

The Nose of all Noses

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Zahra's Dadima has an unusually large nose.
It is quite a thing of beauty.
Not only is it large, it also has a big mole on it.
Perhaps to make sure that no one ever misses it.

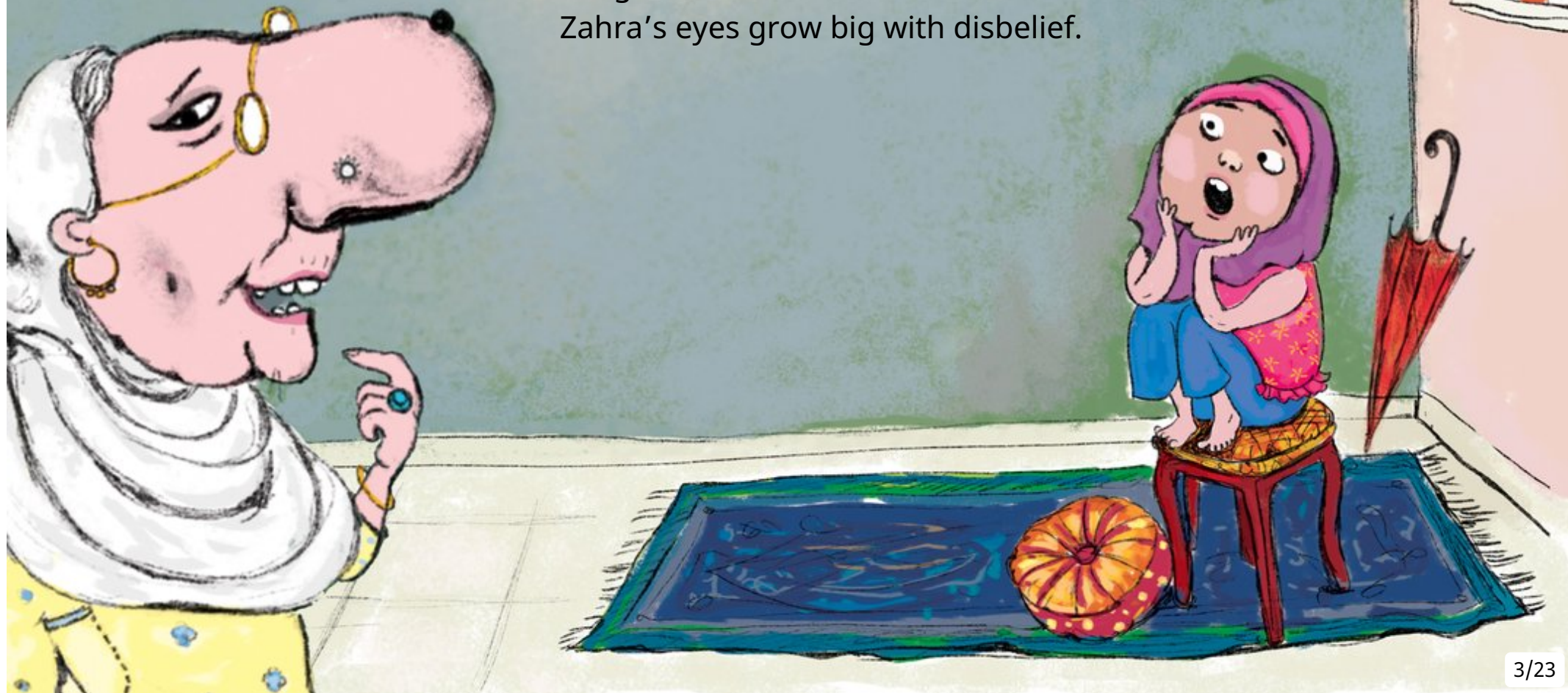


Zahra's nose is nothing in comparison.
"Dadima, why do you have such a large nose?"

Dadima's nose quivers a little before she breaks
into a gleeful laugh.

"Oh, Zahra! Mine is the nose of all noses.
It picks up scents that others cannot even
imagine."

Zahra's eyes grow big with disbelief.



"For instance, right now, I can sniff the air and tell you..." Dadima closes her eyes, her nose swells, her nostrils flare, her mole quivers and her chest puffs up.



"HUMMMM HAR HUMMMM!"



Your Ammi is about to make biryani for lunch, our neighbour is crushing henna leaves for her hair, and the cat has just done a pee-pee."

"SNIFF SNORT SNIFF!"
Zahra tries to sniff out
these secrets too.



"Could you teach me this magic, Dadima?"

Dadima smiles. "When I was a little girl, my nose was trained at my father's old attar shop. If you try hard enough, you can train yours too."

She picks up a dusty old crystal bottle from her dressing table.



"This is from one of the oldest shops in Old Delhi, where attars are sold among jewels to those with fine noses," Dadima whispers.

"Take a whiff and see where your nose takes you."
Dadima uncorks the bottle and brings it to Zahra's nose.

"Hummmm har hummmm!"
Zahra breathes in the dust. And "ACHOOOO!"
"Be gentle, take your time and imagine..."



Zahra takes a slow and deep breath. When she closes her eyes, her nose swells, her nostrils flare and her chest puffs up, just like Dadima's.

"HUMMMM HAR HUMMMM!"

And just like that, she smells flowers sweet and fresh. The flowers remind her of festivals.



When Zahra opens her eyes, she is in a garden. For miles and miles there is nothing but rows of roses.
It is no longer a Mumbai afternoon. It is dawn and some people are plucking pink roses in the garden.



“What you sniffed was the ruh-e-gulaab, a perfume made from roses in this garden in Kannauj,” says Dadima.



Dadima and Zahra stealthily follow the rose pluckers to an old brick-walled factory. There the rose pluckers tip the petals into a great copper pot in a large brick kiln. Dadima and Zahra watch in wonder as the attar is made and poured into delicate glass bottles.



“Is ruh-e-gulaab the only perfume they make, Dadima?” asks Zahra. Dadima pulls out another little bottle from her kurta. Zahra closes her eyes, her nose swells, her nostrils flare and her chest puffs up as she takes a deep breath.

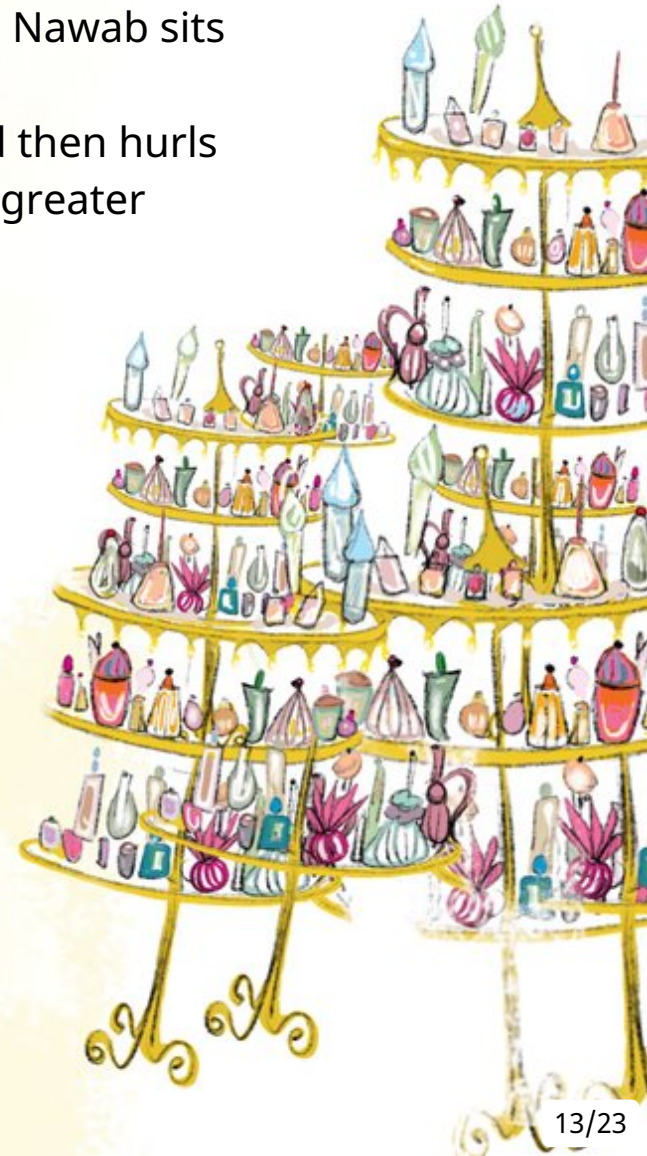
“HUMMMM HAR HUMMMM!”

This attar reminds her of the first monsoon shower.





The monsoon-shower attar transports them to a grand marble palace where a Nawab sits amid crystal bottles. He sniffs them at great speed and then hurls them across the room at an even greater speed.

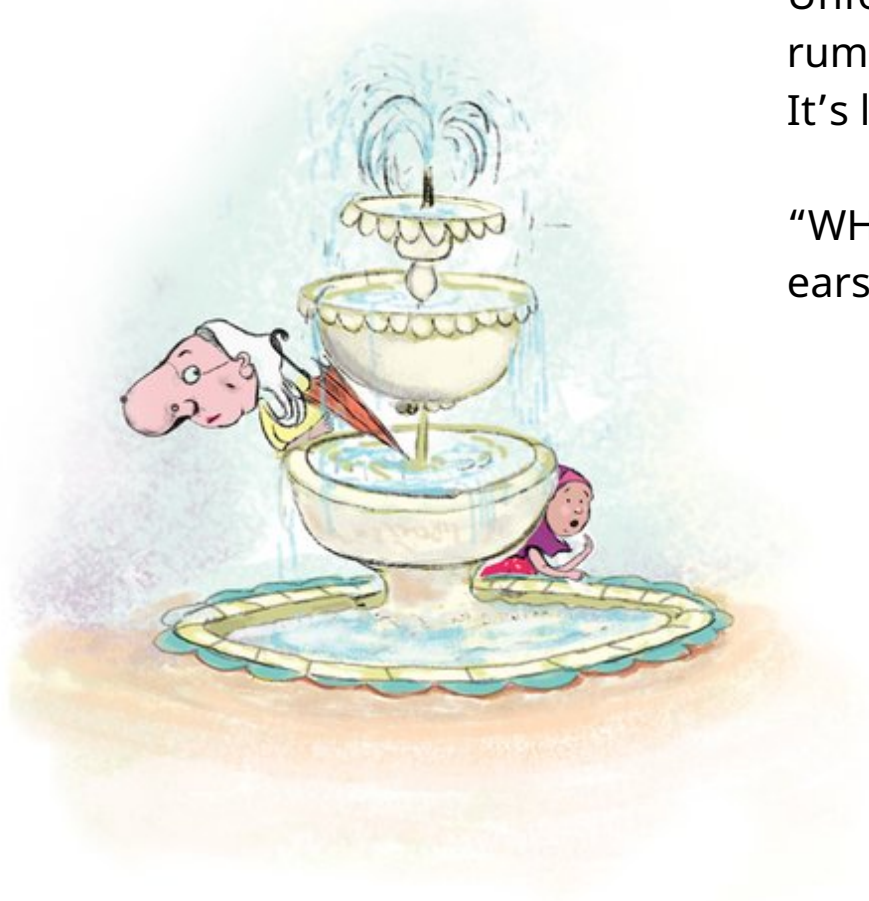


A puny man quivers in front of him, holding a casket full of little glass bottles.

“None of these will do! These smell like the rain,” grunts the angry Nawab. “Where is the signature scent you promised me? You’re supposed to be the best perfumer in all of Awadh!”

“Hukum! I’m sure this is the attar you wanted,” says the perfumer, fumbling amongst his things.





Unfortunately, Zahra's tummy chooses this minute to rumble.

It's lunchtime and she's very hungry.

"WHO IS THAT?" thunders the Nawab, whose keen ears have picked up the sound.



Before Zahra and Dadima can skip away, the Nawab catches them sniffing at the bottles he has been throwing away.



“Dadiji, are you spying on me?” asks the Nawab.

“I would have punished you but I can see you have a keen sense of smell and the nose of all noses.

Come here and help me pick an attar that can become my signature scent.”

Dadima sneakily drops her old crystal bottle
amongst the perfumer's things.
She pretends to find it and does a more
dramatic version of her sniff.

**"HUMH HA HURRRUMPH GUR GURR HUMH
HAAA HUI!"**

She hands the Nawab a bottle.



The perfumer, Dadima and Zahra wait anxiously as the Nawab takes a sniff from the bottle.

"This is exactly what I wanted! What is it?"
He looks at the baffled perfumer.

"Ruh-e-gulaab, the soul of roses from Kannauj. This is what the perfumer brought for you," says Dadima.





Just then, they hear another distant, angry rumble.

"GUDU GUDU, GTTTRRRR, GUDU GUDU."

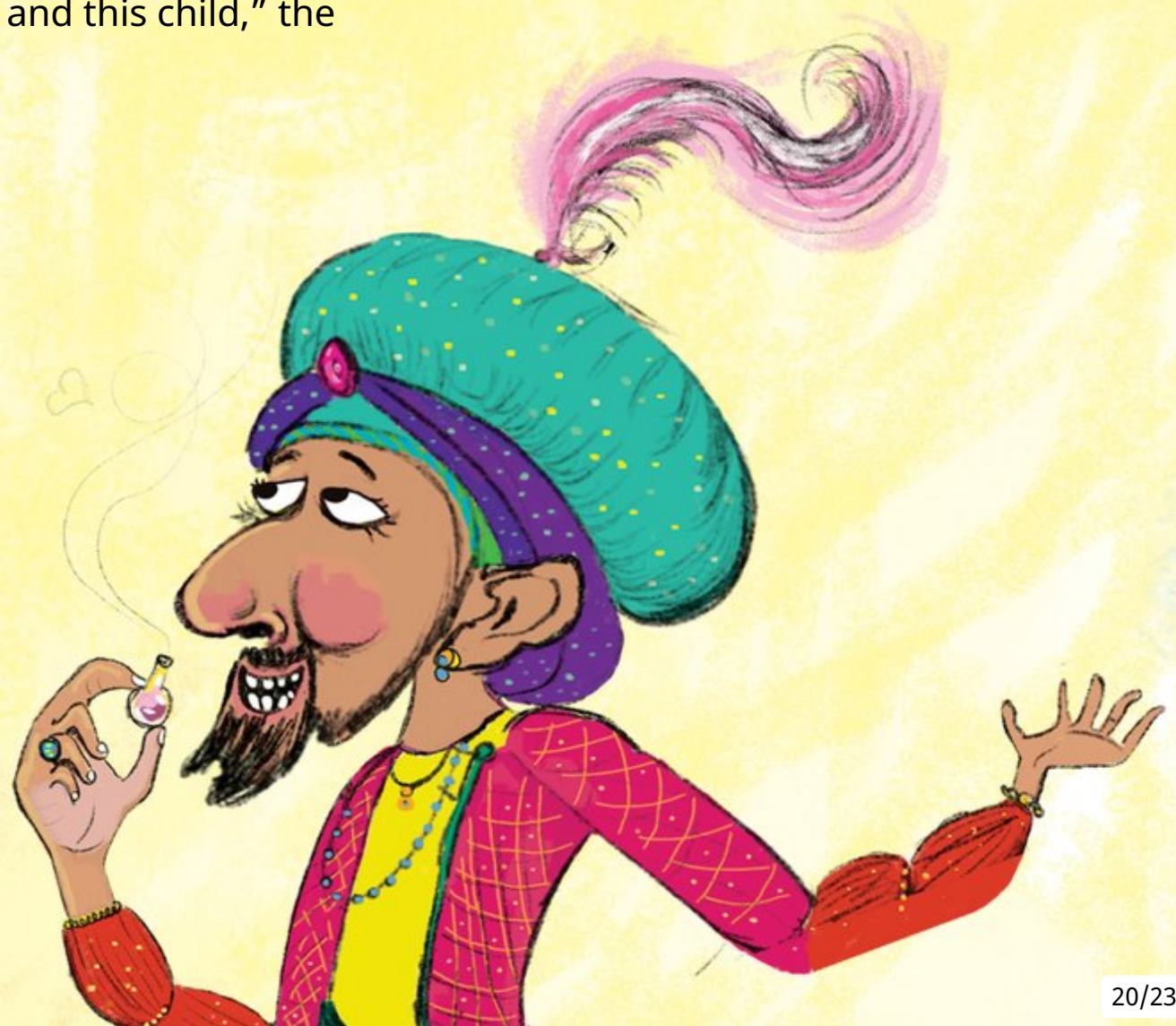
"What was that, Zahra?" asks Dadima, as her nose twitches with worry.

"That was my tummy, Dadima," says Zahra.

"It's time for us to head home. What scent reminds you of home, Zahra?" Dadima asks her.

"Biryani!" says a hungry Zahra, without missing a beat.

"I have Awadh's most delicious biryani to offer.
Khansama! Get some for Dadiji and this child," the
Nawab commands his cook.



But Dadima quietly pulls out a tiny copper box filled with a spoonful of fragrant biryani.

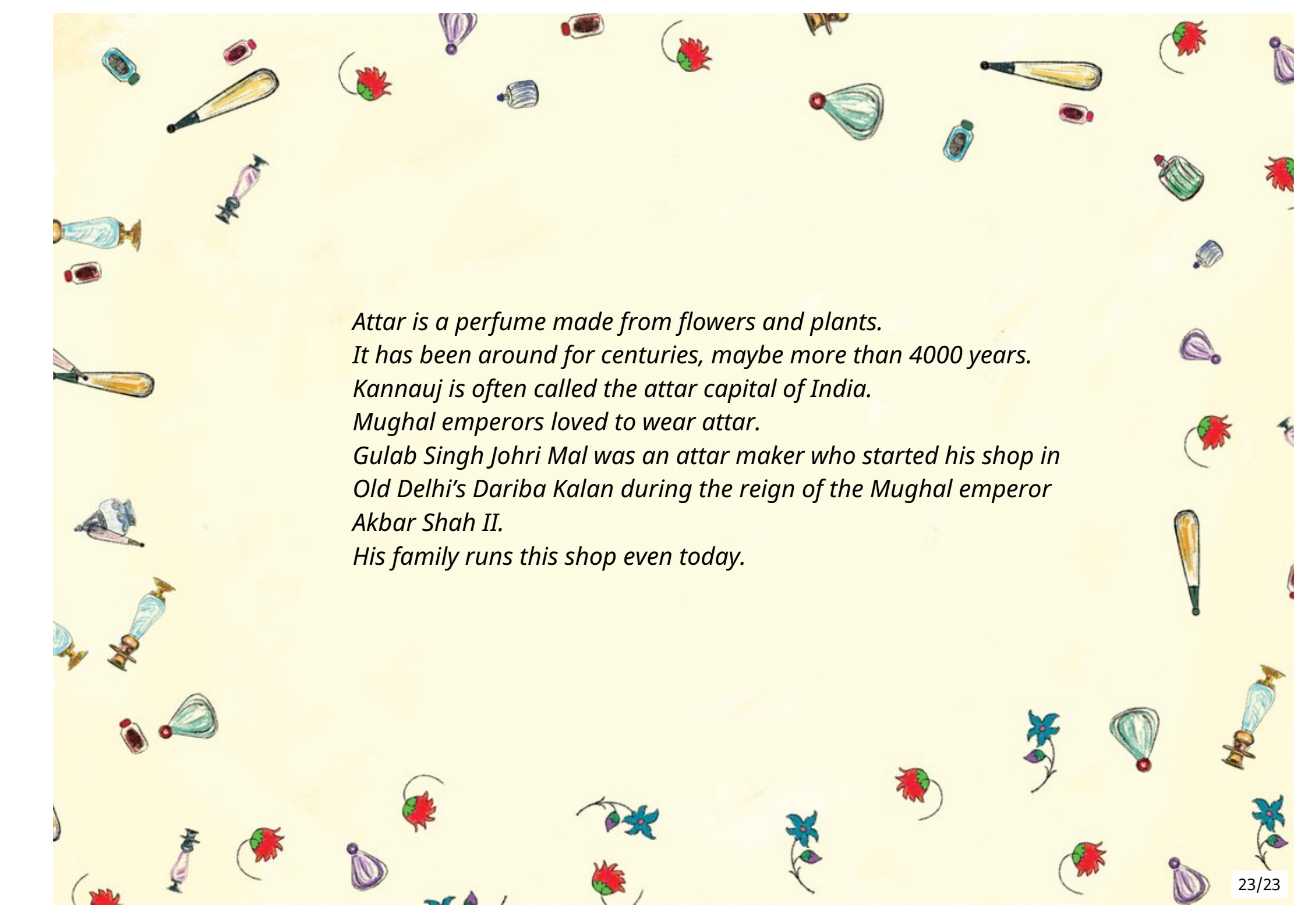
They close their eyes, their noses swell, their nostrils flare and their chests puff up as they take a deep breath.



HMMMMMMMM HAR HMMMMMMMMMM!

They open their eyes and find themselves at the dining table, just in time for biryani.



A decorative border surrounds the central text area. It features various hand-drawn motifs including red and blue flowers, green leaves, and several different styles of perfume bottles in colors like blue, green, and purple. The background is a light cream color.

*Attar is a perfume made from flowers and plants.
It has been around for centuries, maybe more than 4000 years.
Kannauj is often called the attar capital of India.
Mughal emperors loved to wear attar.
Gulab Singh Johri Mal was an attar maker who started his shop in
Old Delhi's Dariba Kalan during the reign of the Mughal emperor
Akbar Shah II.
His family runs this shop even today.*

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The Nose of all Noses

(English)

Zahra's Dadima has an unusually large nose. It picks up scents that others cannot even imagine. Zahra wants a super nose too. Find out what happens when Dadima and Zahra take a deep sniff of attar and embark on an adventure to train for a super nose.

This is a Level 3 book for children who are ready to read on their own.



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