



Fly Safe, Godavan

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Level 3



"Rania, Rania!" called Saleem mamu. "Come and see the godavan."

Rania stopped playing with her goat and ran to Saleem mamu. In the mung bean field was a big bird with a black crown. It was taller than her, but not as tall as Saleem mamu.

Frrsht!

The godavan's tail feathers stood up straight.

Poof!

The godavan's neck inflated like a balloon.

Saleem Mamu smiled. "We stopped putting pesticides in the field and so the godavan has come here to find a mate. He is showing off for her."



The next week, Saleem Mamu took Rania for a walk. He pointed and said, "Our godavan's mate has laid an egg on the ground. We have to keep it safe from being trampled by the cows and goats and camels."



Saleem Mamu told Rania to protect the nest but not go too close to it.

"Shoo!" said Rania to the cows and goats.

"PHURRR," Rania scolded the camels.

"You're safe," whispered Rania to the godavan and her egg.



One night there was a terrible storm.
Thunder boomed like a drum. Lightning flashed
over the sand dunes. Rania wondered if the
godavan and her egg were okay.

In the morning, Rania
went to check on the nest.
“Oh, no!” she cried. “The
storm has destroyed the egg.”

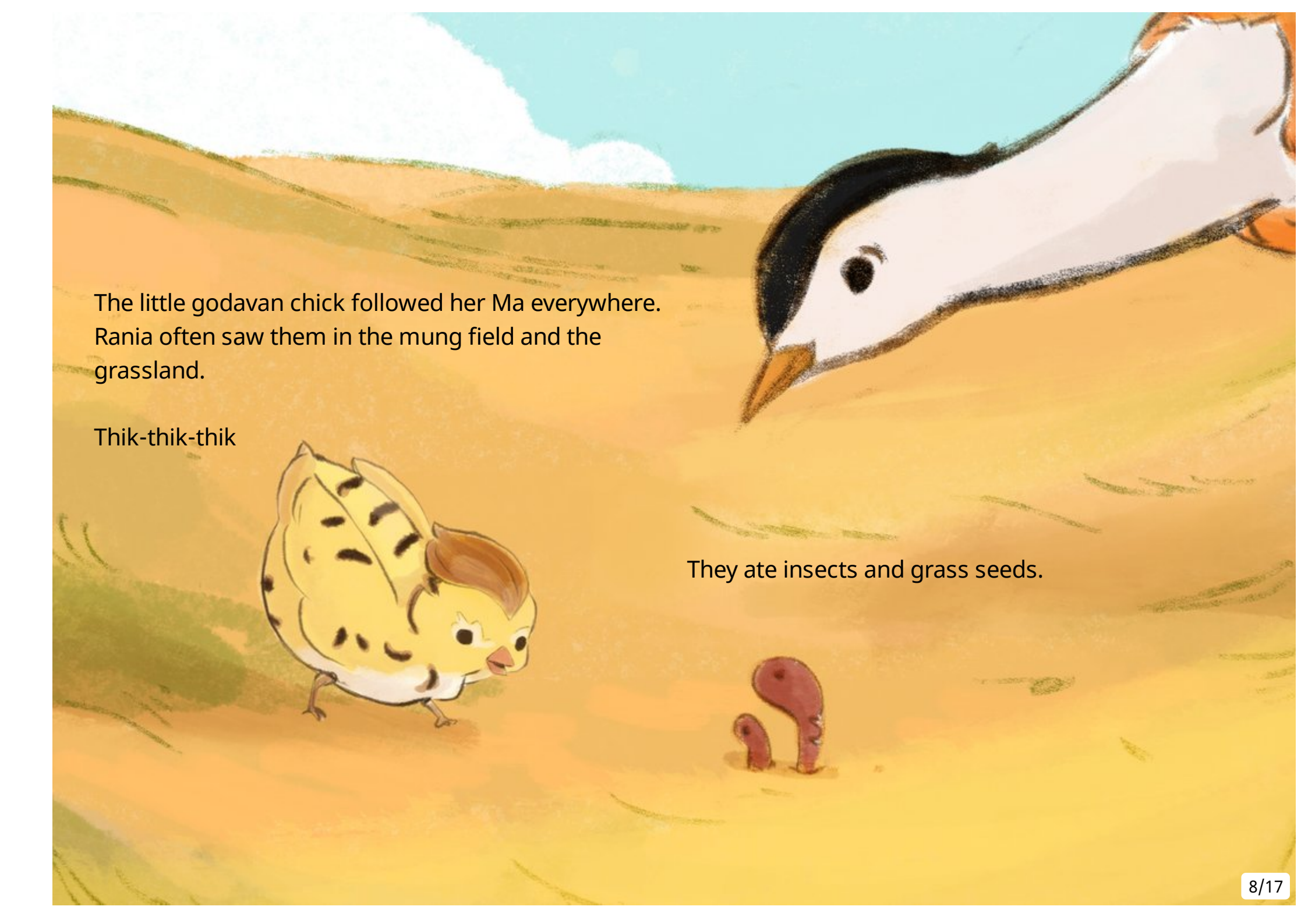
Saleem Mamu laughed. He pointed
to the pieces of eggshell on the
ground. “It has hatched!”



Rania no longer had to protect the nest. But she still had to keep Ma and the chick safe.

“The chick can’t fly yet,” said Saleem mamu. “So we have to help Ma keep it safe from predators.”



The illustration shows a large white bird, likely a godavan, with a distinctive black headband and a long, pointed beak. It is looking down towards a small, fluffy yellow chick with black spots. The chick is standing on a patch of green grass in a yellowish-brown field. In the background, there are rolling hills under a blue sky with white clouds. The overall style is soft and painterly.

The little godavan chick followed her Ma everywhere.
Rania often saw them in the mung field and the
grassland.

Thik-thik-thik

They ate insects and grass seeds.

Rania once saw a pack of dogs enter the field. She yelled for Saleem Mamu and together they chased the dogs away.

“Uff,” thought Rania. “Keeping our godavans safe is a lot of work. I can’t wait till our chick can fly away from danger!”

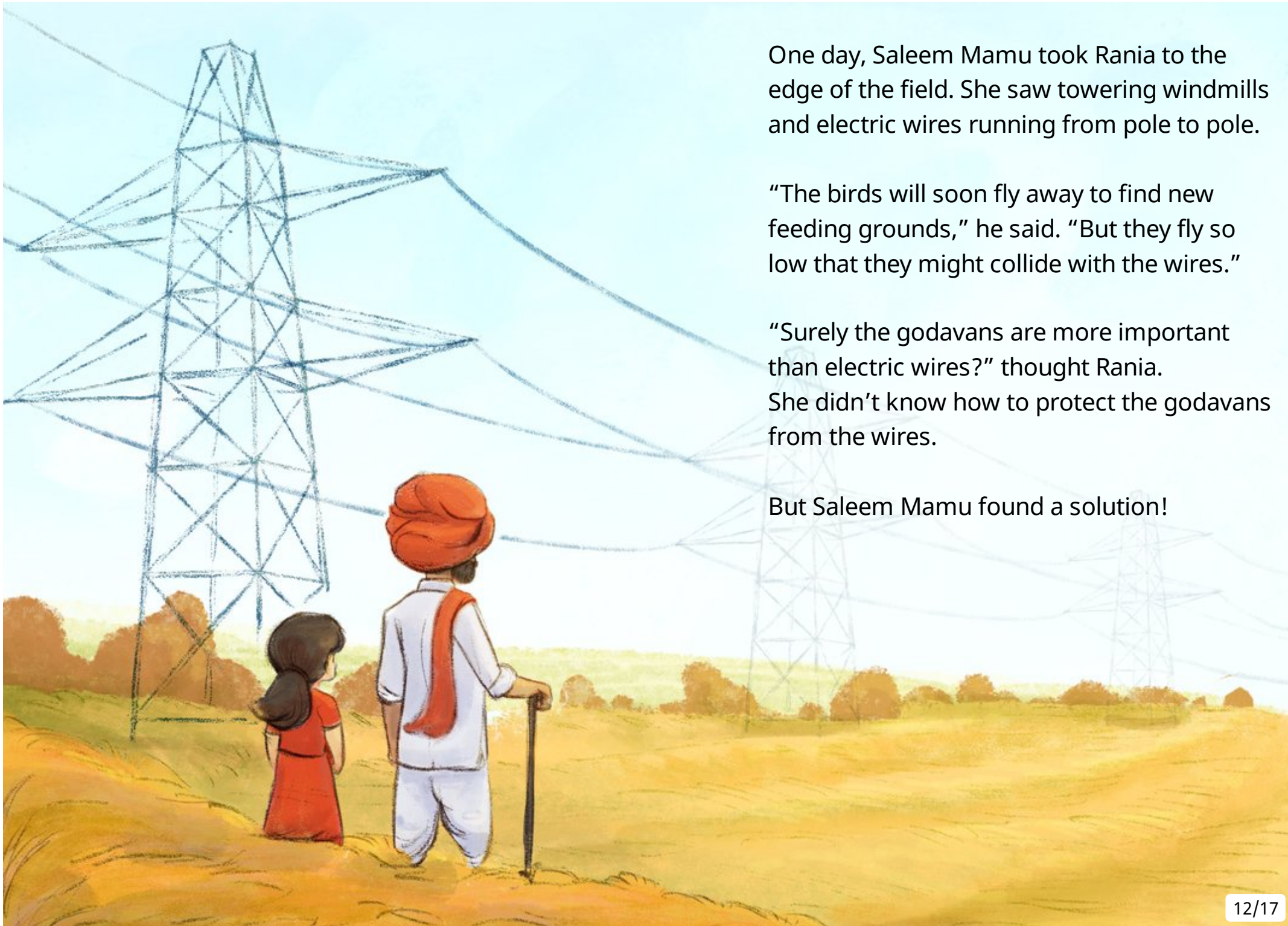


The godavan chick was getting bigger and bigger. She could now fly and was almost as tall as her Ma.



Sometimes, Saleem Mamu had trouble telling them apart. But Rania always knew which was which.





One day, Saleem Mamu took Rania to the edge of the field. She saw towering windmills and electric wires running from pole to pole.

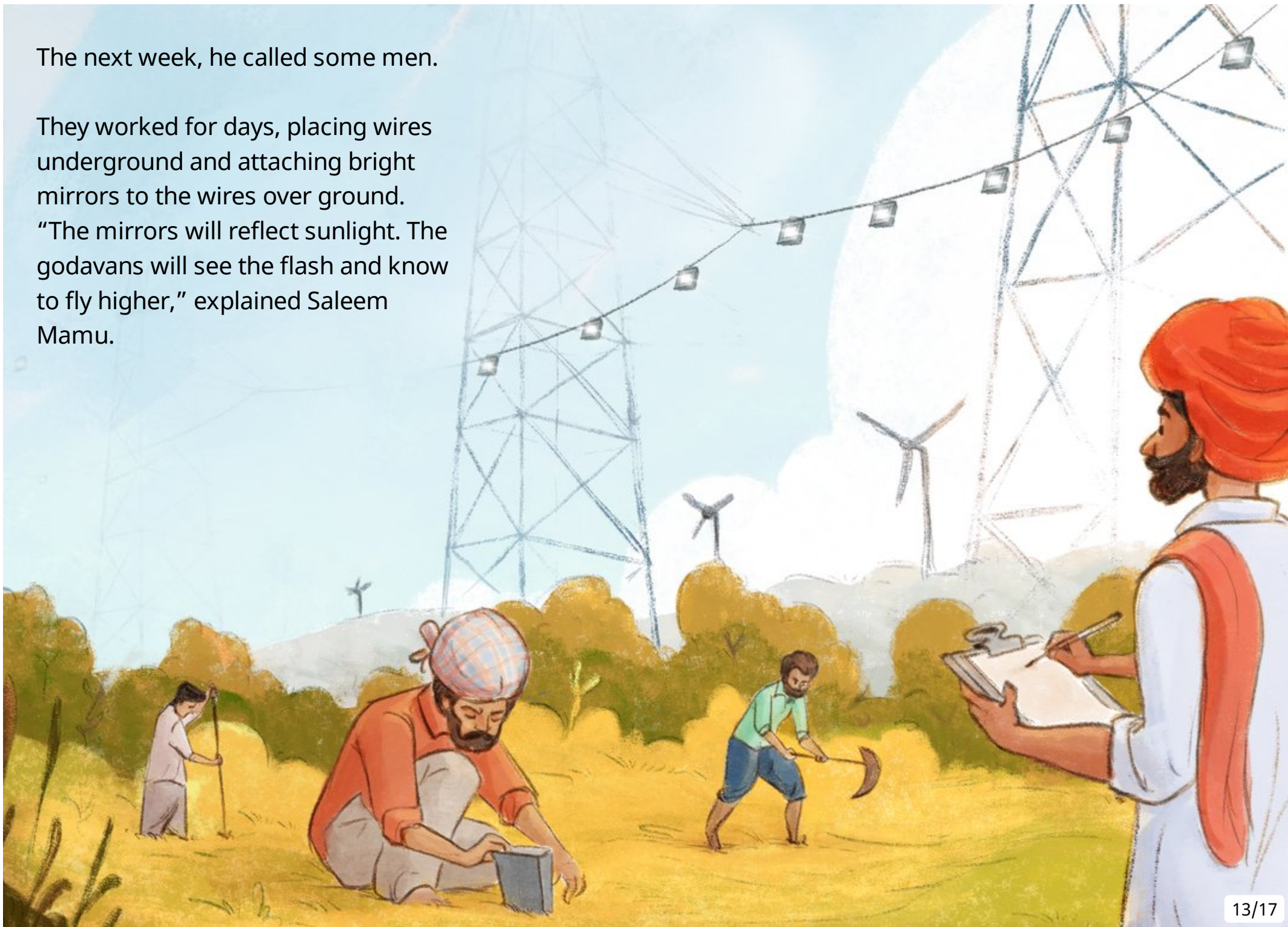
"The birds will soon fly away to find new feeding grounds," he said. "But they fly so low that they might collide with the wires."

"Surely the godavans are more important than electric wires?" thought Rania. She didn't know how to protect the godavans from the wires.

But Saleem Mamu found a solution!

The next week, he called some men.

They worked for days, placing wires underground and attaching bright mirrors to the wires over ground. “The mirrors will reflect sunlight. The godavans will see the flash and know to fly higher,” explained Saleem Mamu.



Rania was helping Abba in the field when she saw the godavans. The two birds took a short run up and began to flap their heavy wings.

Slowly, slowly they lifted off the ground and flew safely over the wires.



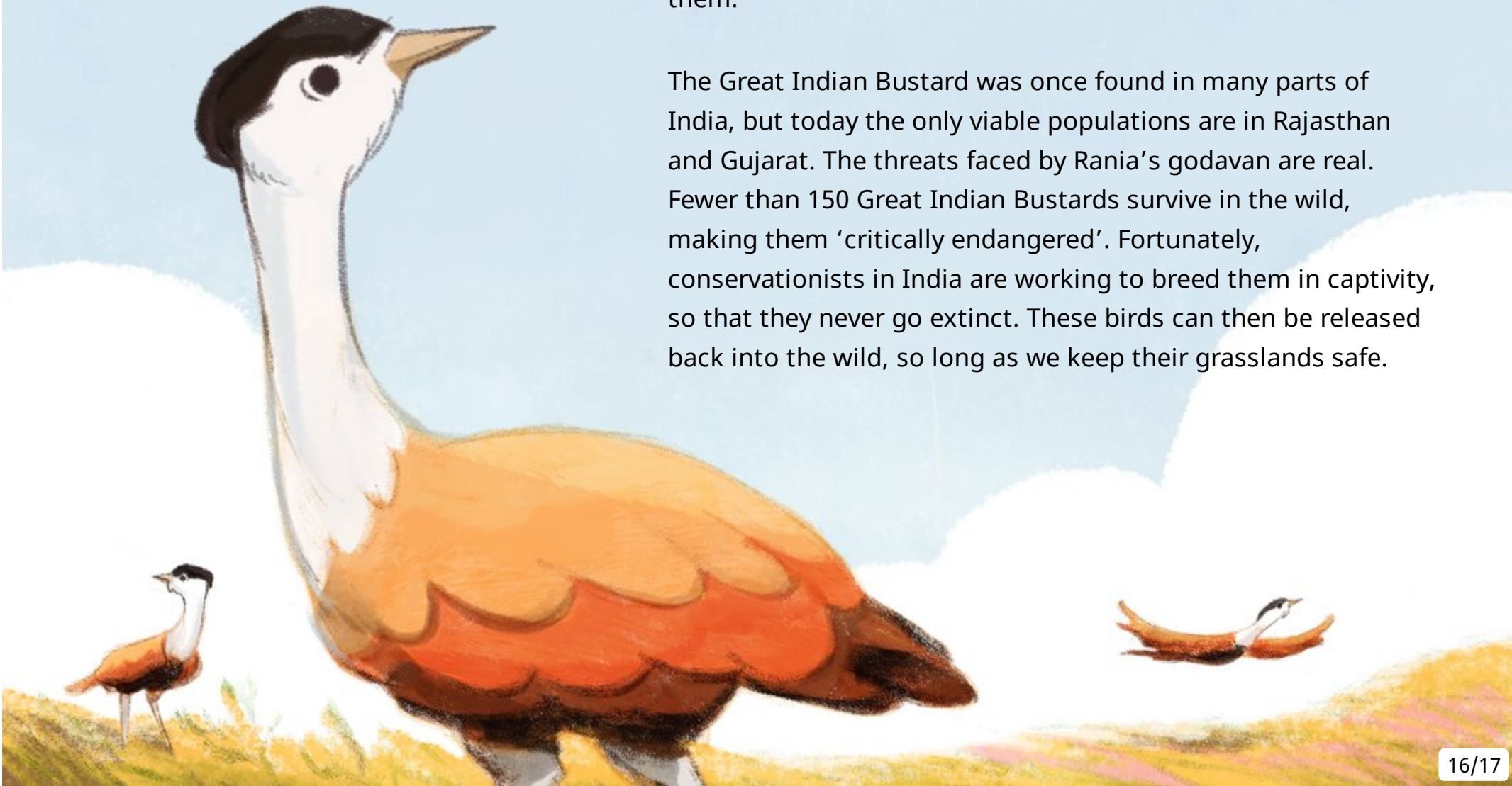
"Fly safe, my godavan birds," yelled Rania.
"And come back soon."

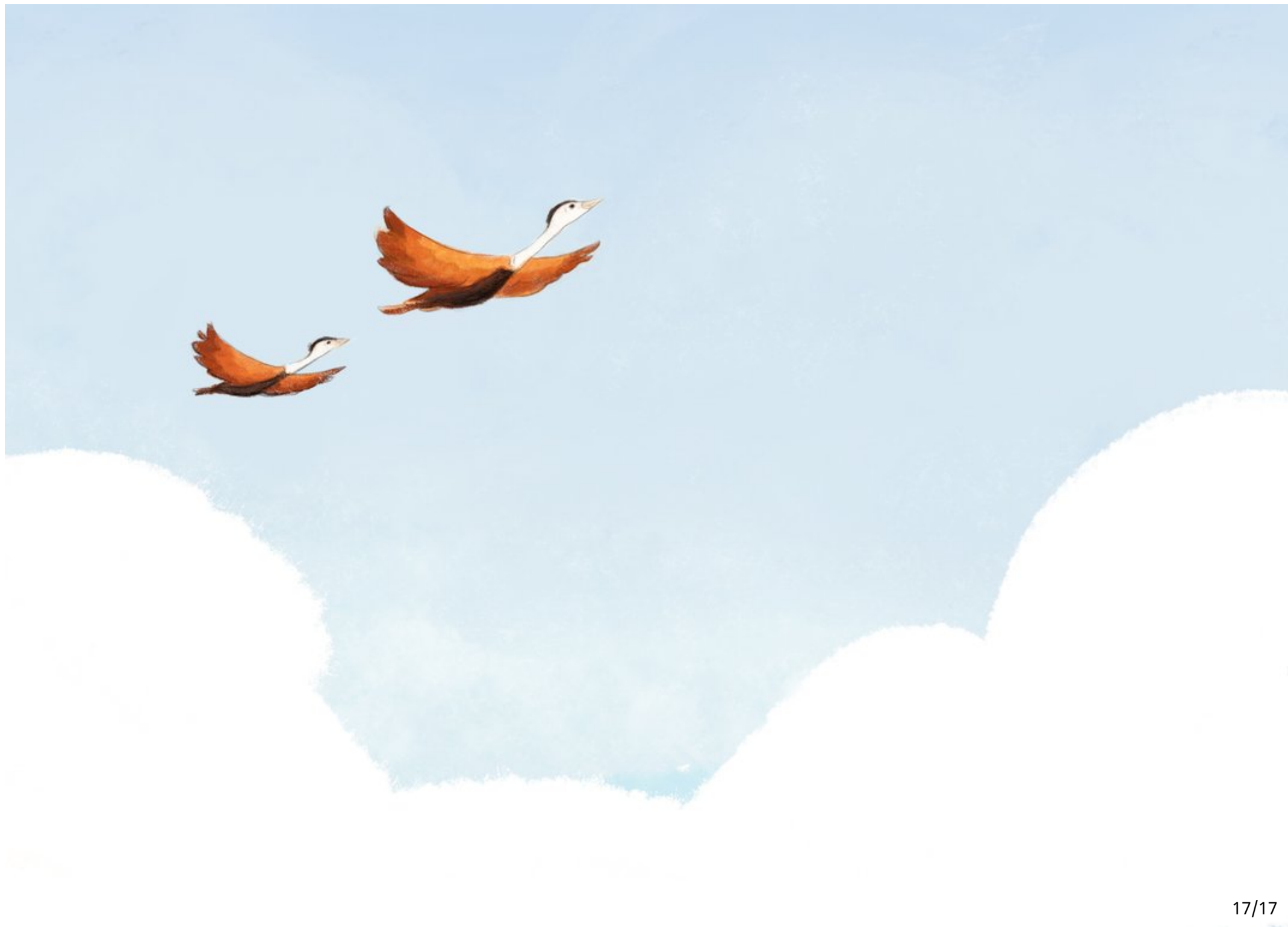


Meet the Godavan

The Great Indian Bustard was almost declared India's national bird! This beautiful species lives in grasslands. The female nests on open ground and lays just one clutch of eggs every year. It is a very tall and heavy bird. Great Indian Bustards fly low and close to the ground. They have weak frontal vision, which means they can't always spot power lines in time to fly over them.

The Great Indian Bustard was once found in many parts of India, but today the only viable populations are in Rajasthan and Gujarat. The threats faced by Rania's godavan are real. Fewer than 150 Great Indian Bustards survive in the wild, making them 'critically endangered'. Fortunately, conservationists in India are working to breed them in captivity, so that they never go extinct. These birds can then be released back into the wild, so long as we keep their grasslands safe.





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Fly Safe, Godavan

(English)

Rania is determined to keep the little godavan chick and her Ma safe. But there are so many threats to the survival of the Great Indian Bustard.

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



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