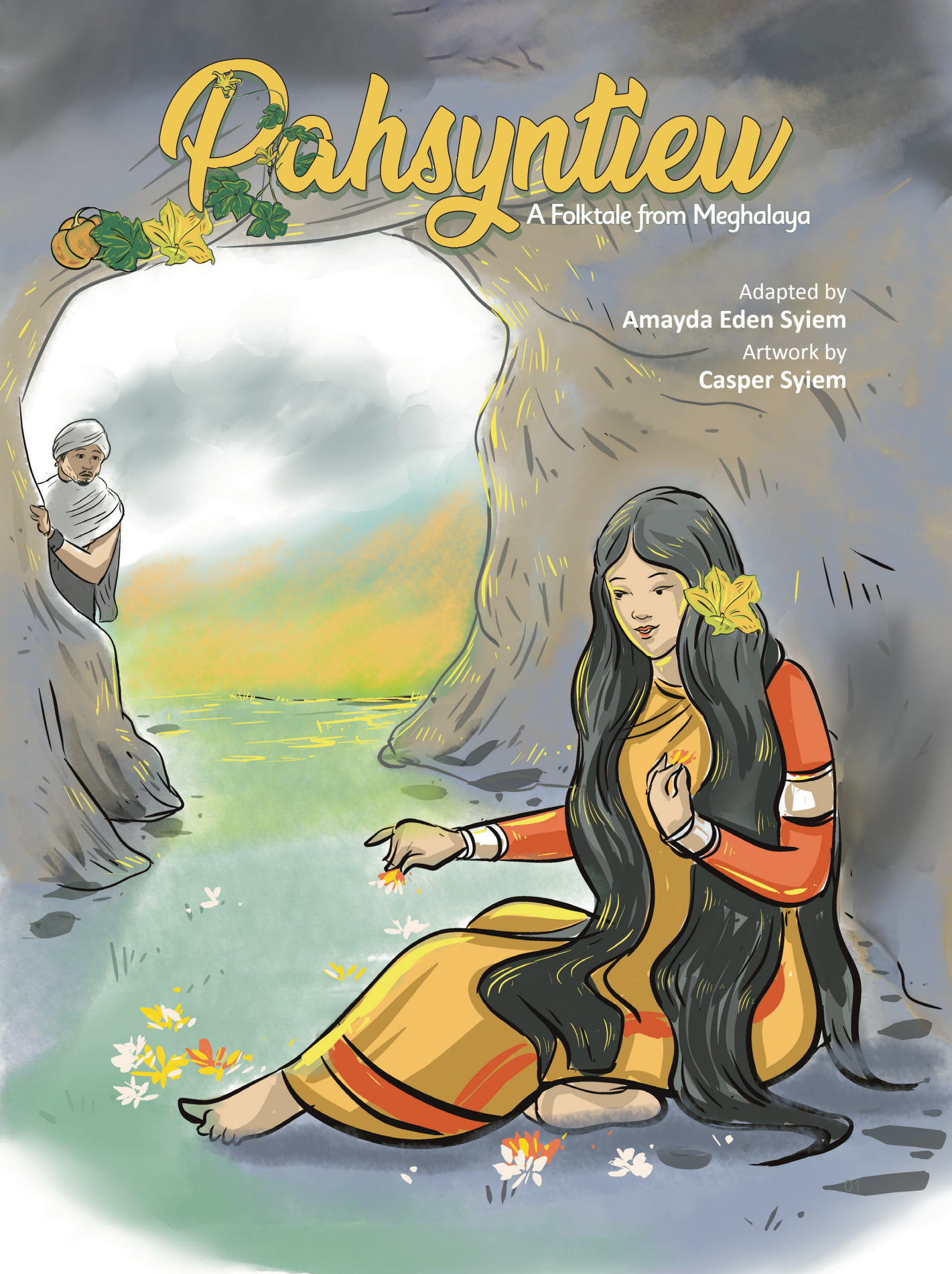


Pahsyntiew

A Folktale from Meghalaya

Adapted by
Amayda Eden Syiem

Artwork by
Casper Syiem



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Pahsyntiew

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Pahsyntienu



In the meadows of Shillong,
where the hills looked like sleeping giants,
a little girl walked along the soft grass,
her tiny hands picking flowers as she went.





“Look, Mummy!” she said happily,
holding up a small flower.
“This one’s my favorite!”





Her mother smiled and sat beside her.
“Ah, a pumpkin flower!
Do you know about the story of a beautiful
maiden who loved flowers, just like you?”





The little girl's eyes widened.
"Tell me! Tell me Mummy!"
Her mother gently tucked the flower into her
daughter's hair,
"Let me tell you about Pahsyntiew..."





**“A long time ago, in the beautiful hills of Shillong,
there lived a powerful spirit called U Lei Shyllong.
He was the guardian of the hills and forests.**

**The people of the nearby villages liked and
respected him.**





U Lei Shyllong was very happy with the people
so he sent his daughter to live among them.





She took the form of a lovely maiden
and came to live in a quiet cave called Krem Marai,
near the village of Pomlakrai at the top of the hill.

She helped take care of the people
by blessing the land with good harvests.





She didn't tell anyone who she was and stayed all alone. She spent her days sitting quietly outside the cave, picking flowers, and watching over the hills.

But the children who played nearby were afraid of her. She seemed so mysterious and beautiful.

They ran back to the village and told their parents about the strange woman in the cave.





News about the mysterious lady quickly spread
throughout the villages.

Many people were too scared to go near her.

But there was one brave man named Sati
Mylliemngap, an elder from the village of Nongkseh.
He was wise and curious.

Sati decided to go and meet the mysterious maiden.



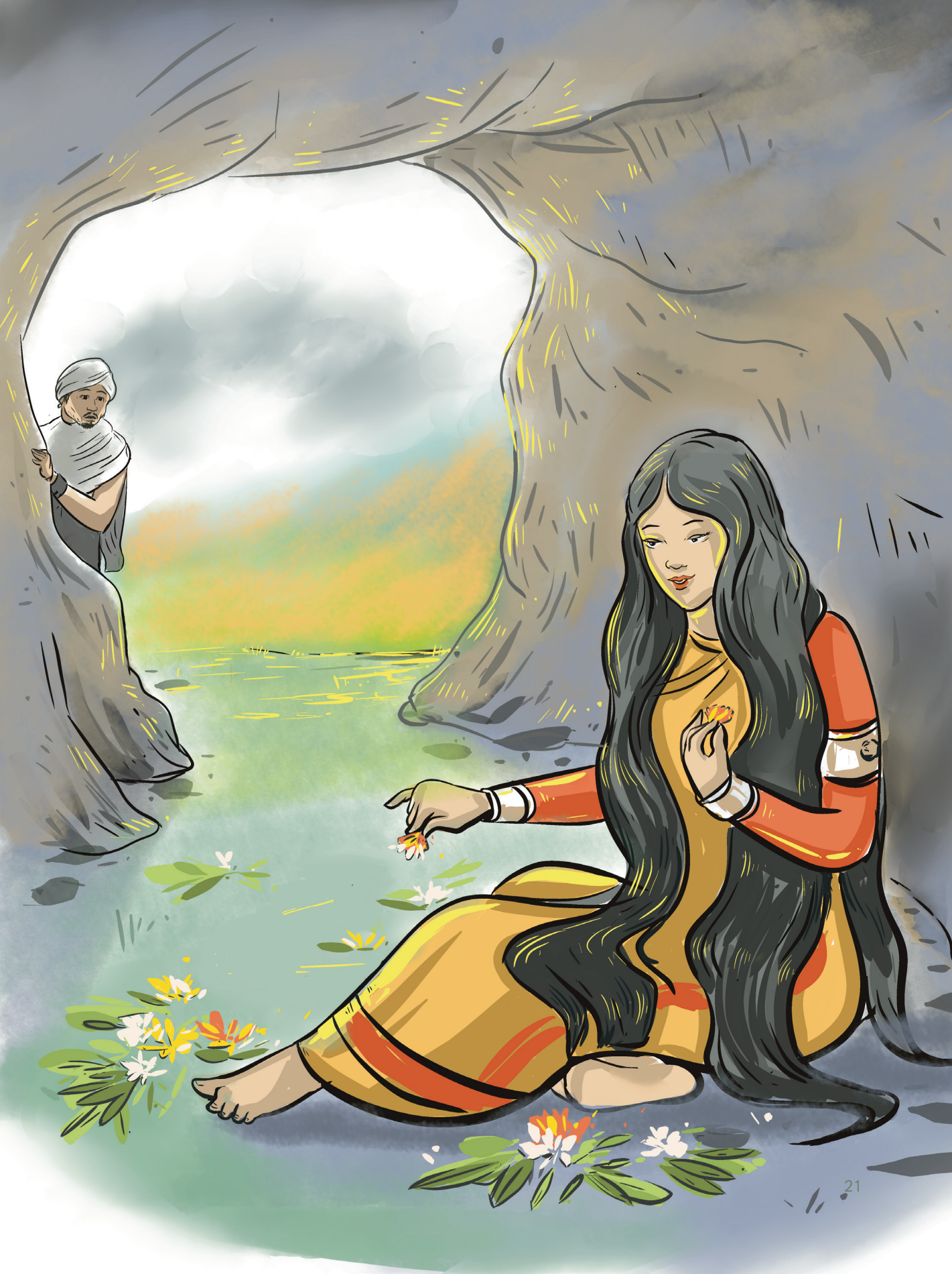




One bright morning, Sati went out to find her.

When he reached the cave, he saw her sitting
with a flower in her hand.

Her long dark hair flowed like a river, and her
beautiful golden dress sparkled in the sunlight.



Sati greeted her kindly, but the maiden was shy
and quickly ran inside the cave.
Sati did not give up. He came up with an idea.

He noticed that she loved flowers, so he gathered
a bunch of pumpkin flowers and gently placed
them near the entrance of the cave.

Then, he spoke softly,
“Please don’t be afraid. I will not hurt you.”





After a little while, the maiden peeked out,
curious about the flowers.

When she came out to take them,
Sati gently called out, “Please don’t be afraid.
I only want to talk to you and learn about you.”





Slowly, she began to trust him.

She told him that she was the daughter of U Lei Shyllong and that she had come to the village to help the people.

She also said that she would one day become the mother of a great family who would rule the land wisely.





Sati promised to keep her secret safe and took her
back to the village.
He introduced her to everyone.

He called her Pahsyntiew,
meaning “the one lured by flowers.”

Pahsyntiew lived happily with the people,
and they grew to love and respect her.





In time, Pahsyntiew married a strong and kind man named Kongngor, and they had many children.





But one day, Pahsyntiew told her family,
“My time here is over.
I must go back to my father, U Lei Shyllong,
in the hills.”





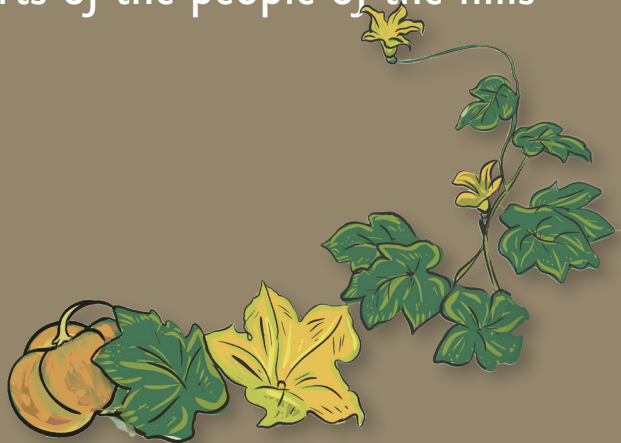
Her husband and children were sad but they knew she had to leave.

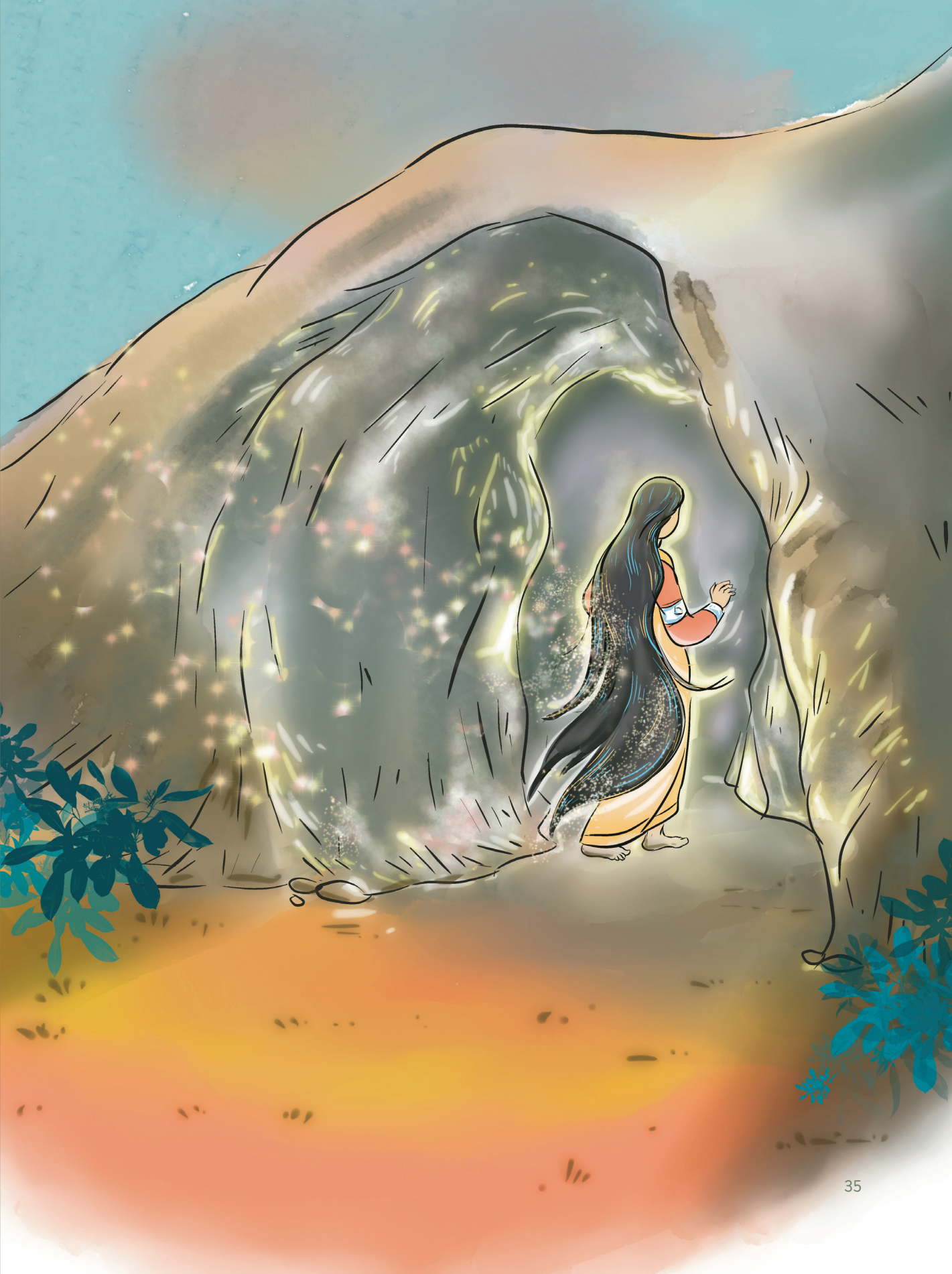
She blessed them and returned to her cave, where she disappeared forever.

Her children grew up to be wise leaders, just as Pahsyntiew had promised.

They ruled the land with kindness and strength, making their mother proud.

And so, the story of Pahsyntiew, the Flower Maiden, lived on in the hearts of the people of the hills”





As the sun began to set over the hills,
the little girl looked up at her mother with wide eyes.
“Do you think I’ll ever see Pahsyntiew’s cave?”





Her mother smiled, brushing a strand of hair from her daughter's face.

“Maybe one day, when you're older.
And when we go, we'll take the most beautiful
flowers we can find, just like Pahsyntiew”





A watercolor illustration of a landscape. The sky is bright and white with soft, yellowish clouds. The ground is a mix of yellow and orange, suggesting a field or a path. In the foreground on the right, there is a green bush with small leaves. The overall style is soft and painterly.

The little girl hugged her mother tight.
“I can’t wait.”



I Spy

Can you spot each of these items as you journey through the book?



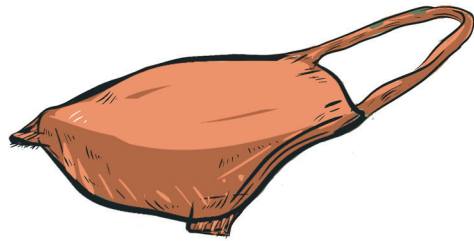
Khasi Traditional Bangles | Mahu and Syngkha



Necklace | Paila



Pumpkin Flower | Tiew Pathaw



Khasi Traditional Shopping Bag | Pla ĩew



Khasi Traditional Dress | Dhara

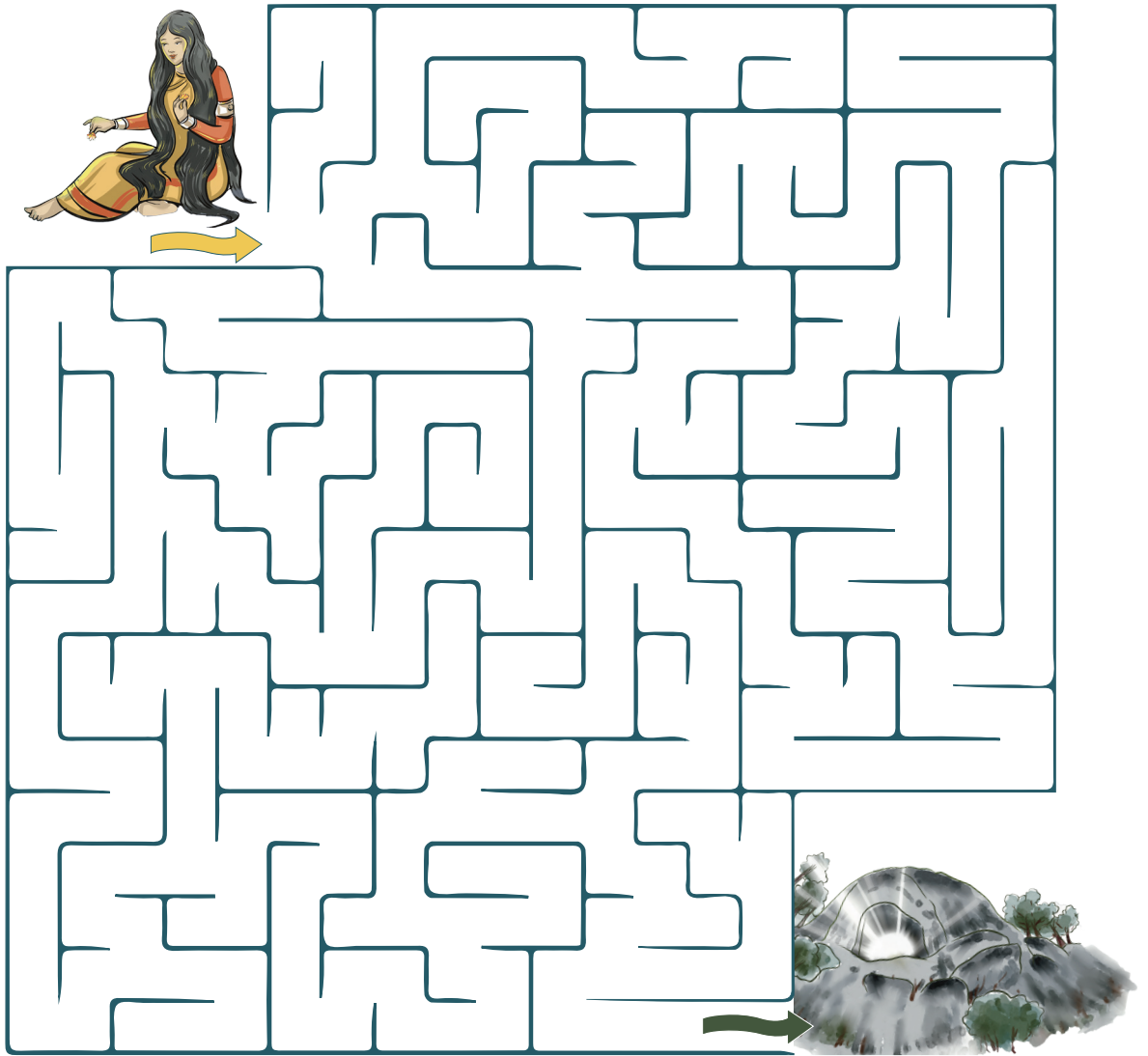


Pumpkin | Pathaw



Oranges | Soh Nĕmtra

Help Pahsyntiew Find Her Way Home



Note to the Grown-Ups

Here are a few ways you can help your child engage more with the story!



Make Reading Time Special

Create a cozy, quiet space where you can read together without distractions. Soft lighting or a comfy blanket can set the mood, making it feel like a reading adventure!



Bring the Story to Life

Use different voices and expressions for each character to make the story more fun and engaging. Encourage interaction by asking questions like, “What do you think will happen next?” or “How would you feel if you were in the story?”



Encourage Creativity

After reading, ask your child to draw their favorite part of the story or imagine what happens next. You can also create your own version of the tale, adding new characters or twists together!



Explore Nature

Take your child on a nature walk and ask them to notice and pick their favorite flowers, just like the little girl in the story. A visit to Krem Marai will also help connect the themes of the book with their surroundings.



Build Vocabulary Together

When you come across new words, pause to explain them in a way that’s easy to understand. For example, “A ‘maiden’ is a young woman.” This builds their vocabulary while keeping the story engaging.



Listen to Your Child’s Thoughts

Let your child ask questions or point out details in the illustrations that interest them. Every observation, no matter how small, adds to their enjoyment. Let them take the lead and value their ideas!



Creative Arts Fun

Encourage your child to create something based on the story—a drawing of Pahsyntiew, her cave, or the hills. This adds a hands-on activity that deepens their connection to the story.

Eden lives in Shillong—a beautiful place in the hills—with her family, her playful dog Ruff, and her big, lazy cat Connor. She is a counsellor with an interest in child and adolescent wellbeing. She loves writing, doodling, and making cool nail art.

Casper is a super-talented artist who loves painting huge murals and creating colorful stories for kids. When he's not illustrating books, you'll find him out in the countryside with his guitar, exploring the magical Khasi Hills. Armed with his trusty paintbrushes and watercolors, Casper captures the beauty of rivers, trees, and mountains wherever he goes.



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