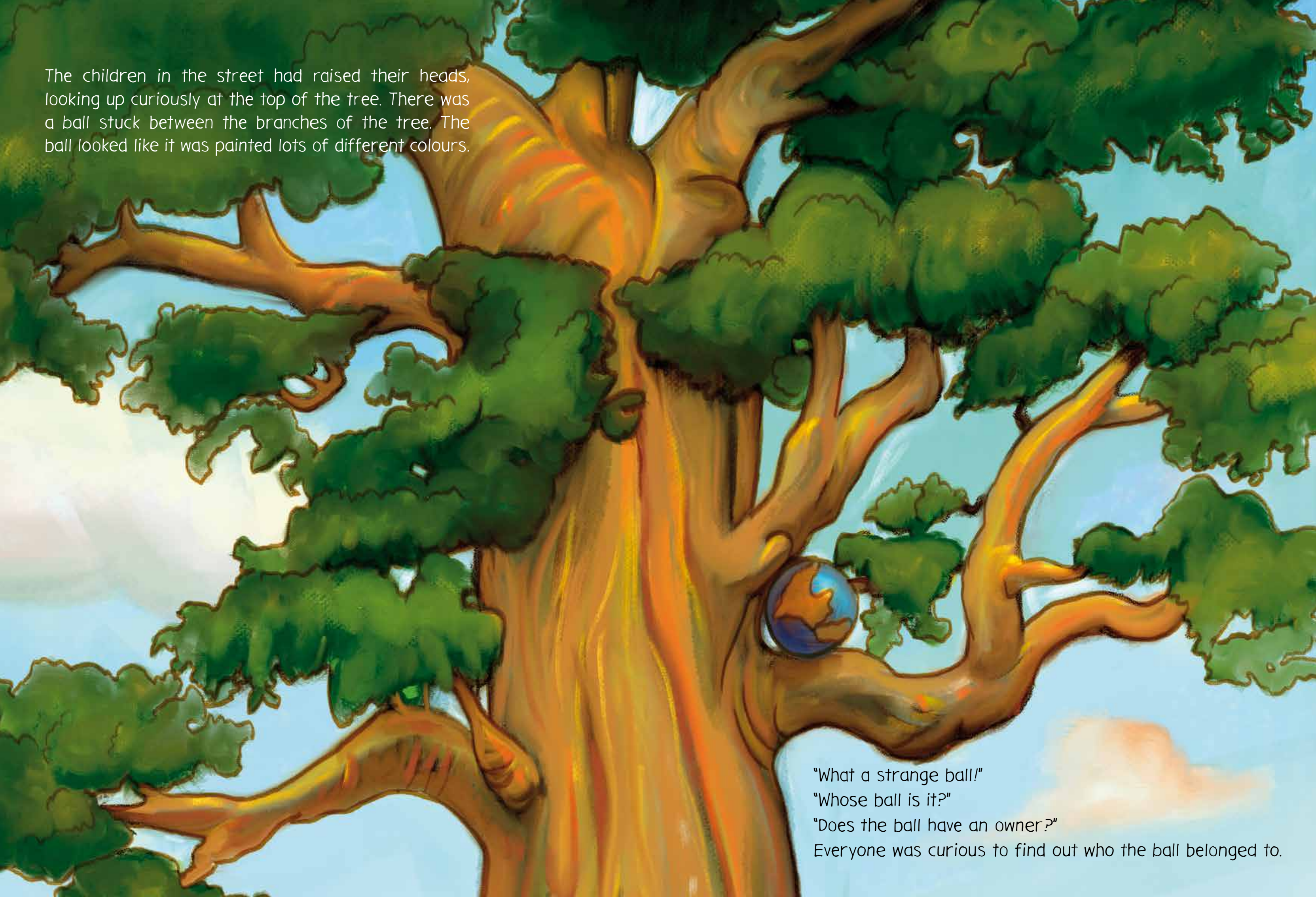


WHOSE
BALL IS IT?



A large, gnarled tree with a thick, brown trunk and many green, leafy branches. A small, colorful ball, resembling a globe with blue, orange, and yellow sections, is stuck in one of the lower branches. The background is a light blue sky with soft, white clouds.

The children in the street had raised their heads, looking up curiously at the top of the tree. There was a ball stuck between the branches of the tree. The ball looked like it was painted lots of different colours.

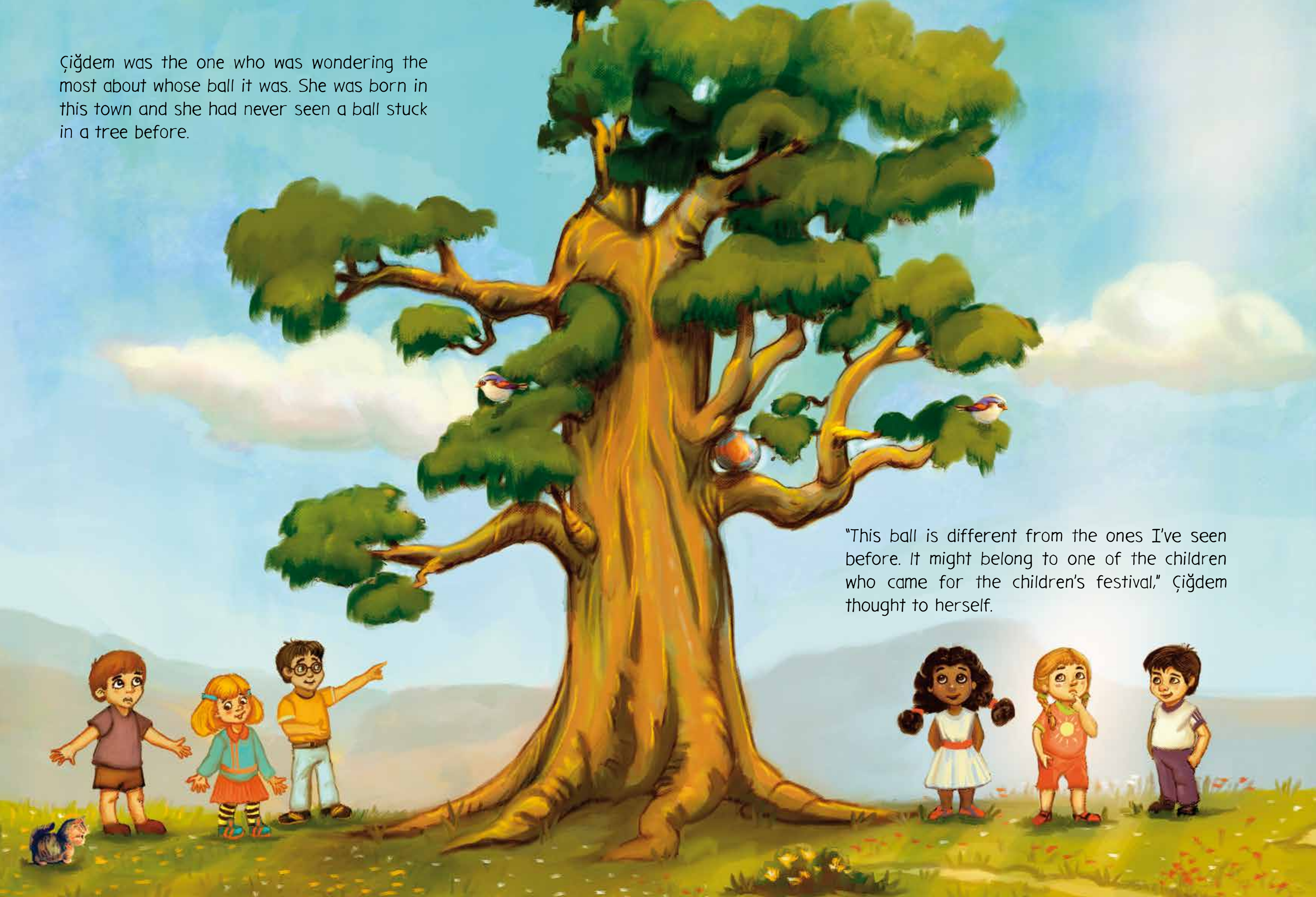
"What a strange ball!"

"Whose ball is it?"

"Does the ball have an owner?"

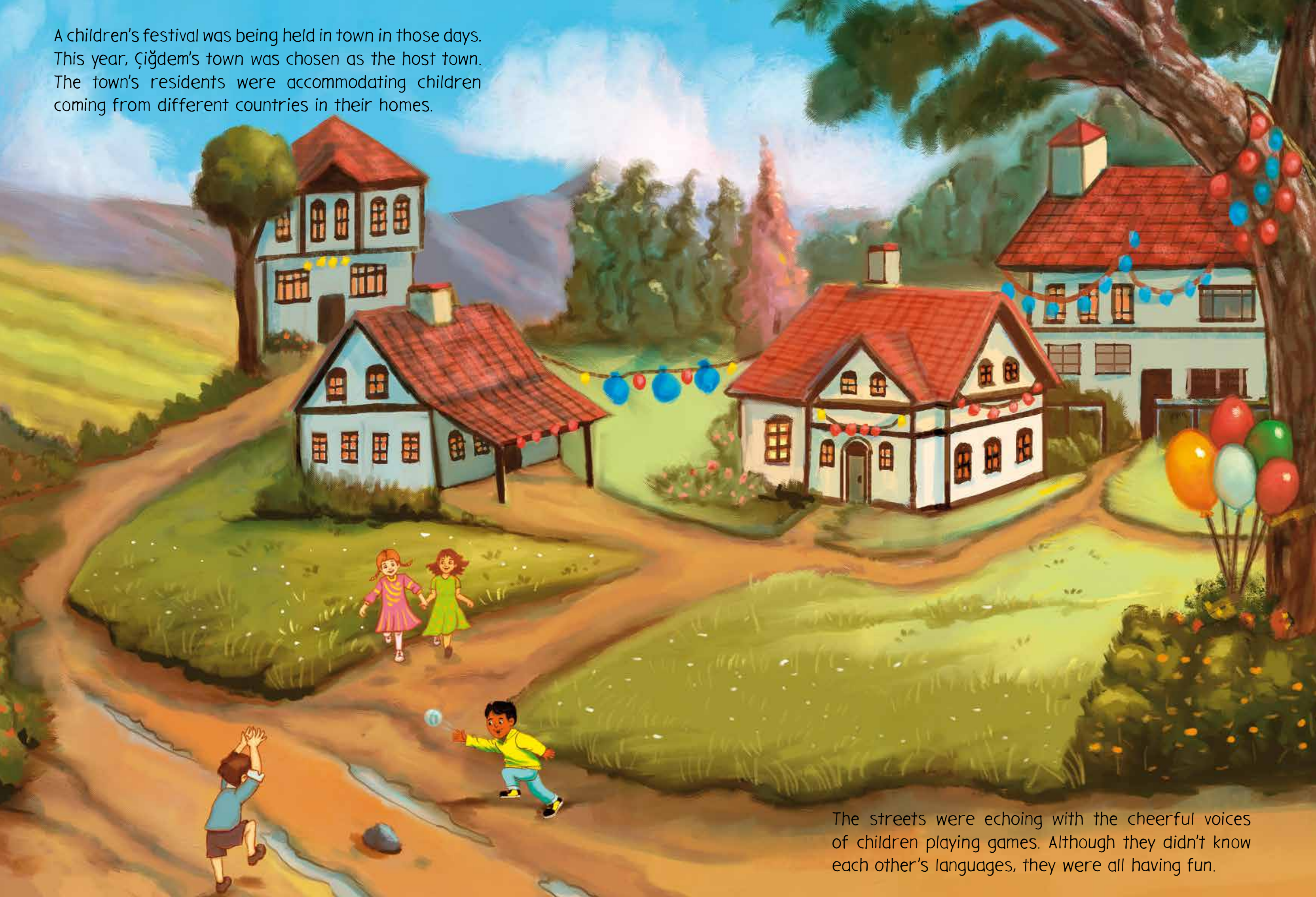
Everyone was curious to find out who the ball belonged to.

Çiğdem was the one who was wondering the most about whose ball it was. She was born in this town and she had never seen a ball stuck in a tree before.



"This ball is different from the ones I've seen before. It might belong to one of the children who came for the children's festival," Çiğdem thought to herself.

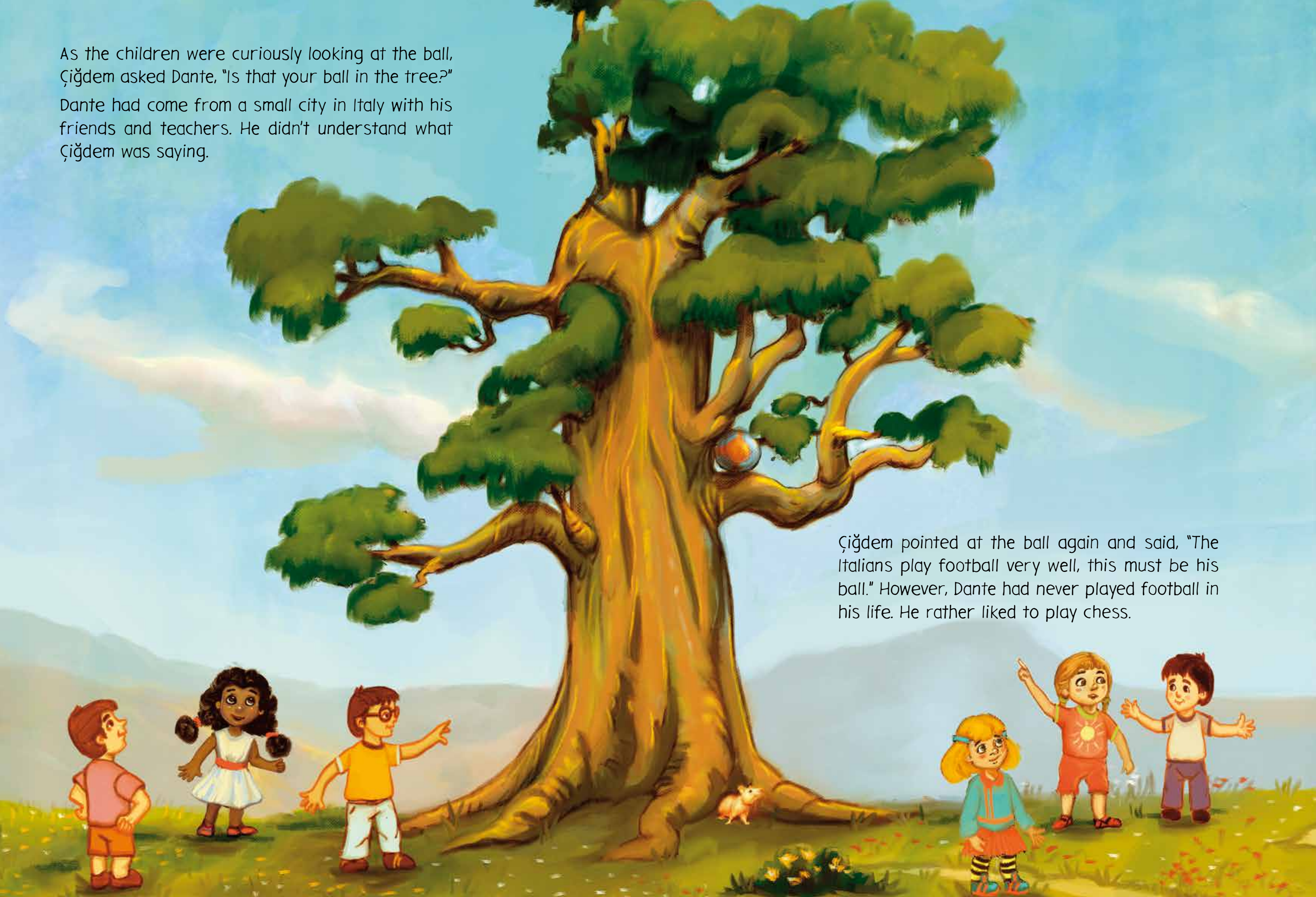
A children's festival was being held in town in those days. This year, ıgdem's town was chosen as the host town. The town's residents were accommodating children coming from different countries in their homes.



The streets were echoing with the cheerful voices of children playing games. Although they didn't know each other's languages, they were all having fun.

As the children were curiously looking at the ball, Çiğdem asked Dante, "Is that your ball in the tree?" Dante had come from a small city in Italy with his friends and teachers. He didn't understand what Çiğdem was saying.

Çiğdem pointed at the ball again and said, "The Italians play football very well, this must be his ball." However, Dante had never played football in his life. He rather liked to play chess.



Demet's mother, who was hosting Dante in her home, could speak Italian. Dante had told her that he never played football before. Many of his friends around him were also not very interested in football. When Demet explained this to the children, they were all confused. They thought that everyone in Italy loved football.



This way, it became clear that the ball didn't belong to Dante. The children continued looking around curiously. Ahmet said, "Maybe it is Toni's ball."

He was hosting Toni from America in his home and since he was learning English at school, they could easily understand each other. Toni had told him about how they played American football.





"American football is a little bit different from the football played here. Our ball is oval shaped. We can hit the ball with both our hands and feet," she explained.

In this case, the round ball on the tree still had no owner.

But it wasn't Toni's ball either. Although they played football as we know it in America, there was another game called American football. Toni told them about the football played in her country. The other children were listening with interest.



"Could it be Aamir's ball?" asked Çiğdem. Aamir came from Honduras. Aamir and his Honduran friends had just performed a dance show and the other children had watched them with admiration.



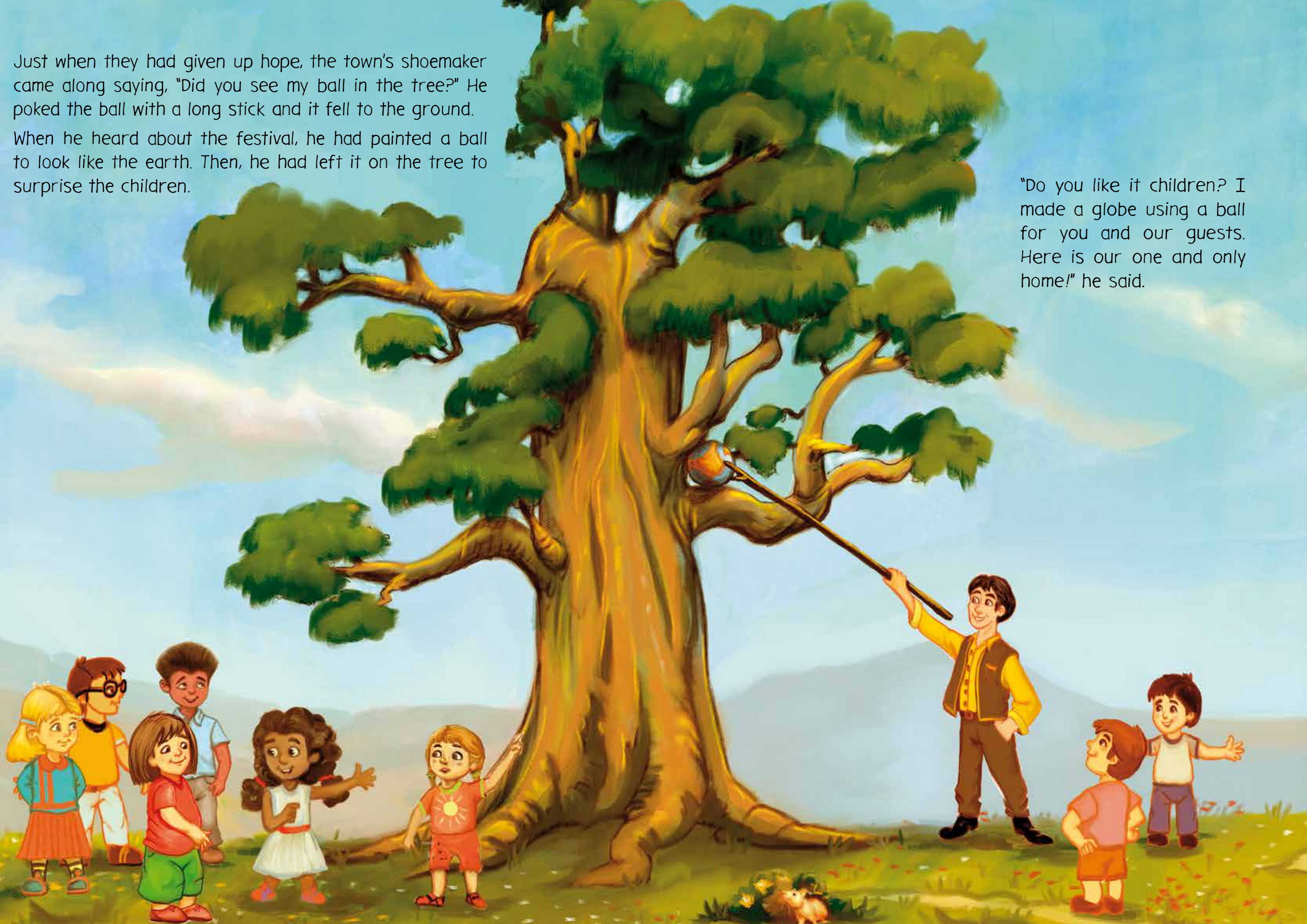
İpek, who was accommodating Aamir in her home, didn't speak Spanish. Nevertheless, she was able to quickly communicate with him using dictionaries and signs. Aamir shook his head to explain that the ball was not his.

The children still hadn't found out who the ball belonged to.



Just when they had given up hope, the town's shoemaker came along saying, "Did you see my ball in the tree?" He poked the ball with a long stick and it fell to the ground. When he heard about the festival, he had painted a ball to look like the earth. Then, he had left it on the tree to surprise the children.

"Do you like it children? I made a globe using a ball for you and our guests. Here is our one and only home!" he said.



The children started examining the ball with great interest. They found their countries on the globe and showed them with excitement.

"Italy is close to our country, I wish we could go and see it right now," said Çiğdem. Demet was very impressed by the Punta dance of Honduras. It was also very interesting to see that this country was situated by the ocean. "The ocean is so big," she thought.

The children spent hours studying the globe made from a ball. The shoemaker was watching them with pleasure. How nice was it for them to be able to cross the borders and come together here.



Ahmet asked the shoemaker, "Can we keep this ball?"

"Of course, it's your ball now. Go on and enjoy," said the shoemaker and threw the ball to the children.

With their ball, the children played games from many countries around the world all day long. They had fun and learned together.

