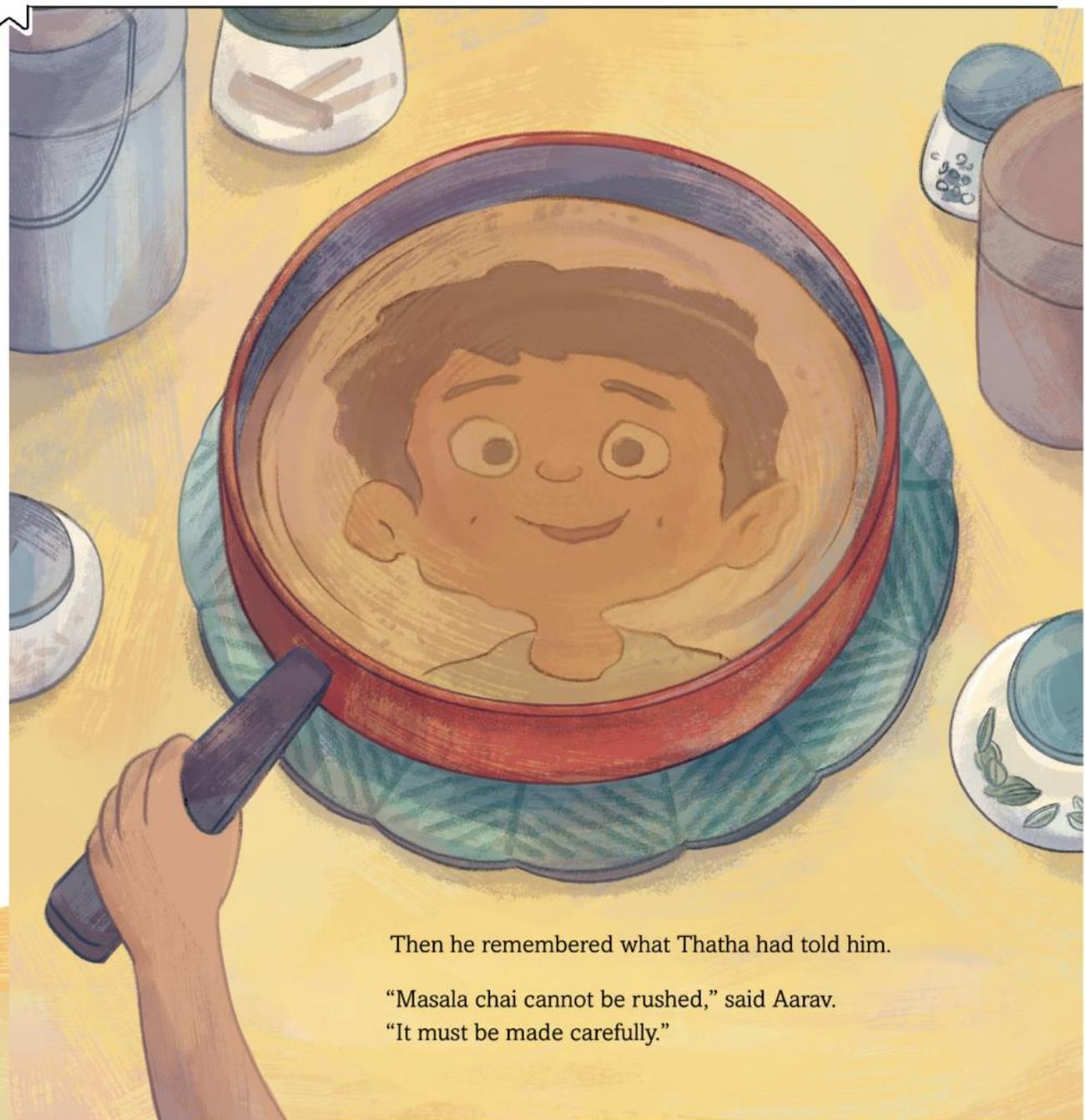
But he didn't let the leaves steep long enough, so the chai looked too pale and just tasted like milk.



Aarav tried again, this time with Pati's help. He hopped around the room while he waited for the tea leaves to steep.



This time, the chai was the right color . . . but it didn't smell right. He had forgotten to add the spices! It wasn't *masala* chai.



Then he remembered what Thatha had told him.

"Masala chai cannot be rushed," said Aarav.
"It must be made carefully."

Aarav measured milk and water into a pot.

He put it to heat on the stove.



Once tiny bubbles appeared
at the edges, he scooped
in dark tea leaves.



Then one by one, he added spices:



“Slowly, slowly,” said Aarav.
He waited patiently while the
chai simmered and steeped.

Soon he saw the warm brown of the masala
chai and smelled its wonderful scent—it was ready!



Aarav and his helpers strained the masala chai.

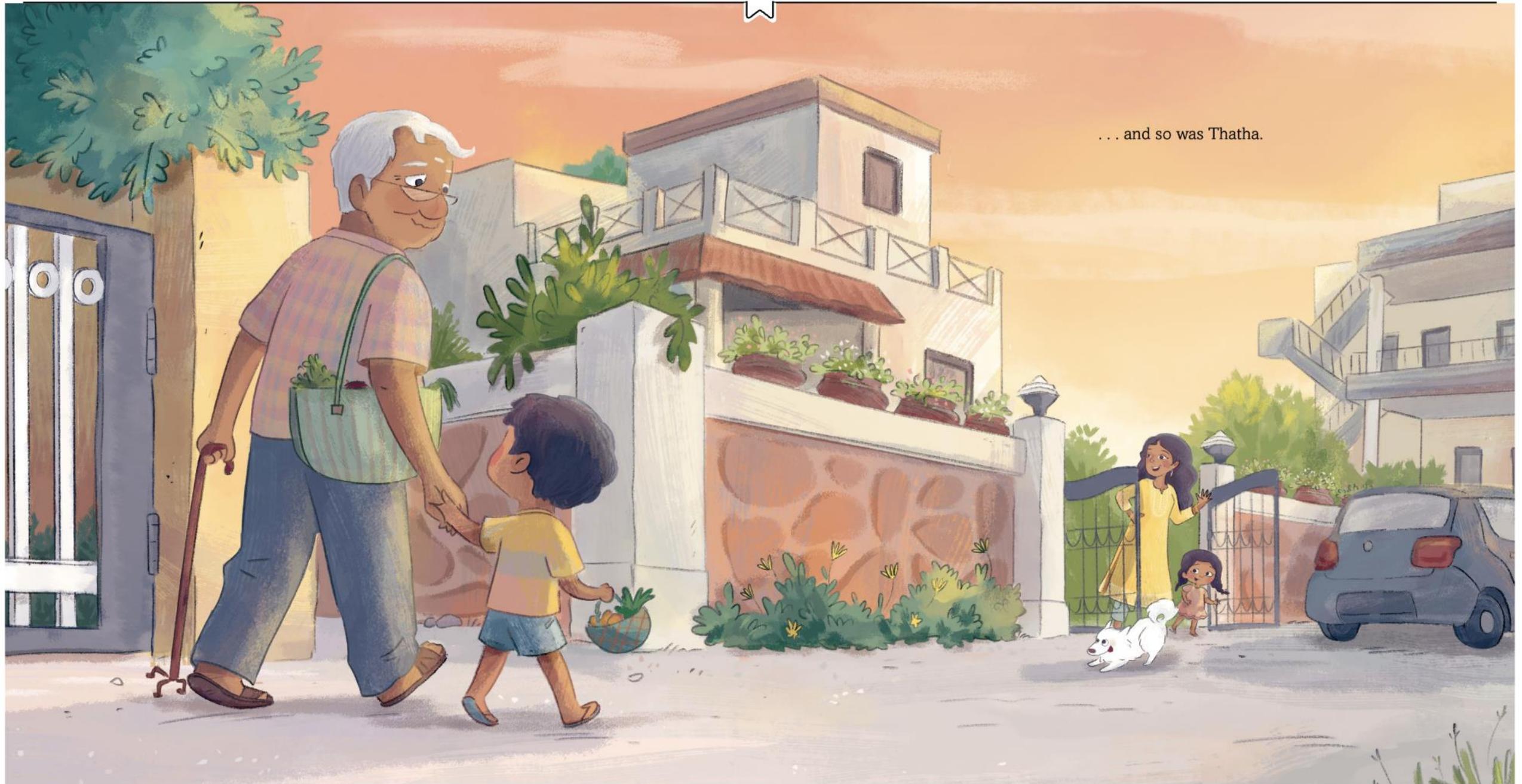
They added sugar and mixed it in a milky ribbon,
just like Thatha always did.



"This is perfect masala chai!" Thatha said.
"I feel better already."

Everyone stayed still and sipped the warm, spiced sweetness.
Masala chai was worth slowing down for . . .





... and so was Thatha.

Author's Note

When I was a child, every afternoon when my family came home from work and school, we drank tea, otherwise known as chai—milky and fragrant and sweet. I'll never forget those moments when we slowed down, put aside whatever else we were doing, and chatted about our days while we enjoyed a delicious drink. And sometimes, if we wanted to feel particularly luxurious, we made masala chai, adding spices while brewing our tea to create complex flavors.

Nowadays, I still enjoy afternoon chai with my parents, husband, and children. And my dad, the thatha in my family, is definitely the best chai maker in the house. There's no "correct" way to make masala chai—just the way you find most delicious. Kids can have warm milk with a splash of tea. I hope you try making masala chai with your family and take the time to stop whatever you're doing, slow down, and enjoy a delicious drink with those you love.

MASALA CHAI

INGREDIENTS FOR FOUR SERVINGS

2 cups water

2 cups milk

4 tablespoons black or rooibos tea (or four tea bags)

fresh whole spices, to taste
(I recommend 3 cardamom pods, 2 cloves, 1–2 slices fresh ginger, 2 peppercorns, and a 1-inch cinnamon stick)

4 teaspoons sugar or honey (or to taste)

DIRECTIONS

1. Measure water and milk into a pot. With a grown-up's help, put the pot on the stove on medium-low or low heat. Keep an eye on the pot so it doesn't boil over!
2. Once bubbles appear at the edges, add the tea leaves or tea bags. Adjust the heat so the liquid is simmering.
3. Crush the cardamom pods and peppercorns gently with the back of a spoon and add them to the pot. Add slices of ginger. Add the cloves and cinnamon stick and any other spices you enjoy.
4. Turn the heat down low and let the tea and spices steep at least three minutes, or up to eight for a stronger flavor. Once the masala chai has turned a deep brown and smells wonderful, strain it into cups.
5. Add sweetener, then pour the masala chai back and forth a few times between a cup and a larger cup or pot. This mixes in the sweetener, cools the chai a little, and adds air, which enhances the flavors.
6. Enjoy the masala chai with those you love.



