

What Hmong gardeners said about Orphan Boy the Farmer:

“It teaches you to be safe.”

“The message that you have is very important,
especially for the elders.”

“I liked the part about how you need to prepare according
to the story in order to harvest and it will help your
‘future.’”

“We like it because we are Hmong farmers. It teaches and
reminds us of our lives as farmers.”

“Yes, I liked it. Because I have been through that and have
experienced the hardship and can relate Tou Joua’s life.”

“Your story follows well with the ways of gardening.
It is good.”

“We are orphans ourselves, so we have learned that this story is good.”

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YANG

ORPHAN BOY THE FARMER

TUB NTSUAG, TUB UA TEB

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Orphan Boy the Farmer
Tub Ntsuag, Tub Ua Teb

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Orphan Boy the Farmer

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the Minnesota Rapid Agricultural Response Fund, for their generous funding which helped us bring these safety stories to Hmong farming and gardening families and communities, and

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Finally, we express our deepest gratitude to those who generously helped on all of the seemingly endless and unconnected parts of the project. Collectively, you helped to form the seed of the idea that led to the story *Orphan Boy the Farmer...*

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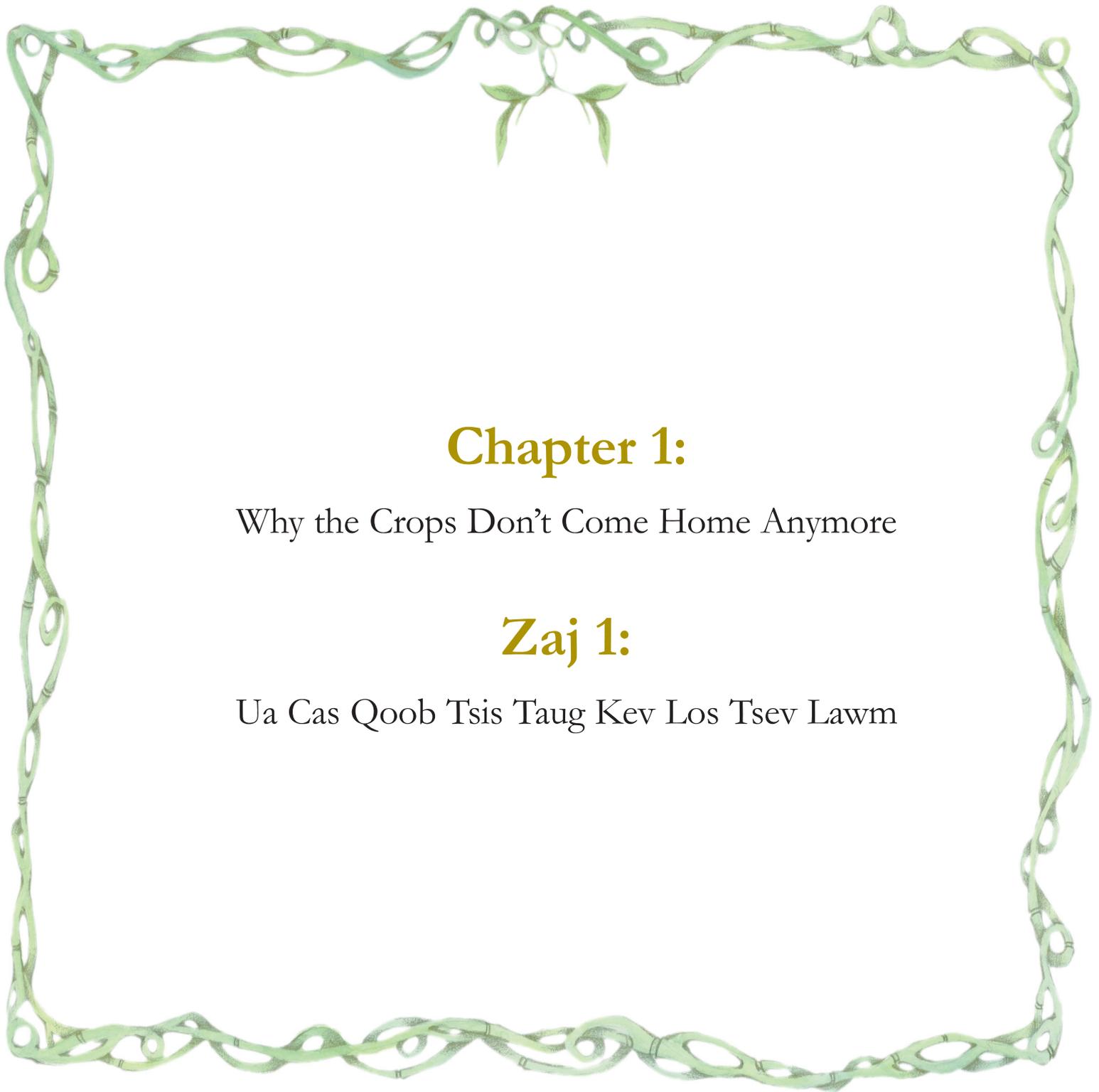
— *Michele Schermann and John Shutske*

Preface

As educators and researchers at a large land-grant university, this book represents a once-in-a-career culmination of five years of exciting work. When we began this adventure in 1999, we originally hoped to learn enough to provide unique safety and health education and information to Hmong farming families who work hard in the fields to supply vegetables, fruits, herbs, and flowers to the many open air markets throughout our region. Thanks to a generous grant from the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, we were given the opportunity to explore the richness of the Hmong culture and history, and to learn the ways in which Hmong parents and grandparents think about work, families, health, and the place of agriculture in their hearts. Additional funding from the Rapid Agricultural Response Fund helped us bring these safety stories to Hmong farming and gardening families and communities.

We are grateful to those who contributed their time, expertise, and wisdom to this book. We hope that the knowledge contained inside will help parents and families protect their loved ones from injuries and illnesses that stem from their hard work. We also hope that those who read this work will benefit from learning about the Hmong culture as we have.

— *Michele Schermann & John Shutske*



Chapter 1:

Why the Crops Don't Come Home Anymore

Zaj 1:

Ua Cas Qoob Tsis Taug Kev Los Tsev Lawm

Hmong people believe that at the beginning of the world, Lou Tou and his wife, Ntsee Tye, came out to the world through a crack in the mountains. When they came out, there were no plants or animals on the earth. They brought with them a magical flower that gave them seeds for food. As they explored this new world, they ate some of the seeds from the flower when they were hungry, while planting most of them all over the place.

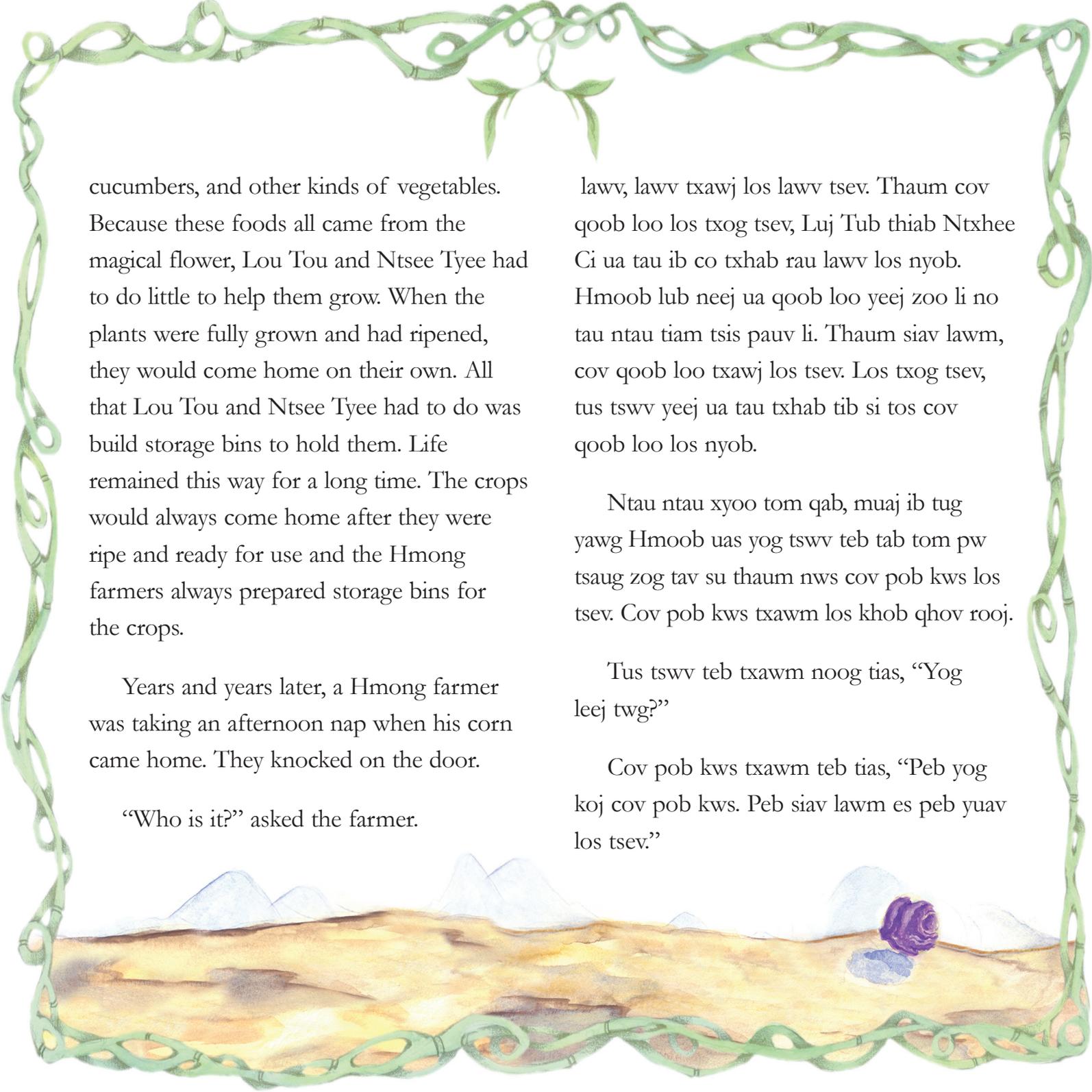
In a short time, the seeds that they spread throughout the world sprouted and grew into all kinds of plants. Among the plants that came from the seeds were rice, corn,



Hmoob ntseeg tias puag thaum ub, Luj Tub thiab Ntxhee Ci tawm hauv roob pob tsuas los rau ntiaj teb no. Thaum nkawv tawm los txog, ntiaj teb qhuav qhawv tsis muaj tsiaj txhu li. Nkawv nqa tau ib lub paj nrog nkawv xwb. Nkawv txawm los ncig saib xyuas ntiaj teb. Thaum nkawv tshaib plab, nkawv noj cov noob paj. Nkawv ncig txog qhov twg, nkawv kuj muab cov noob paj w rau qhov ntawd.

Tsis ntev tom qab, cov noob paj txawm loj tuaj ua txhua tsav txhua yam tsiaj txhu. Cov noob paj ntawd kuj loj tuaj ua tau pob kws, dib, thiab txhua yam qoob loo. Vim cov qoob loo no los ntawm lub paj los, lawv txawj tuaj





cucumbers, and other kinds of vegetables. Because these foods all came from the magical flower, Lou Tou and Ntsee Tye had to do little to help them grow. When the plants were fully grown and had ripened, they would come home on their own. All that Lou Tou and Ntsee Tye had to do was build storage bins to hold them. Life remained this way for a long time. The crops would always come home after they were ripe and ready for use and the Hmong farmers always prepared storage bins for the crops.

Years and years later, a Hmong farmer was taking an afternoon nap when his corn came home. They knocked on the door.

“Who is it?” asked the farmer.

lawv, lawv txawj los lawv tsev. Thaum cov qoob loo los txog tsev, Luj Tub thiab Ntxhee Ci ua tau ib co txhab rau lawv los nyob. Hmoob lub neej ua qoob loo yeej zoo li no tau ntau tiam tsis pauv li. Thaum siav lawm, cov qoob loo txawj los tsev. Los txog tsev, tus tswv yeej ua tau txhab tib si tos cov qoob loo los nyob.

Ntau ntau xyoo tom qab, muaj ib tug yawg Hmoob uas yog tswv teb tab tom pw tsaug zog tav su thaum nws cov pob kws los tsev. Cov pob kws txawm los khob qhov rooj.

Tus tswv teb txawm noog tias, “Yog leej twg?”

Cov pob kws txawm teb tias, “Peb yog koj cov pob kws. Peb siav lawm es peb yuav los tsev.”

“We are your corn. We are ripe and ready for your use so we have come home,” answered the corn.

“Why so soon? I’m not ready for you. I haven’t built a storage bin for you yet,” replied the farmer.

“But we are ripe and ready. If we stay in the field any longer, we will go bad and you will not be able to use us,” answered the corn.

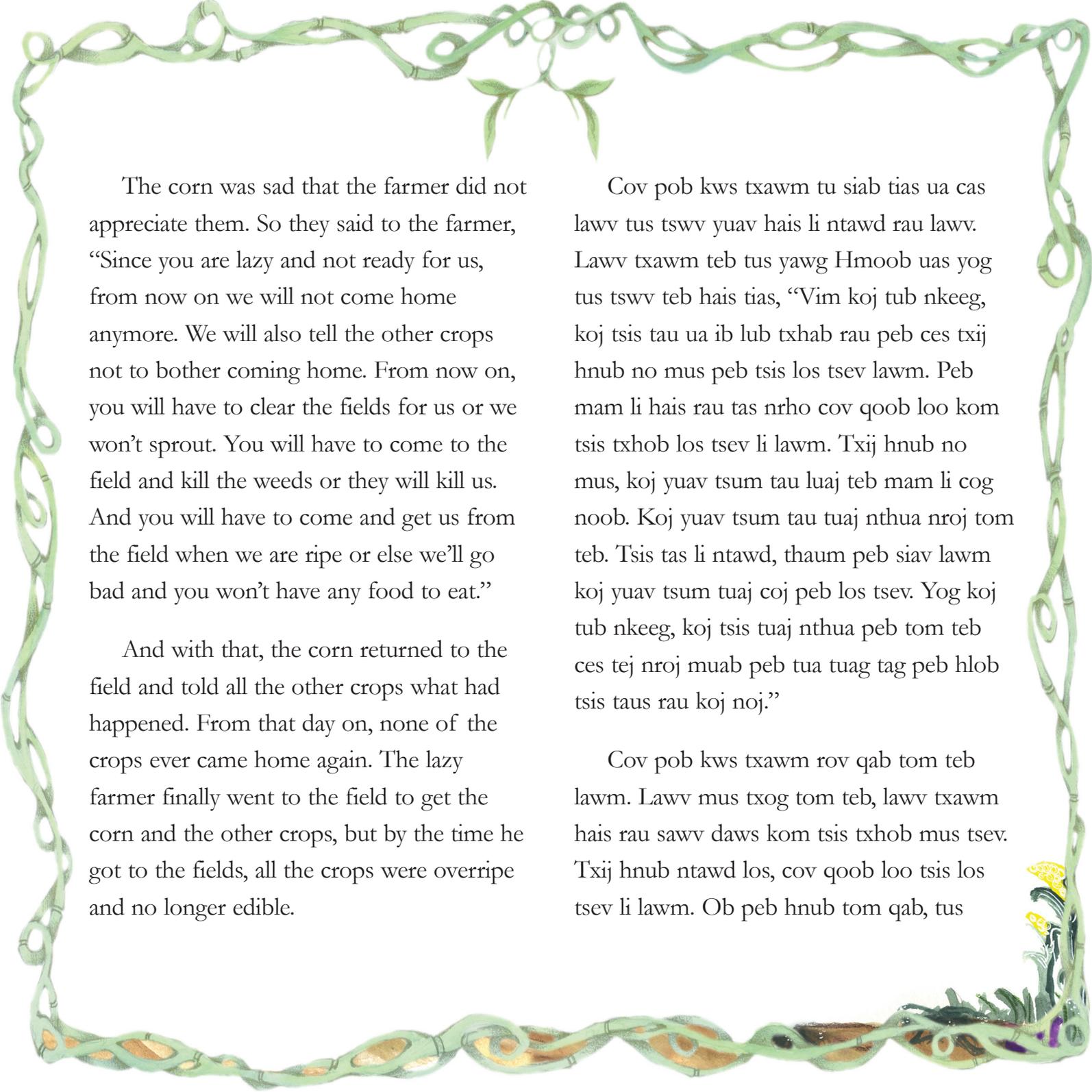
The farmer yelled out, “Go back to the fields. I’ll come and get you when I am ready.”

Tus tsvv teb txawm teb tias, “Ua cas yuav los ntov tas npaud? Kuv twb tsis tau ua txhab rau nej li.”

Cov pob kws hais tias, “Peb twb siav tas lawm. Yog peb tseem nyob tom teb ntev me ntsis thiab ces peb yuav tsis zoo noj lawm.”

Tus tsvv teb txawm cem tias, “Cia li rov qab mus tom teb. Kuv khoom thaum twg kuv mam li tuaj koj nej los tsev.”



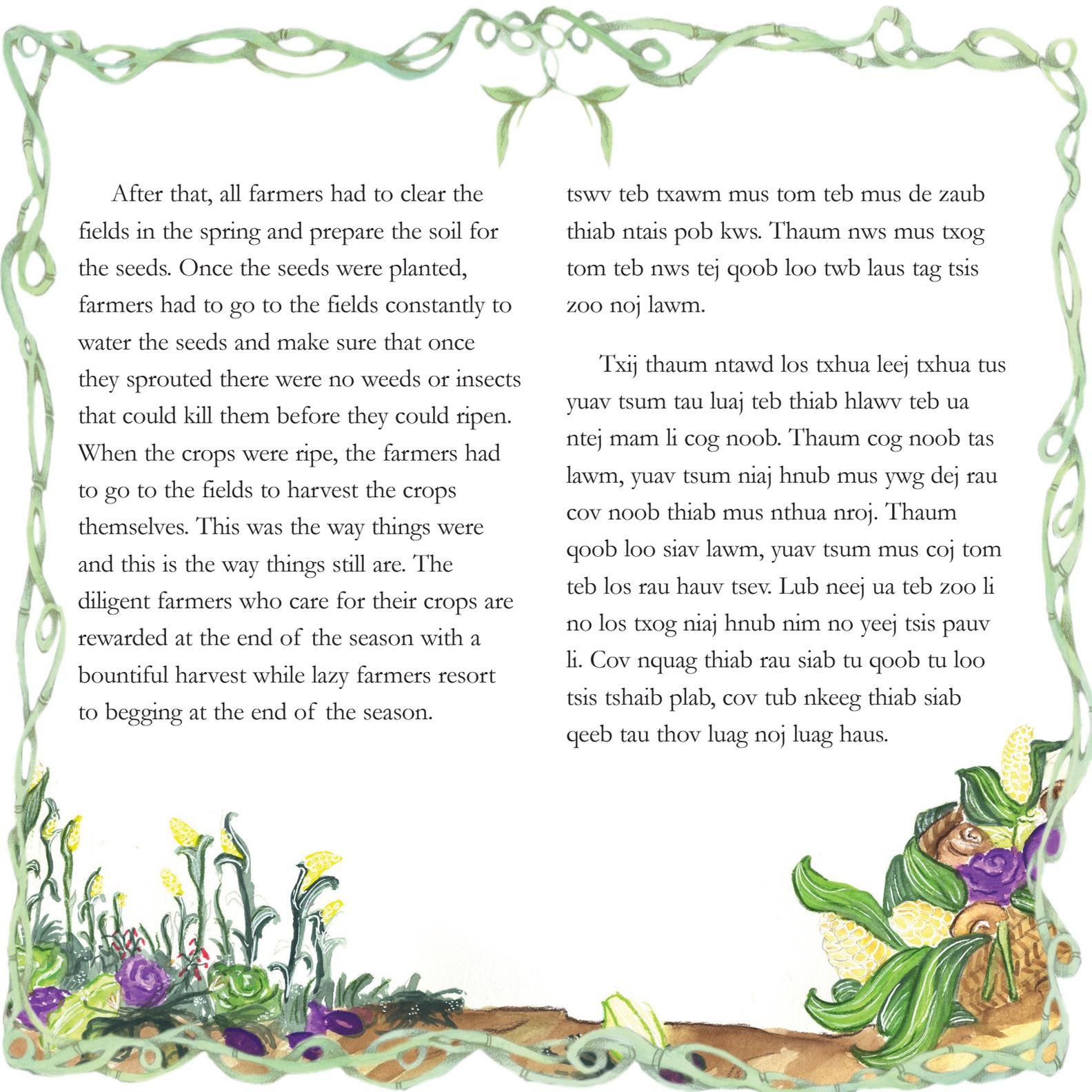


The corn was sad that the farmer did not appreciate them. So they said to the farmer, “Since you are lazy and not ready for us, from now on we will not come home anymore. We will also tell the other crops not to bother coming home. From now on, you will have to clear the fields for us or we won’t sprout. You will have to come to the field and kill the weeds or they will kill us. And you will have to come and get us from the field when we are ripe or else we’ll go bad and you won’t have any food to eat.”

And with that, the corn returned to the field and told all the other crops what had happened. From that day on, none of the crops ever came home again. The lazy farmer finally went to the field to get the corn and the other crops, but by the time he got to the fields, all the crops were overripe and no longer edible.

Cov pob kws txawm tu siab tias ua cas lawv tus tswv yuav hais li ntawd rau lawv. Lawv txawm teb tus yawg Hmoob uas yog tus tswv teb hais tias, “Vim koj tub nkeeg, koj tsis tau ua ib lub txhab rau peb ces txij hnuv no mus peb tsis los tsev lawm. Peb mam li hais rau tas nrho cov qoob loo kom tsis txhob los tsev li lawm. Txij hnuv no mus, koj yuav tsum tau luaj teb mam li cog noob. Koj yuav tsum tau tuaj nthua nroj tom teb. Tsis tas li ntawd, thaum peb siav lawm koj yuav tsum tuaj coj peb los tsev. Yog koj tub nkeeg, koj tsis tuaj nthua peb tom teb ces tej nroj muab peb tua tuag tag peb hlob tsis taus rau koj noj.”

Cov pob kws txawm rov qab tom teb lawm. Lawv mus txog tom teb, lawv txawm hais rau sawv daws kom tsis txhob mus tsev. Txij hnuv ntawd los, cov qoob loo tsis los tsev li lawm. Ob peb hnuv tom qab, tus



After that, all farmers had to clear the fields in the spring and prepare the soil for the seeds. Once the seeds were planted, farmers had to go to the fields constantly to water the seeds and make sure that once they sprouted there were no weeds or insects that could kill them before they could ripen. When the crops were ripe, the farmers had to go to the fields to harvest the crops themselves. This was the way things were and this is the way things still are. The diligent farmers who care for their crops are rewarded at the end of the season with a bountiful harvest while lazy farmers resort to begging at the end of the season.

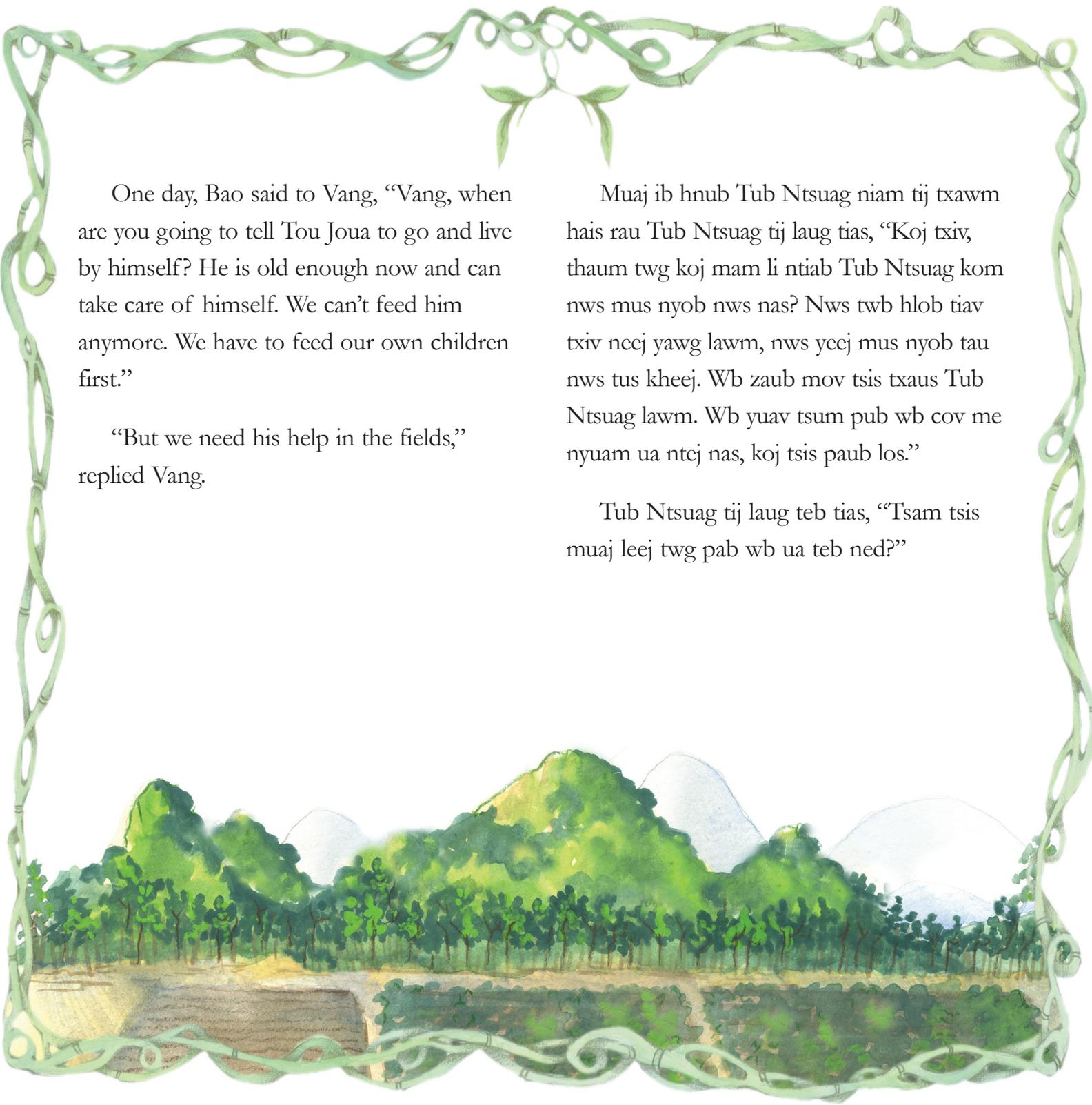
tswv teb txawm mus tom teb mus de zaub thiab ntais pob kws. Thaum nws mus txog tom teb nws tej qoob loo twb laus tag tsis zoo noj lawm.

Txij thaum ntawd los txhua leej txhua tus yuav tsum tau luaj teb thiab hlawv teb ua ntej mam li cog noob. Thaum cog noob tas lawm, yuav tsum niaj hnuv mus ywg dej rau cov noob thiab mus nthua nroj. Thaum qoob loo siav lawm, yuav tsum mus coj tom teb los rau hauv tsev. Lub neej ua teb zoo li no los txog niaj hnuv nim no yeej tsis pauv li. Cov nquag thiab rau siab tu qoob tu loo tsis tshaib plab, cov tub nkeeg thiab siab qeeb tau thov luag noj luag haus.

Many, many years later, there lived a boy named Tou Joua. Since his parents died five years ago, Tou Joua had lived with his older brother, Vang, and his sister-in-law, Bao, helping them with their farm. Bao did not like Tou Joua living and eating with them. She felt that he was eating too much of their food and taking too much space in their little house. After all, they had four children of their own and their oldest son was getting big enough to do all the things that Tou Joua did around the house and the farm.

Ntau ntau xyoo tom qab, muaj ib tug tub Hmoob hu ua Tub Ntsuag. Tub Ntsuag nrog nws tij laug Vaj thiab niam tij nkawv nyob. Txij thaum Tub Ntsuag niam thiab txiv tau tuag tsib xyoo tas los, Tub Ntsuag yeej nyob nrog nws tij laug thiab niam tij pab nkawv ua nkawv cov teb. Tiam sis Tub Ntsuag tus niam tij yeej tsis nyiam Tub Ntsuag hlo li. Raws li niam tij xav, Tub Ntsuag noj mov loj dhau lawm. Tsis tas li ntawd, lawv lub tsev me me twb tsis txaus nkawv plaub tug me nyuam nyob kiag li. Nkawv tus tub hlob twb loj npaum li Tub Ntsuag lawm thiab nws yeej ua tau Tub Ntsuag tej hauj lwm lawm.





One day, Bao said to Vang, “Vang, when are you going to tell Tou Joua to go and live by himself? He is old enough now and can take care of himself. We can’t feed him anymore. We have to feed our own children first.”

“But we need his help in the fields,” replied Vang.

Muaj ib hnuv Tub Ntsuag niam tij txawm hais rau Tub Ntsuag tij laug tias, “Koj txiv, thaum twg koj mam li ntiab Tub Ntsuag kom nws mus nyob nws nas? Nws twb hlob tiav txiv neej yawg lawm, nws yeej mus nyob tau nws tus kheej. Wb zaub mov tsis txaus Tub Ntsuag lawm. Wb yuav tsum pub wb cov me nyuam ua ntej nas, koj tsis paub los.”

Tub Ntsuag tij laug teb tias, “Tsam tsis muaj leej twg pab wb ua teb ned?”



Bao snapped back, “Yes, but he eats more than he helps. Besides my son Tou Keng can do all those things now. You tell him to move out today, or else...”

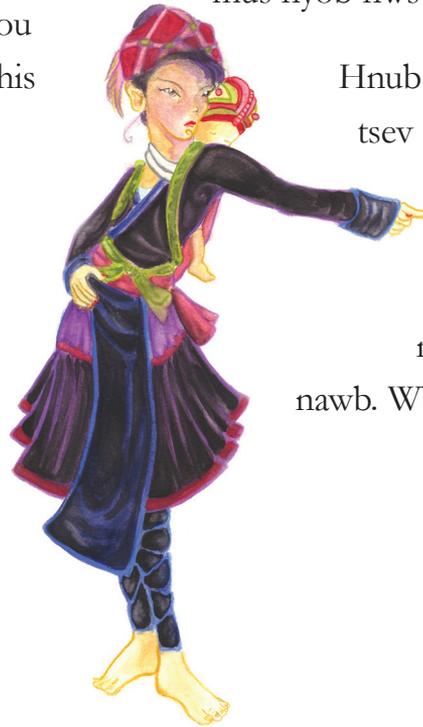
“Yes, yes, you are right. He is old enough now to live by himself and farm his own land,” answered Vang.

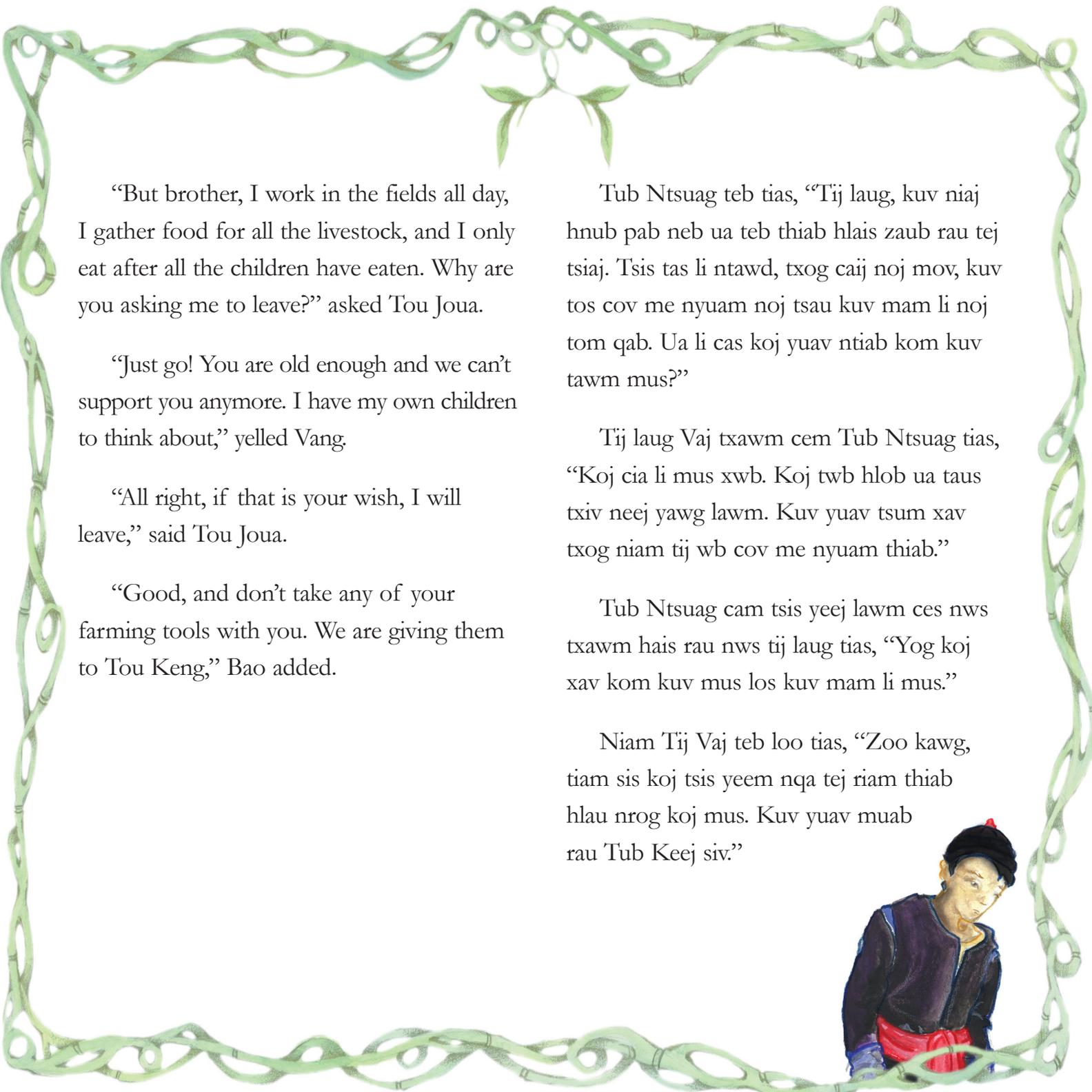
That afternoon when Tou Joua came home for lunch Vang told him, “Tou Joua this will be your last meal in this house. You will have to go build your own house and to farm your own land. We can’t support you anymore.”

Niam tij teb hlo, “Yog, tiam sis Tub Ntsuag noj ntau tshaj li nws pab. Tsis tas li ntauw, kuv tus Tub Keej yeej ua tau tej hauj lwm ntauw lawm. Hnub no koj cia li ntiab kom Tub Ntsuag khiav mus tсам ces...”

Tub Ntsuag tij laug cam tsis yeej lawm, nws txawm hais tias, “Yog, koj hais yog lawm. Tub Ntsuag yeej tiav txiv lawm. Nws mus nyob nws tau lawm.”

Hnub ntawv thaum Tub Ntsuag los tsev los noj su, tij laug Vaj txawm hais rau Tub Ntsuag tias, “Tub Ntsuag, koj noj mov tas ces koj cia li mus nrhiav koj vaj koj tsev nyob nawb. Wb pab tsis tau koj lawm.”





“But brother, I work in the fields all day, I gather food for all the livestock, and I only eat after all the children have eaten. Why are you asking me to leave?” asked Tou Joua.

“Just go! You are old enough and we can’t support you anymore. I have my own children to think about,” yelled Vang.

“All right, if that is your wish, I will leave,” said Tou Joua.

“Good, and don’t take any of your farming tools with you. We are giving them to Tou Keng,” Bao added.

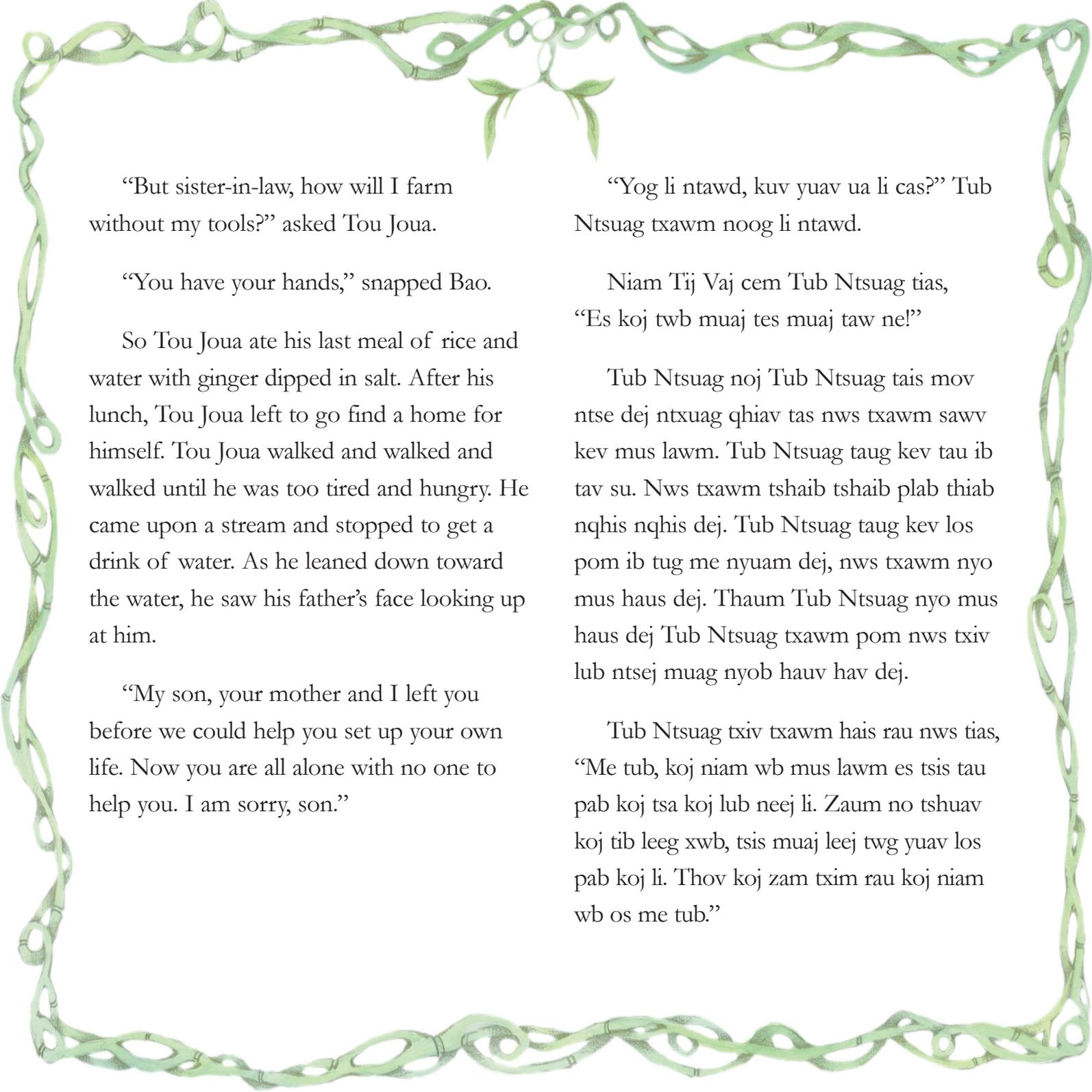
Tub Ntsuag teb tias, “Tij laug, kuv niaj hnuv pab neb ua teb thiab hlais zaub rau tej tsiaj. Tsis tas li ntawd, txog caij noj mov, kuv tos cov me nyuam noj tsau kuv mam li noj tom qab. Ua li cas koj yuav ntiab kom kuv tawm mus?”

Tij laug Vaj txawm cem Tub Ntsuag tias, “Koj cia li mus xwb. Koj twb hlob ua taus txiv neej yawg lawm. Kuv yuav tsum xav txog niam tij wb cov me nyuam thiab.”

Tub Ntsuag cam tsis yeej lawm ces nws txawm hais rau nws tij laug tias, “Yog koj xav kom kuv mus los kuv mam li mus.”

Niam Tij Vaj teb loo tias, “Zoo kawg, tiam sis koj tsis yeem nqa tej riam thiab hlau nrog koj mus. Kuv yuav muab rau Tub Keej siv.”





“But sister-in-law, how will I farm without my tools?” asked Tou Joua.

“You have your hands,” snapped Bao.

So Tou Joua ate his last meal of rice and water with ginger dipped in salt. After his lunch, Tou Joua left to go find a home for himself. Tou Joua walked and walked and walked until he was too tired and hungry. He came upon a stream and stopped to get a drink of water. As he leaned down toward the water, he saw his father’s face looking up at him.

“My son, your mother and I left you before we could help you set up your own life. Now you are all alone with no one to help you. I am sorry, son.”

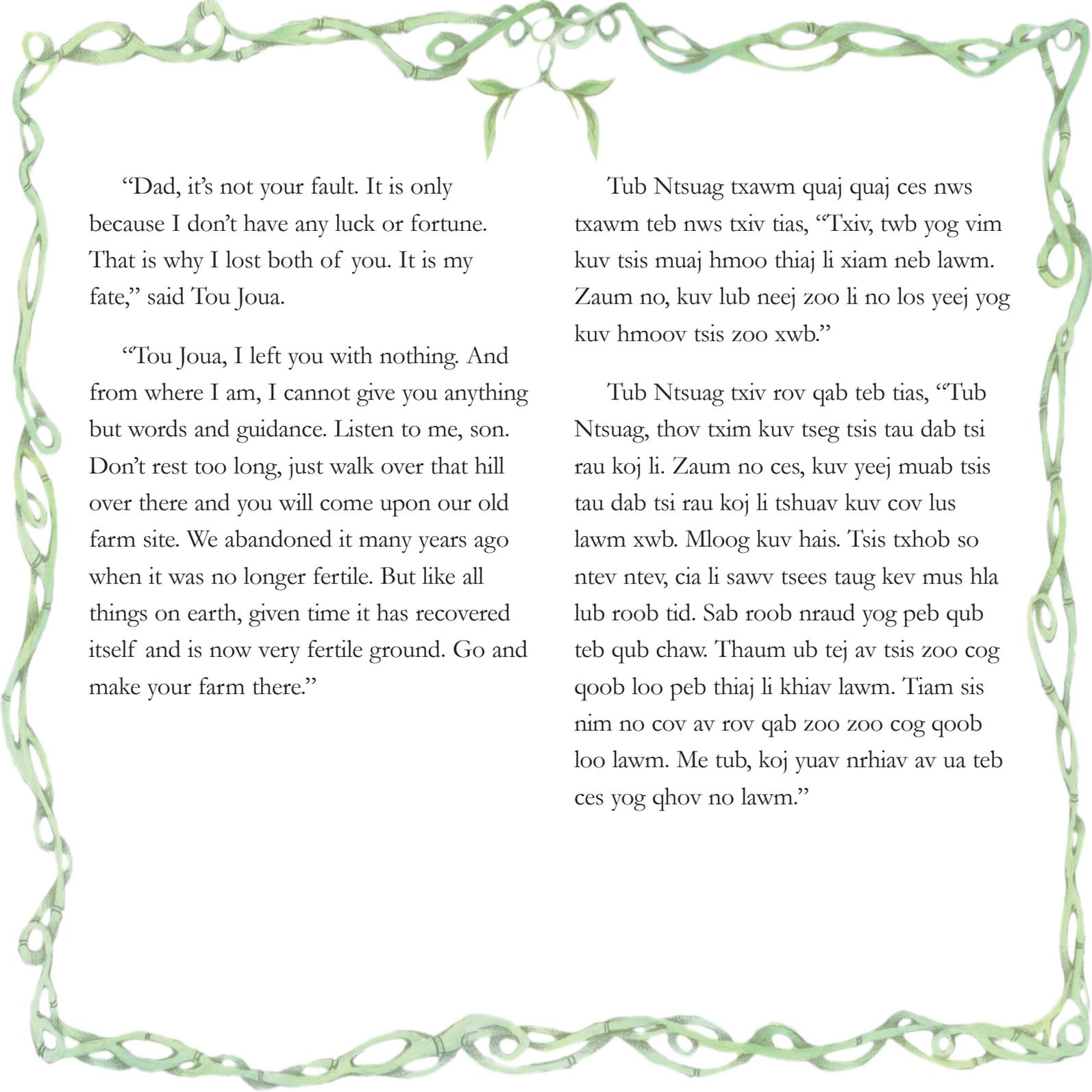
“Yog li ntawd, kuv yuav ua li cas?” Tub Ntsuag txawm noog li ntawd.

Niam Tij Vaj cem Tub Ntsuag tias, “Es koj twb muaj tes muaj taw ne!”

Tub Ntsuag noj Tub Ntsuag tais mov ntse dej ntxuag qhiav tas nws txawm sawv kev mus lawm. Tub Ntsuag taug kev tau ib tav su. Nws txawm tshaib tshaib plab thiab nqhis nqhis dej. Tub Ntsuag taug kev los pom ib tug me nyuam dej, nws txawm nyo mus haus dej. Thaum Tub Ntsuag nyo mus haus dej Tub Ntsuag txawm pom nws txiv lub ntsej muag nyob hauv hav dej.

Tub Ntsuag txiv txawm hais rau nws tias, “Me tub, koj niam wb mus lawm es tsis tau pab koj tsa koj lub neej li. Zaum no tshuav koj tib leeg xwb, tsis muaj leej twg yuav los pab koj li. Thov koj zam txim rau koj niam wb os me tub.”



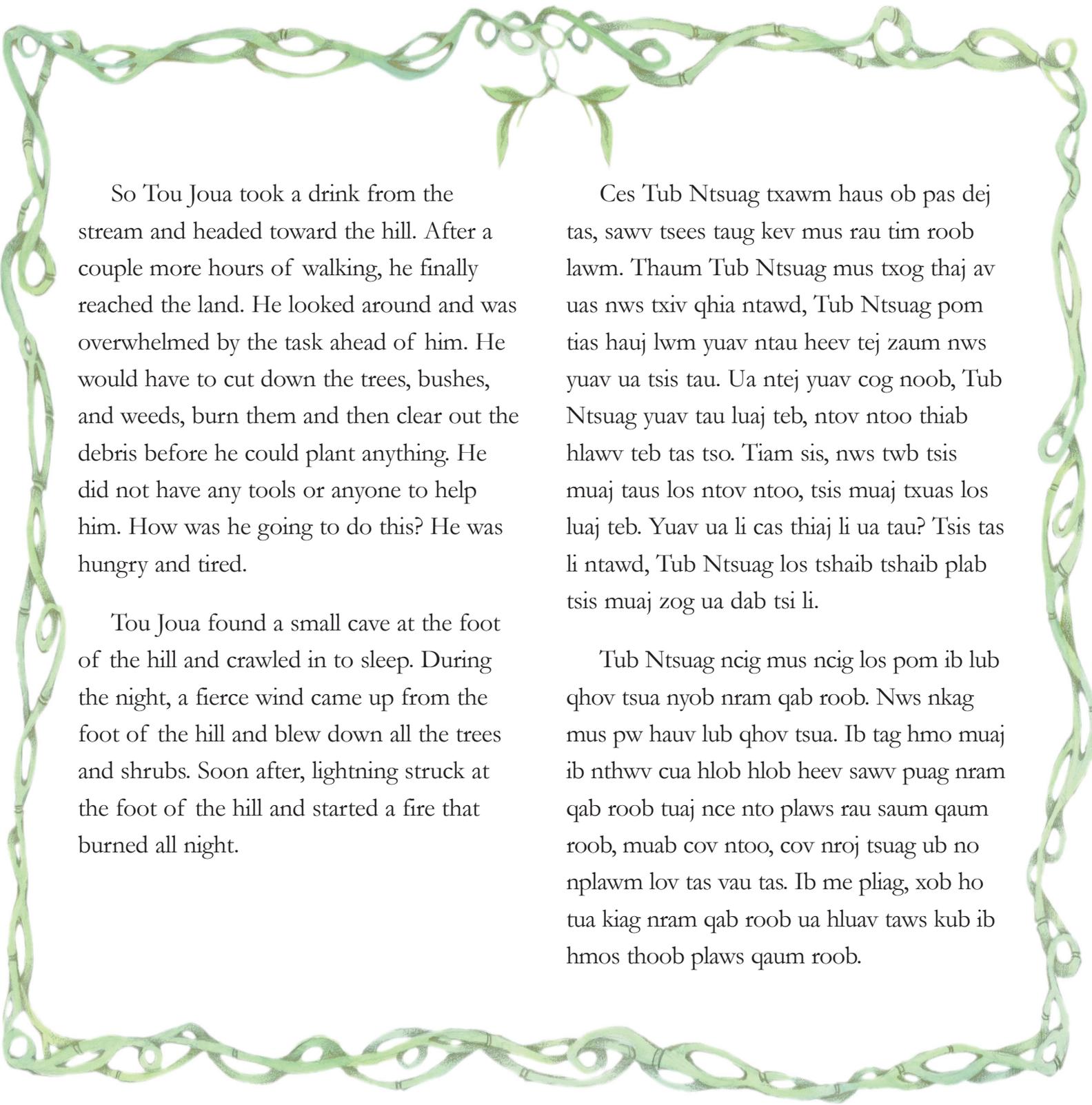


“Dad, it’s not your fault. It is only because I don’t have any luck or fortune. That is why I lost both of you. It is my fate,” said Tou Joua.

“Tou Joua, I left you with nothing. And from where I am, I cannot give you anything but words and guidance. Listen to me, son. Don’t rest too long, just walk over that hill over there and you will come upon our old farm site. We abandoned it many years ago when it was no longer fertile. But like all things on earth, given time it has recovered itself and is now very fertile ground. Go and make your farm there.”

Tub Ntsuag txawm quaj quaj ces nws txawm teb nws txiv tias, “Txiv, twb yog vim kuv tsis muaj hmoo thiaj li xiam neb lawm. Zaum no, kuv lub neej zoo li no los yeej yog kuv hmoov tsis zoo xwb.”

Tub Ntsuag txiv rov qab teb tias, “Tub Ntsuag, thov txim kuv tseg tsis tau dab tsi rau koj li. Zaum no ces, kuv yeej muab tsis tau dab tsi rau koj li tshuav kuv cov lus lawm xwb. Mloog kuv hais. Tsis txhob so ntev ntev, cia li sawv tsees taug kev mus hla lub roob tid. Sab roob nraud yog peb qub teb qub chaw. Thaum ub tej av tsis zoo cog qoob loo peb thiaj li khiav lawm. Tiam sis nim no cov av rov qab zoo zoo cog qoob loo lawm. Me tub, koj yuav nrhiav av ua teb ces yog qhov no lawm.”



So Tou Joua took a drink from the stream and headed toward the hill. After a couple more hours of walking, he finally reached the land. He looked around and was overwhelmed by the task ahead of him. He would have to cut down the trees, bushes, and weeds, burn them and then clear out the debris before he could plant anything. He did not have any tools or anyone to help him. How was he going to do this? He was hungry and tired.

Tou Joua found a small cave at the foot of the hill and crawled in to sleep. During the night, a fierce wind came up from the foot of the hill and blew down all the trees and shrubs. Soon after, lightning struck at the foot of the hill and started a fire that burned all night.

Ces Tub Ntsuag txawm haus ob pas dej tas, sawv tsees taug kev mus rau tim roob lawm. Thaum Tub Ntsuag mus txog thaj av uas nws txiv qhia ntawd, Tub Ntsuag pom tias hauj lwm yuav ntau heev tej zaum nws yuav ua tsis tau. Ua ntej yuav cog noob, Tub Ntsuag yuav tau luaj teb, ntov ntoo thiab hlawv teb tas tso. Tiam sis, nws twb tsis muaj taus los ntov ntoo, tsis muaj txuas los luaj teb. Yuav ua li cas thiaj li ua tau? Tsis tas li ntawd, Tub Ntsuag los tshaib tshaib plab tsis muaj zog ua dab tsi li.

Tub Ntsuag ncig mus ncig los pom ib lub qhov tsua nyob nram qab roob. Nws nkag mus pw hauv lub qhov tsua. Ib tag hmo muaj ib nthwv cua hlob hlob heev sawv puag nram qab roob tuaj nce nto plaws rau saum qaum roob, muab cov ntoo, cov nroj tsuag ub no nplawm lov tas vau tas. Ib me pliag, xob ho tua kiag nram qab roob ua hluav taws kub ib hmos thoob plaws qaum roob.

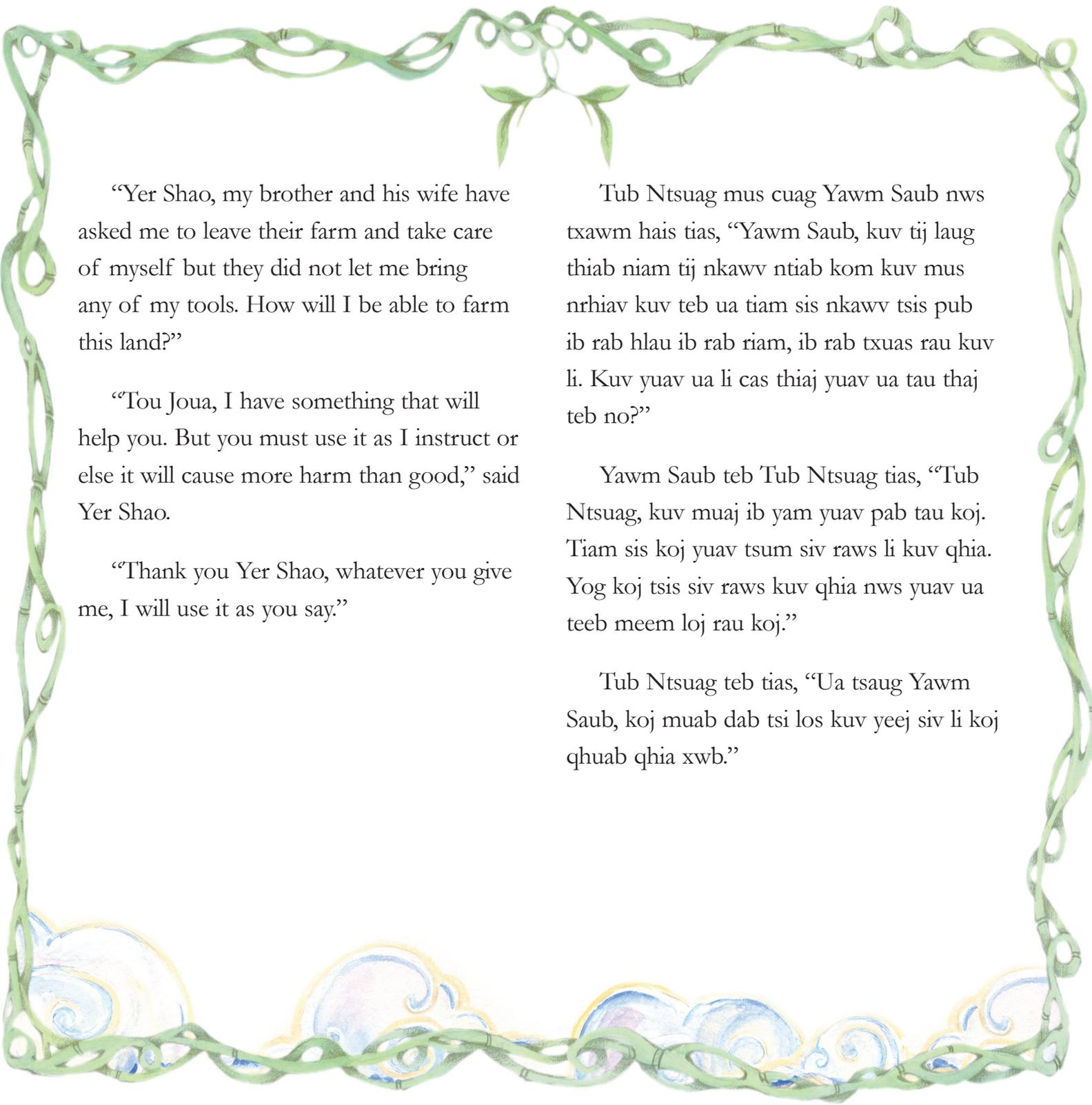
In the morning, when Tou Joua woke up, the whole hillside had been cleared. The land waited for him to use it.

“Thank you father. You have seen my misfortune and have helped me. But how will I till this land by myself — and without my farming tools?” Tou Joua thought for a long while but could not come up with anything. So he decided to go ask Yer Shao for advice.

Tag kis Tub Ntsuag sawv los xyuas ua cas roob du lug tsis muaj hmab tsis muaj ntoo li lawm. Thaj av tsuas yog nyob tos Tub Ntsuag cog noob xwb.

Tub Ntsuag zoo siab heev nws txawm hais tias, “Ua koj tsuag kuv txiv. Koj tau pom kuv kev txom nyem koj thiaj li pab kuv li no. Tiam sis kuv yuav ua tau thaj teb no li cas? Kuv twb tsis muaj tej cuab yeej ua teb li ne!” Tub Ntsuag xav xav ib tag kig tsis muaj tswv yim li. Ces nws txawm txiav txim siab mus cuag Yawm Saub.





“Yer Shao, my brother and his wife have asked me to leave their farm and take care of myself but they did not let me bring any of my tools. How will I be able to farm this land?”

“Tou Joua, I have something that will help you. But you must use it as I instruct or else it will cause more harm than good,” said Yer Shao.

“Thank you Yer Shao, whatever you give me, I will use it as you say.”

Tub Ntsuag mus cuag Yawm Saub nws txawm hais tias, “Yawm Saub, kuv tij laug thiab niam tij nkawv ntiab kom kuv mus nrhiav kuv teb ua tiam sis nkawv tsis pub ib rab hlau ib rab riam, ib rab txuas rau kuv li. Kuv yuav ua li cas thiaj yuav ua tau thaj teb no?”

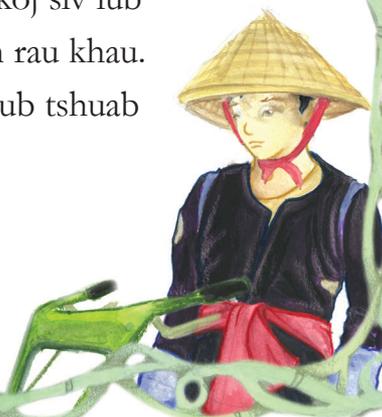
Yawm Saub teb Tub Ntsuag tias, “Tub Ntsuag, kuv muaj ib yam yuav pab tau koj. Tiam sis koj yuav tsum siv raws li kuv qhia. Yog koj tsis siv raws kuv qhia nws yuav ua teeb meem loj rau koj.”

Tub Ntsuag teb tias, “Ua tsaug Yawm Saub, koj muab dab tsi los kuv yeej siv li koj qhuab qhia xwb.”

“Because you are alone, this machine, called a roto-tiller, will help you till more land in a day than you could in three days without it. This is a powerful machine. You are tall and strong enough to use it, but you must never let anyone smaller and shorter than you use it. It doesn’t matter if you’re a man or a woman; you may use it as long as the handles are not above your chest and you can turn the tiller easily at the end of the rows. Next, you must always wear shoes. The tines are sharp; with one wrong move you could lose a foot or a toe. Keep your hands and feet away from the tines at all times.



Yawm Saub
txawm hais rau
Tub Ntsuag tias,
“Vim muaj koj tib
leeg xwb, lub tshuab
lajj teb no yuav pab koj
ntau heev. Koj siv lub tshuab lajj teb no, ib
hnuv koj yuav lajj tau npaum li koj siv nyuj
siv twm lajj peb hnuv. Lub tshuab no yog ib
lub tshuab muaj zog heev. Koj siab thiab
muaj zog txaus siv lub tshuab no, tiam sis
tsis yeem muab rau ib tug neeg twg uas qis
tshaj koj thiab tsis muaj zog npaum koj. Poj
niam txiv neej los xij peem, yog tus cav tes
ntawm lub tshuab no qis dua nws nruab siab
ces nws thiaj li muaj peev xwm siv tau. Tsis
tas li ntawd, thaum twg koj siv lub
tshuab no koj yuav tsum rau khau.
Cov kaus hniav ntawm lub tshuab





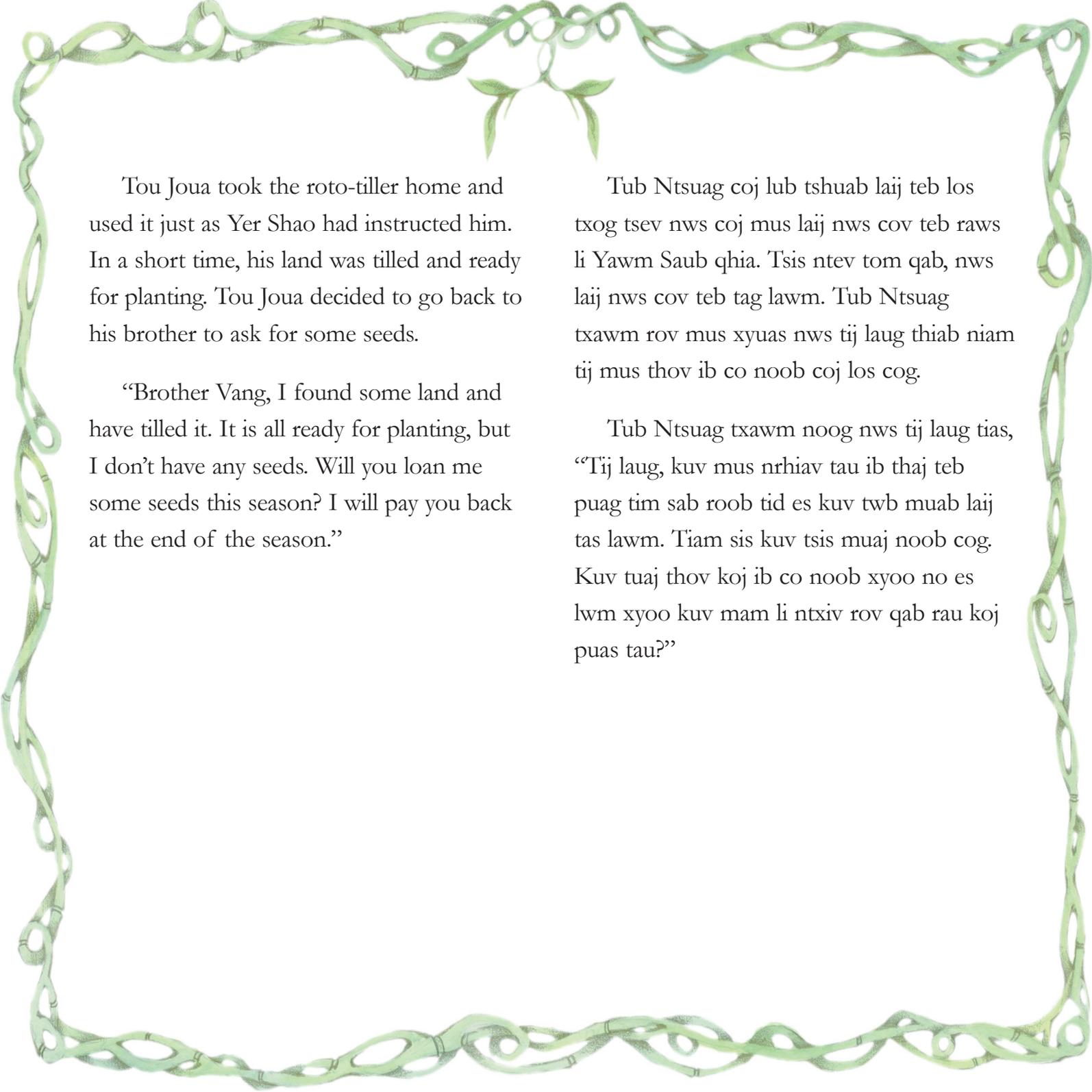
If you need to clean it, turn it off before doing so. Lastly, because it is a powerful machine, you will tire easily and faster than usual. Take a break every so often to regain your strength and control. If you are tired, the machine can get out of control and hurt you.”

“Yer Shao, thank you for the roto-tiller. I will use the machine as you have instructed,” Tou Joua said gratefully.

no ntse heev, yog koj tsis ceev faj yuav txiav koj tes txiav koj taw. Tsis txhob pub koj tej tes taw mus ze cov kaus hniav kiag li. Muab lub tshuab tua ua ntej koj mus tshem ub tshem no ntawm cov kaus hniav. Vim lub tshuab no muaj zog heev, thaum koj siv laij teb koj yuav nkees sai heev. Thaum nkees me ntsis lawm, yuav tsum so kom muaj zog li qub mam li rov qab laij dua. Yog koj nkees koj tsis so ces lub tshuab yuav muab koj hai ua koj raug mob.”

Tub Ntsuag mloog zoo zoo tag ces nws teb Yawm Saub tias, “Ua tsaug koj tau muab lub tshuab laij teb no rau kuv. Kuv mam siv raws li koj qhia.”



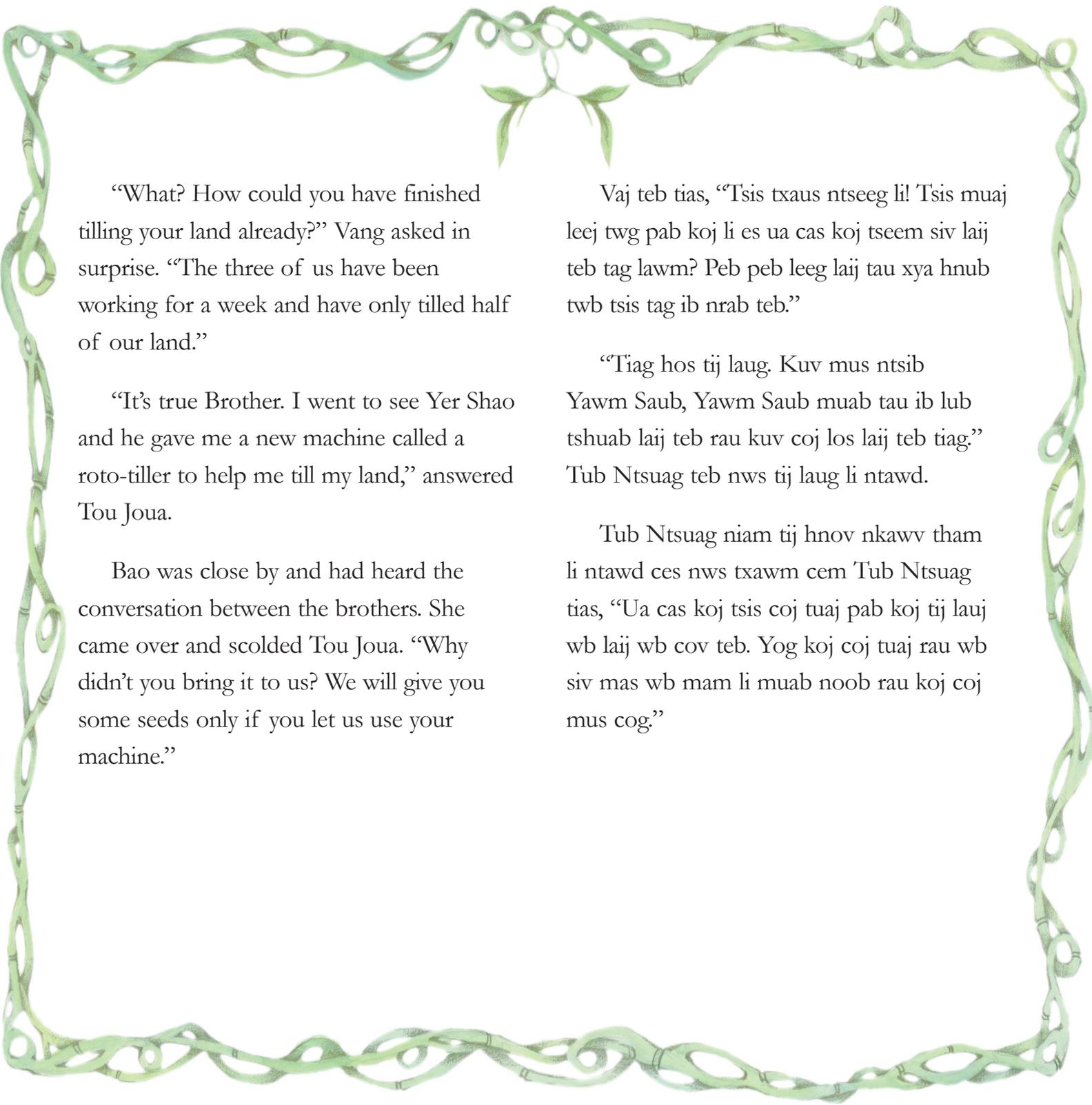


Tou Joua took the roto-tiller home and used it just as Yer Shao had instructed him. In a short time, his land was tilled and ready for planting. Tou Joua decided to go back to his brother to ask for some seeds.

“Brother Vang, I found some land and have tilled it. It is all ready for planting, but I don’t have any seeds. Will you loan me some seeds this season? I will pay you back at the end of the season.”

Tub Ntsuag koj lub tshuab laij teb los txog tsev nws koj mus laij nws cov teb raws li Yawm Saub qhia. Tsis ntev tom qab, nws laij nws cov teb tag lawm. Tub Ntsuag txawm rov mus xyuas nws tij laug thiab niam tij mus thov ib co noob koj los cog.

Tub Ntsuag txawm noog nws tij laug tias, “Tij laug, kuv mus nrhiav tau ib thaj teb puag tim sab roob tid es kuv twb muab laij tas lawm. Tiam sis kuv tsis muaj noob cog. Kuv tuaj thov koj ib co noob xyoo no es lwm xyoo kuv mam li ntxiv rov qab rau koj puas tau?”



“What? How could you have finished tilling your land already?” Vang asked in surprise. “The three of us have been working for a week and have only tilled half of our land.”

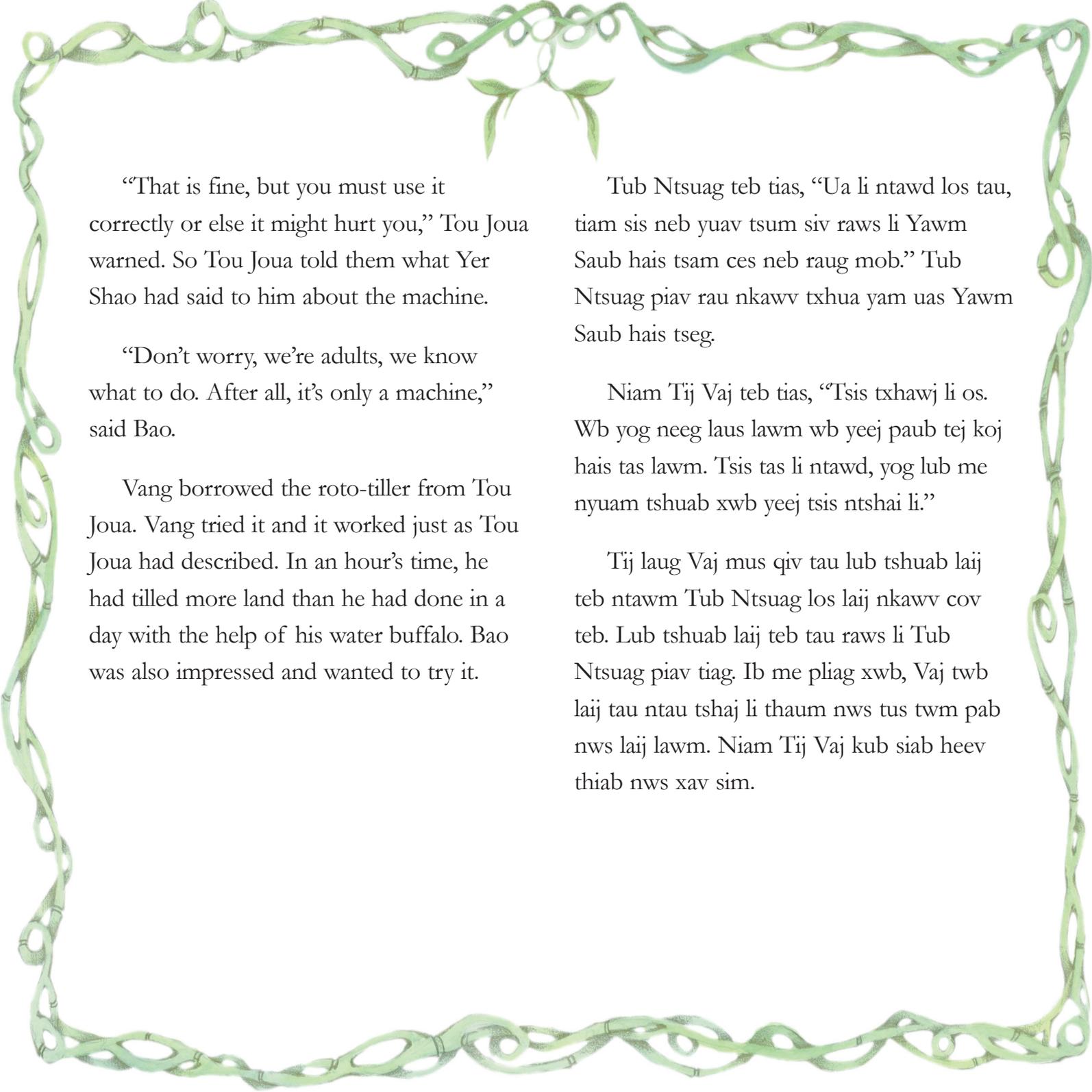
“It’s true Brother. I went to see Yer Shao and he gave me a new machine called a roto-tiller to help me till my land,” answered Tou Joua.

Bao was close by and had heard the conversation between the brothers. She came over and scolded Tou Joua. “Why didn’t you bring it to us? We will give you some seeds only if you let us use your machine.”

Vaj teb tias, “Tsis txaus ntseeg li! Tsis muaj leej twg pab koj li es ua cas koj tseem siv laij teb tag lawm? Peb peb leeg laij tau xya hnuv twb tsis tag ib nrab teb.”

“Tiag hos tij laug. Kuv mus ntsib Yawm Saub, Yawm Saub muab tau ib lub tshuab laij teb rau kuv coj los laij teb tiag.” Tub Ntsuag teb nws tij laug li ntawd.

Tub Ntsuag niam tij hnov nkawv tham li ntawd ces nws txawm cem Tub Ntsuag tias, “Ua cas koj tsis coj tuaj pab koj tij lauj wb laij wb cov teb. Yog koj coj tuaj rau wb siv mas wb mam li muab noob rau koj coj mus cog.”



“That is fine, but you must use it correctly or else it might hurt you,” Tou Joua warned. So Tou Joua told them what Yer Shao had said to him about the machine.

“Don’t worry, we’re adults, we know what to do. After all, it’s only a machine,” said Bao.

Vang borrowed the roto-tiller from Tou Joua. Vang tried it and it worked just as Tou Joua had described. In an hour’s time, he had tilled more land than he had done in a day with the help of his water buffalo. Bao was also impressed and wanted to try it.

Tub Ntsuag teb tias, “Ua li ntawd los tau, tiam sis neb yuav tsum siv raws li Yawm Saub hais tsam ces neb raug mob.” Tub Ntsuag piav rau nkawv txhua yam uas Yawm Saub hais tseg.

Niam Tij Vaj teb tias, “Tsis txhawj li os. Wb yog neeg laus lawm wb yeej paub tej koj hais tas lawm. Tsis tas li ntawd, yog lub me nyuam tshuab xwb yeej tsis ntshai li.”

Tij laug Vaj mus qiv tau lub tshuab laij teb ntawm Tub Ntsuag los laij nkawv cov teb. Lub tshuab laij teb tau raws li Tub Ntsuag piav tiag. Ib me pliag xwb, Vaj twb laij tau ntau tshaj li thaum nws tus twm pab nws laij lawm. Niam Tij Vaj kub siab heev thiab nws xav sim.

“Bao, didn’t you hear what Tou Joua said? You have to be strong enough and tall enough to use it,” Vang reminded Bao.

“You’re not that strong and you can do it and besides, you are not that much taller than I am,” said Bao.

Bao ignored Vang’s objections and took the roto-tiller from him. After a few rows of tilling, Bao thought that it would be better if she tied rubber bands on the hand controls

Tiam sis Vaj tsis kam, “Koj niam, koj tsis nco qab Tub Ntsuag cov lus lawm los? Koj tsis muaj zog txaus thiab koj siab tsis txaus.”

“Koj zog twb tshaj kuv tsis ntau ciav koj twb siv tau. Tsis tas li ntawd, koj siab tshaj kuv tsis ntau pes tsawg thiab.” Niam Tij Vaj cem Vaj li ntawd.

Niam Tij Vaj tsis yuav Vaj hais li. Nws cia li txeeb lub tshuab laij teb ntawm Vaj tes los sim. Niam Tij Vaj laij tau ob peb kab, nws pom tau tias zoo heev. Nws xav tias cia nws muab ob peb txoj yas khi rau tus kav tes kom lub tshuab tsis txhob tuag thaum nws tshem nws txhais tes lawm. Thaum ua ntej



so that the machine wouldn't shut off when she took her hand off of it. It did work well at first, but later when Bao was tired and decided to take a break she forgot that she had the rubber bands on the control. When she let go of the hand control the machine did not stop. She tried to grab it and her hands got caught on the rubber band and the roto-tiller dragged her away from the

zoo li tau hauj lwm kawg. Tiam sis ib me pliag xwb nws nkees nws yuav mus so nws tsis nco qab txog txoj yas uas khi rau ntawm tus ko tes cav. Niam Tij Vaj tso nws txhais tes lawm tiam sis lub tshuab laij teb tsis nres li. Niam Tij Vaj txawm tig rov qab los tuav tus kav tes tiam sis nws txhais tes daig kiag txoj yas. Lub tshuab laij teb muab Niam Tij Vaj hai mus hai los, hai rau nram nkuaj



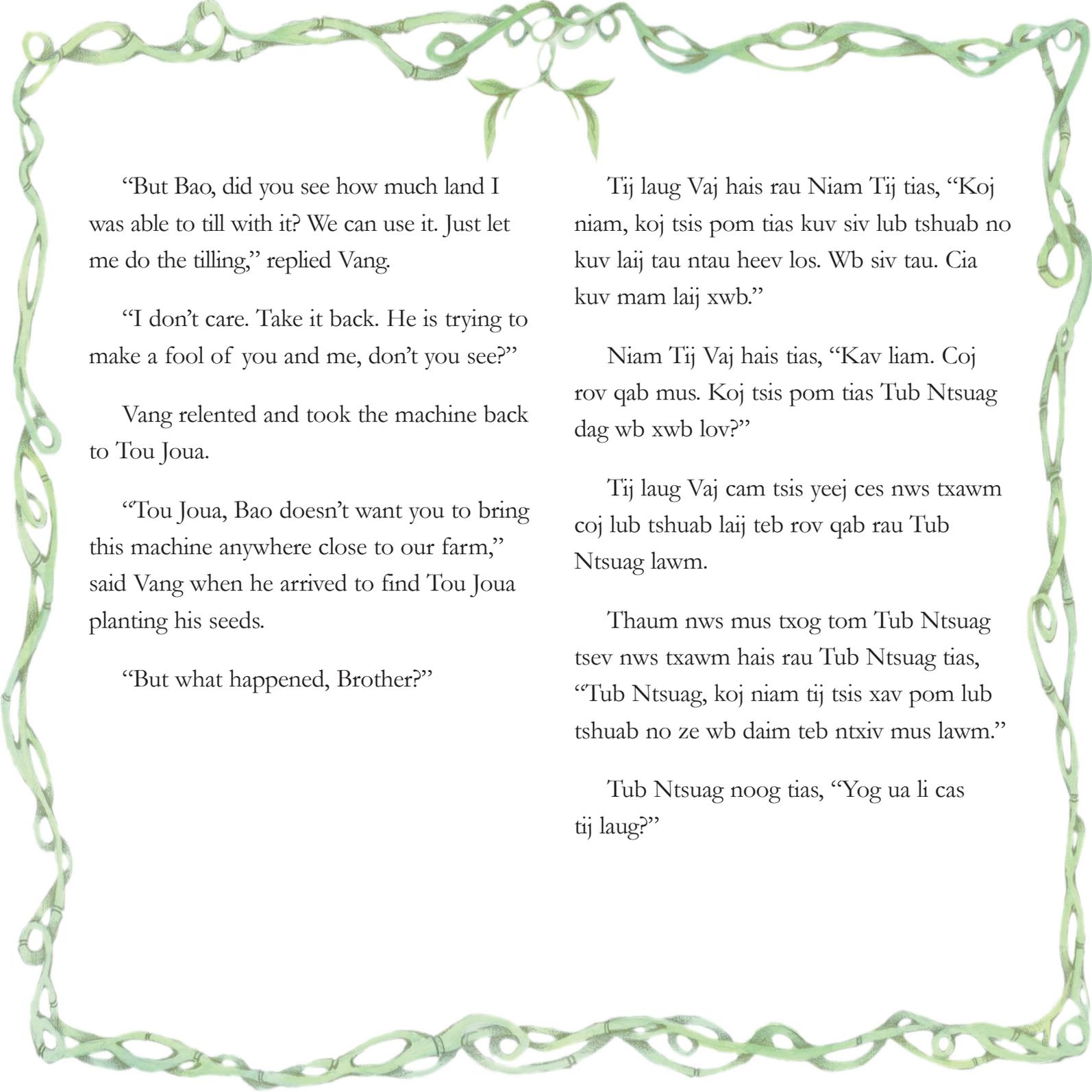
field down towards the pigpen. It took Bao right through the pig manure before Vang could reach her to stop the machine. Bao was soaked in pig manure from head to toe.

“Ay-Yiah! That stupid machine! Tou Joua just wants to trick us. Take it back. I don’t want it near me at all,” screamed Bao.

npuas lawm. Ua ntej Vaj caum mus txog nram nkuaj npuas, lub tshuab laij teb twb muab Niam T’ij Vaj hai thoob nkuaj npuas lo quav npua thoob ib ce tag.

Niam T’ij Vaj qw ib suab tias, “Ay-Yiah! Lub niag tshuab ruam no! Tub Ntsuag xav ntxias wb xwb. Cia li coj rov qab mus rau Tub Ntsuag. Kuv tsis xav pom lub tshuab no nyob ze kuv li.”





“But Bao, did you see how much land I was able to till with it? We can use it. Just let me do the tilling,” replied Vang.

“I don’t care. Take it back. He is trying to make a fool of you and me, don’t you see?”

Vang relented and took the machine back to Tou Joua.

“Tou Joua, Bao doesn’t want you to bring this machine anywhere close to our farm,” said Vang when he arrived to find Tou Joua planting his seeds.

“But what happened, Brother?”

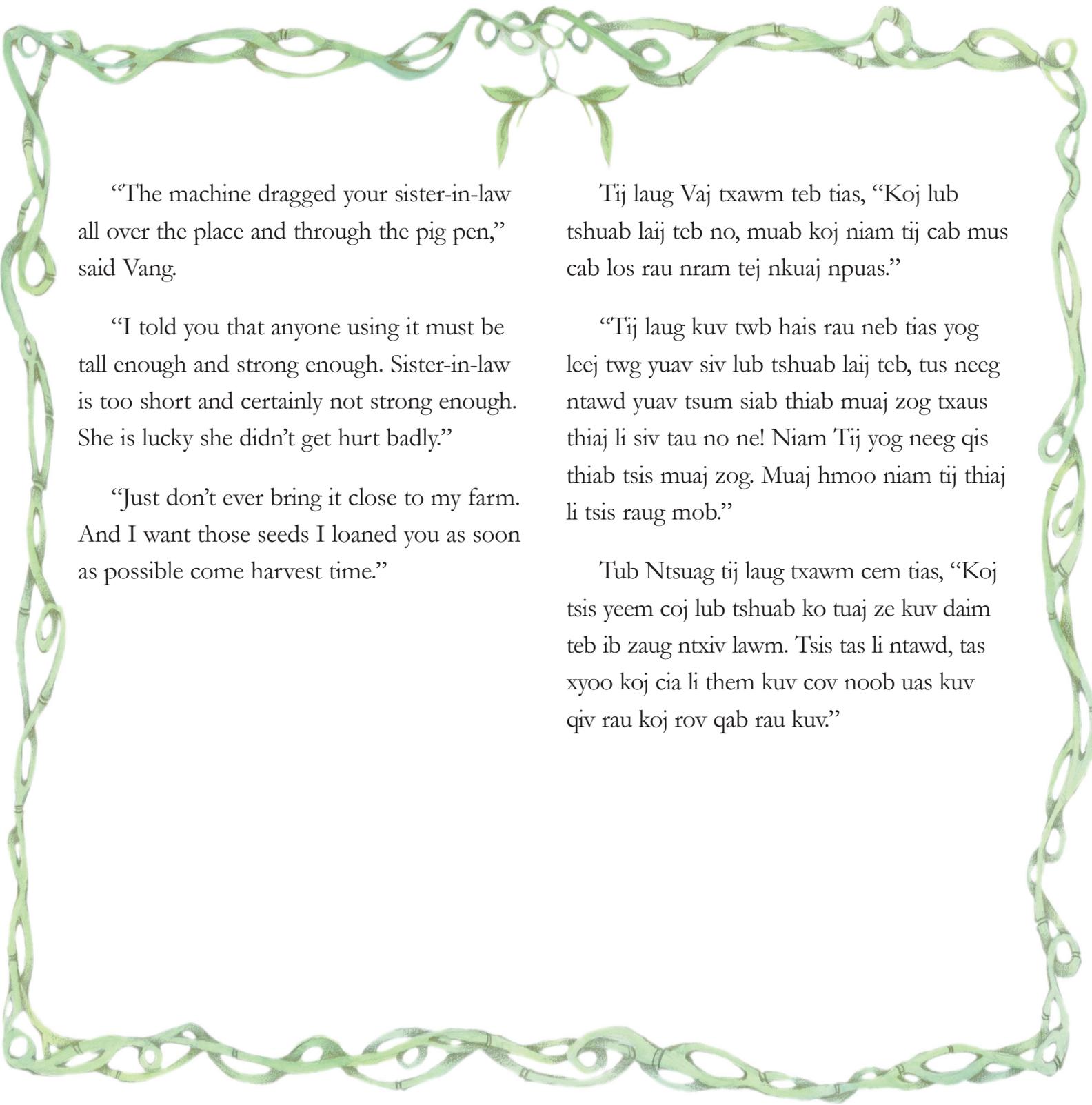
Tij laug Vaj hais rau Niam Tij tias, “Koj niam, koj tsis pom tias kuv siv lub tshuab no kuv laij tau ntau heev los. Wb siv tau. Cia kuv mam laij xwb.”

Niam Tij Vaj hais tias, “Kav liam. Coj rov qab mus. Koj tsis pom tias Tub Ntsuag dag wb xwb lov?”

Tij laug Vaj cam tsis yeej ces nws txawm koj lub tshuab laij teb rov qab rau Tub Ntsuag lawm.

Thaum nws mus txog tom Tub Ntsuag tsev nws txawm hais rau Tub Ntsuag tias, “Tub Ntsuag, koj niam tij tsis xav pom lub tshuab no ze wb daim teb ntxiv mus lawm.”

Tub Ntsuag noog tias, “Yog ua li cas tij laug?”



“The machine dragged your sister-in-law all over the place and through the pig pen,” said Vang.

“I told you that anyone using it must be tall enough and strong enough. Sister-in-law is too short and certainly not strong enough. She is lucky she didn’t get hurt badly.”

“Just don’t ever bring it close to my farm. And I want those seeds I loaned you as soon as possible come harvest time.”

Tij laug Vaj txawm teb tias, “Koj lub tshuab laij teb no, muab koj niam tij cab mus cab los rau nram tej nkuaj npuas.”

“Tij laug kuv twb hais rau neb tias yog leej twg yuav siv lub tshuab laij teb, tus neeg ntawd yuav tsum siab thiab muaj zog txaus thiaj li siv tau no ne! Niam Tij yog neeg qis thiab tsis muaj zog. Muaj hmoo niam tij thiaj li tsis raug mob.”

Tub Ntsuag tij laug txawm cem tias, “Koj tsis yeem koj lub tshuab ko tuaj ze kuv daim teb ib zaug ntxiv lawm. Tsis tas li ntawd, tas xyoo koj cia li them kuv cov noob uas kuv qiv rau koj rov qab rau kuv.”

So Tou Joua took the roto-tiller back and used it year after year to till his farm. After the first year he was able to grow so many crops he could pay back his brother and still have plenty of seed for himself.

Tub Ntsuag txawm coj lub tshuab laij teb rov qab los rau nws laij nws cov teb lawm. Tas thawj thawj xyoo Tub Ntsuag daim teb zoo heev. Nws them tij laug Vaj thiab niam tij Vaj nkawv cov noob rov qab rau nkawv tag los tseem tshuav txaus nws cog lwm xyoo thiab.

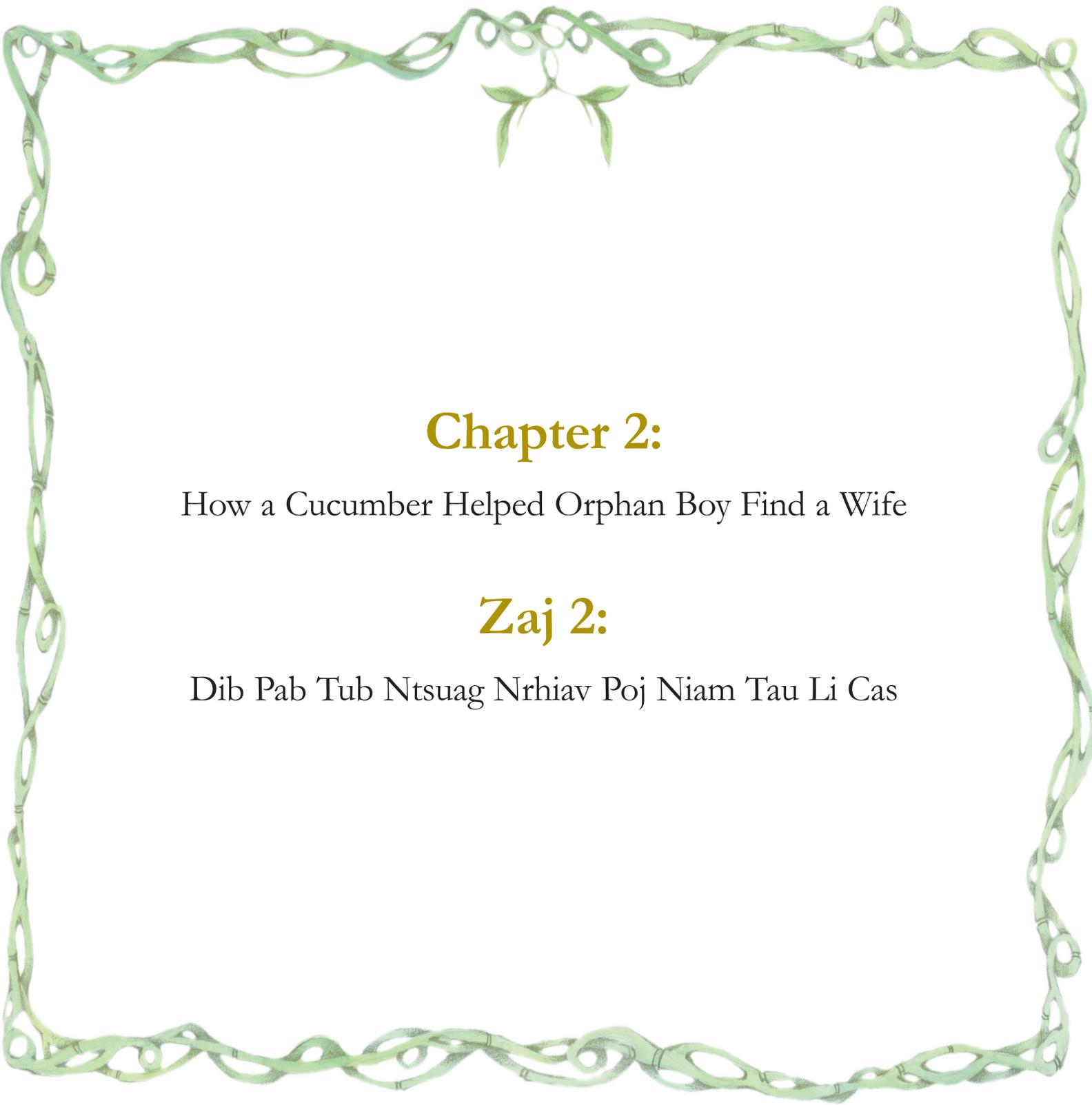


Lessons learned from Chapter 1

Roto-tillers can be dangerous machines, especially for children and other people who are not tall or strong enough to use the tiller. Yer Shao taught Tou Joua these safety lessons:

- A gardener must be able to turn the machine easily at the end of the row.
- Handles should not be above your chest.
- Always wear shoes when operating a tiller.
- Keep your hands and feet away from the tines at all times.
- Turn off the tiller before cleaning it.
- Using a tiller is tiring work and you need to take regular breaks.



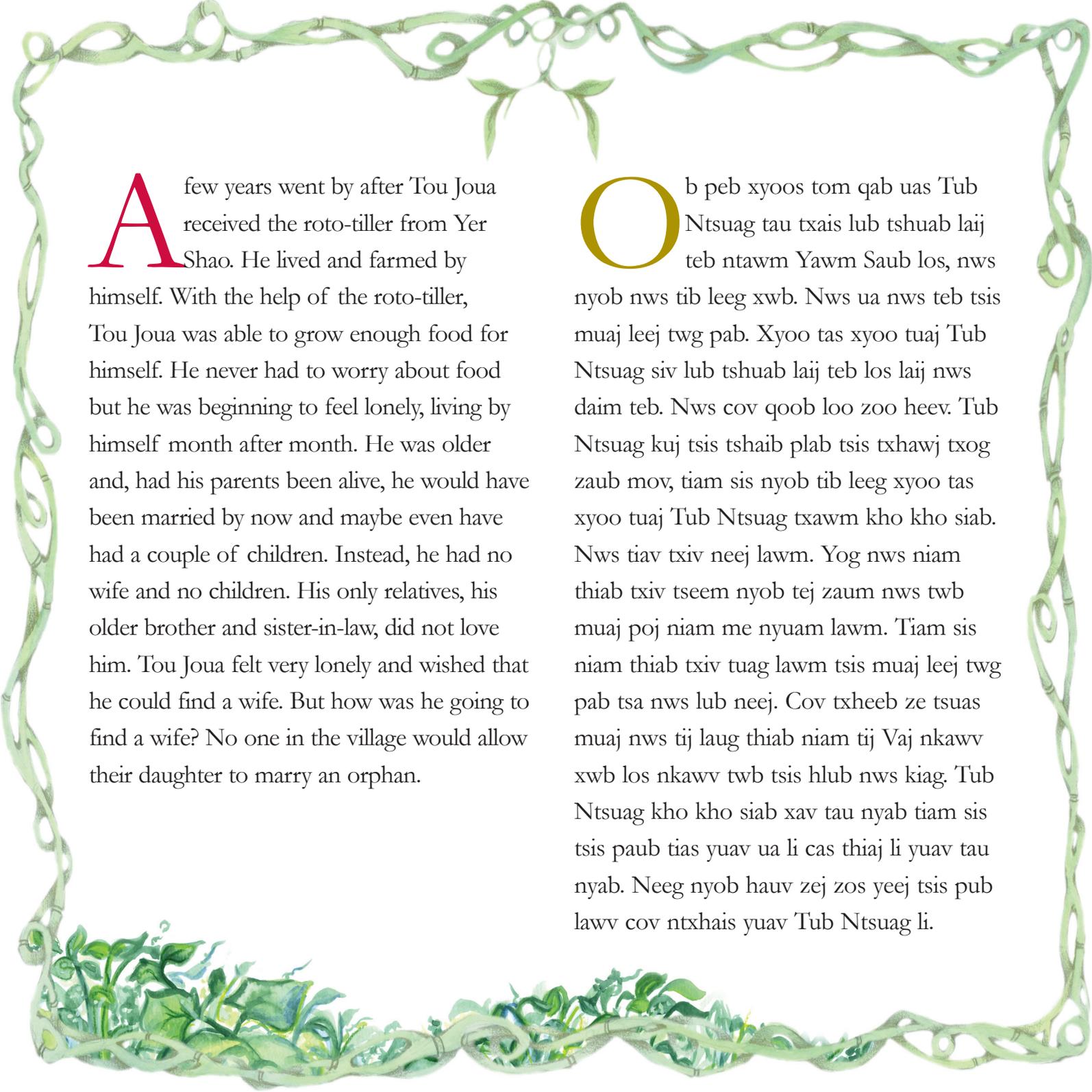


Chapter 2:

How a Cucumber Helped Orphan Boy Find a Wife

Zaj 2:

Dib Pab Tub Ntsuag Nrhiav Poj Niam Tau Li Cas



A few years went by after Tou Joua received the roto-tiller from Yer Shao. He lived and farmed by himself. With the help of the roto-tiller, Tou Joua was able to grow enough food for himself. He never had to worry about food but he was beginning to feel lonely, living by himself month after month. He was older and, had his parents been alive, he would have been married by now and maybe even have had a couple of children. Instead, he had no wife and no children. His only relatives, his older brother and sister-in-law, did not love him. Tou Joua felt very lonely and wished that he could find a wife. But how was he going to find a wife? No one in the village would allow their daughter to marry an orphan.

Ob peb xyoos tom qab uas Tub Ntsuag tau txais lub tshuab laij teb ntawm Yawm Saub los, nws nyob nws tib leeg xwb. Nws ua nws teb tsis muaj leej twg pab. Xyoo tas xyoo tuaj Tub Ntsuag siv lub tshuab laij teb los laij nws daim teb. Nws cov qoob loo zoo heev. Tub Ntsuag kuj tsis tshaib plab tsis txhawj txog zaub mov, tiam sis nyob tib leeg xyoo tas xyoo tuaj Tub Ntsuag txawm kho kho siab. Nws tiav txiv neej lawm. Yog nws niam thiab txiv tseem nyob tej zaum nws twb muaj poj niam me nyuam lawm. Tiam sis niam thiab txiv tuag lawm tsis muaj leej twg pab tsa nws lub neej. Cov txheeb ze tsuas muaj nws tij laug thiab niam tij Vaj nkawv xwb los nkawv twb tsis hlub nws kiag. Tub Ntsuag kho kho siab xav tau nyab tiam sis tsis paub tias yuav ua li cas thiaj li yuav tau nyab. Neeg nyob hauv zej zos yeej tsis pub lawv cov ntxhais yuav Tub Ntsuag li.

One day, while working in the field, an old woman appeared and said to Tou Joua, “I heard that you are lonely and want a wife.”

“Yes, I have a great farm but I am lonely and have no one to share my good fortune with. I am an orphan, no one will let me marry their daughter,” cried Tou Joua.

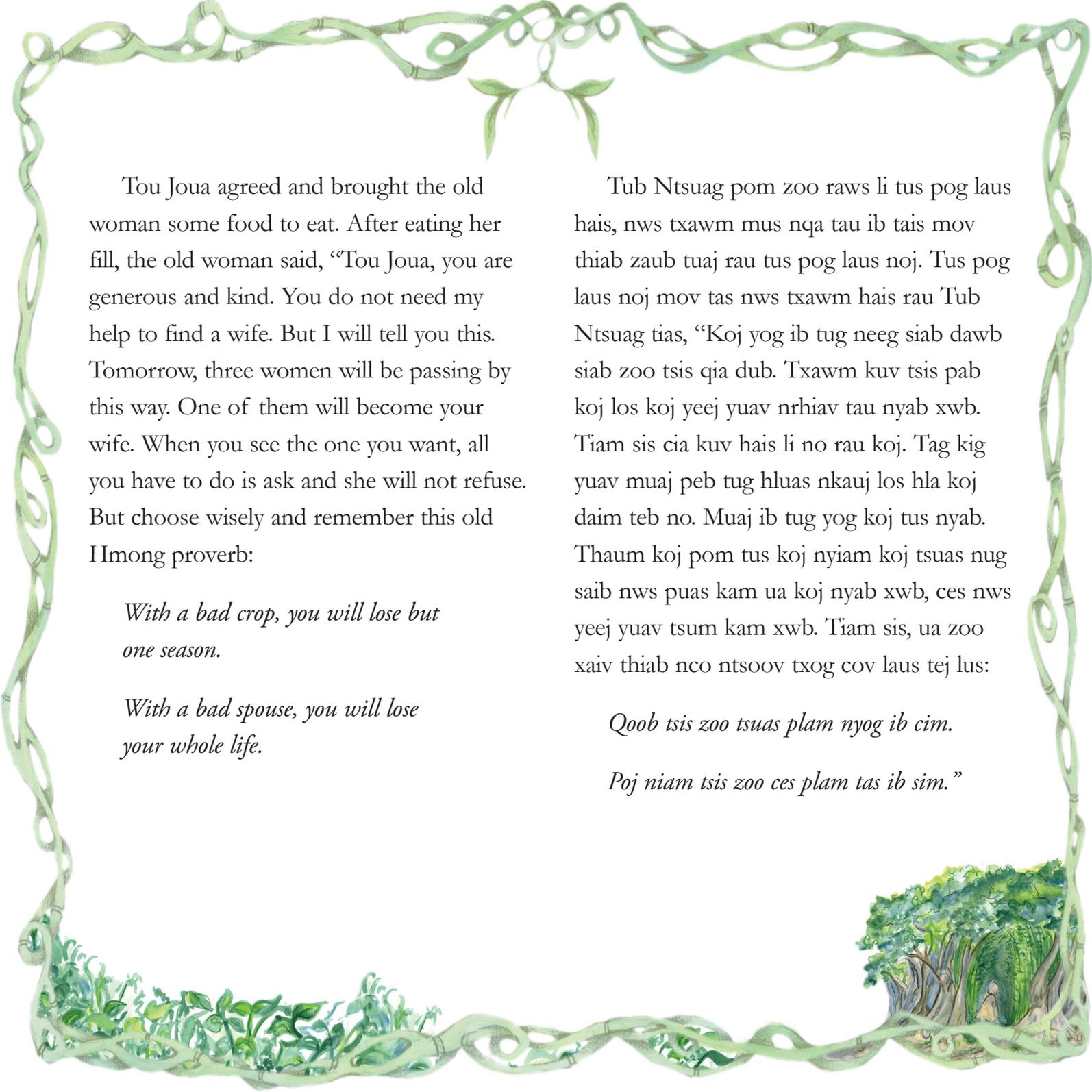
“I am an old woman and cannot work or farm. If you give me something to eat, I will tell you how to get a wife.”

Muaj ib hnuv Tub Ntsuag tab tom ua teb, ib tus pog laus laus tshwm tom ntug teb los. Nws hais rau Tub Ntsuag tias, “Kuv hnov tias koj kho kho siab koj xav tau nyab.”

Tub Ntsuag teb tias, “Yog kawg. Kuv daim teb zoo heev, zaub mov noj tsis tas tiam sis tu siab tsis muaj leej twg nrog kuv ua neej. Kuv yog tub ntsuag tsis muaj leej twg kam muab luag tus ntxhais ua kuv nyab.”

Tus pog laus hais rau Tub Ntsuag tias, “Kuv laus laus, ua tsis taus teb lawm. Yog koj pub mov rau kuv noj, kuv mam li qhia koj nrhiav nyab.”





Tou Joua agreed and brought the old woman some food to eat. After eating her fill, the old woman said, “Tou Joua, you are generous and kind. You do not need my help to find a wife. But I will tell you this. Tomorrow, three women will be passing by this way. One of them will become your wife. When you see the one you want, all you have to do is ask and she will not refuse. But choose wisely and remember this old Hmong proverb:

With a bad crop, you will lose but one season.

With a bad spouse, you will lose your whole life.

Tub Ntsuag pom zoo raws li tus pog laus hais, nws txawm mus nqa tau ib tais mov thiab zaub tuaj rau tus pog laus noj. Tus pog laus noj mov tas nws txawm hais rau Tub Ntsuag tias, “Koj yog ib tug neeg siab dawb siab zoo tsis qia dub. Txawm kuv tsis pab koj los koj yeej yuav nrhiav tau nyab xwb. Tiam sis cia kuv hais li no rau koj. Tag kig yuav muaj peb tug hluas nkauj los hla koj daim teb no. Muaj ib tug yog koj tus nyab. Thaum koj pom tus koj nyiam koj tsuas nug saib nws puas kam ua koj nyab xwb, ces nws yeej yuav tsum kam xwb. Tiam sis, ua zoo xaiv thiab nco ntsoov txog cov laus tej lus:

Qoob tsis zoo tsuas plam nyog ib cim.

Poj niam tsis zoo ces plam tas ib sim.”

With that, the old woman walked off and disappeared into the woods.

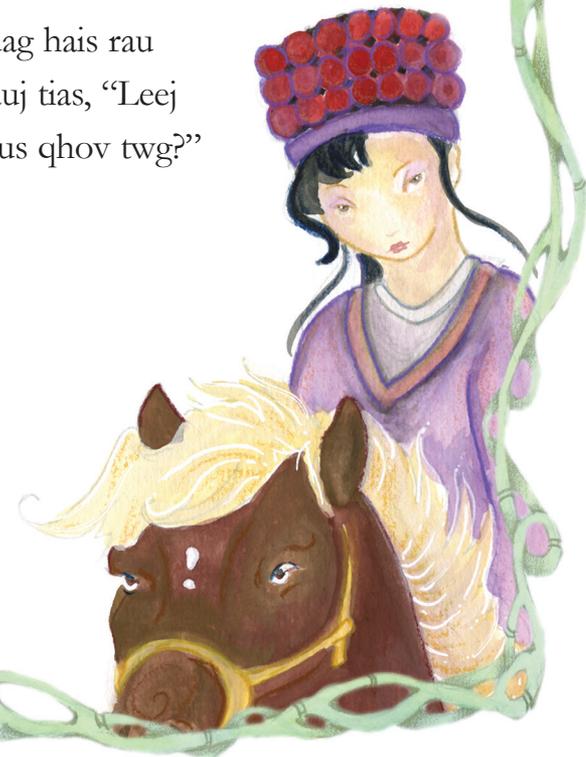
Tou Joua worked in his field and waited for the three women. Sure enough, the next day Tou Joua saw a beautiful girl approaching his farm, riding a magnificent horse. When the girl reached Tou Joua, he went up to talk to her.

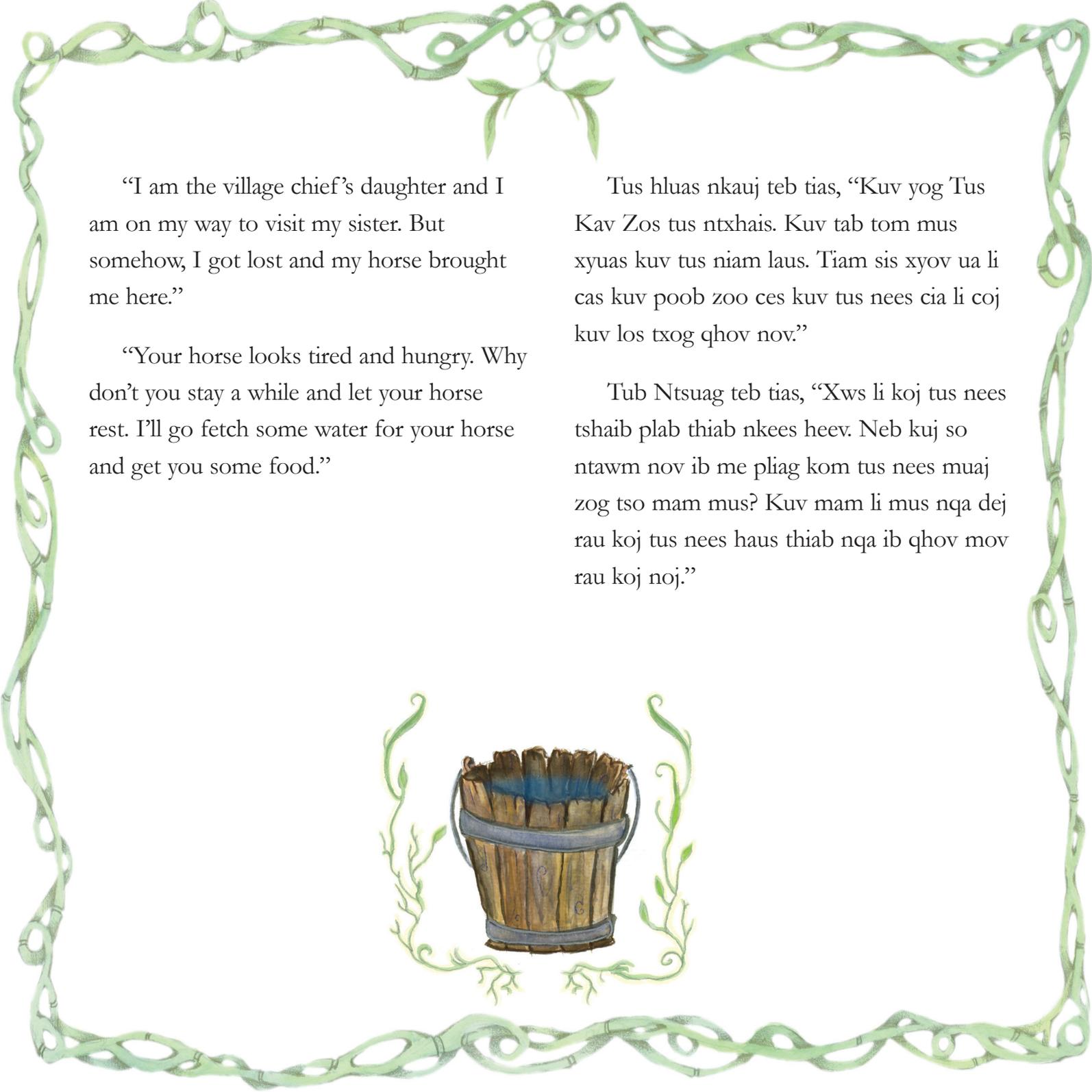
Tou Joua inquired, “Sister, where are you going?”

Hais li ntawd tag ces tus pog laus txawm tig rov qab rau tim hav zoov lawm. Tub Ntsuag tig rov qab los ua teb nyob tos peb tug hluas nkauj ntawd.

Tag kig sawv ntxov Tub Ntsuag tab tom pib ua teb nws pom ib tug hluas nkauj zoo nkauj heev caij ib tug txiv nees tuaj ncaj rau nws daim teb. Thaum tug hluas nkauj los ze zus, Tub Ntsuag txawm sawv mus nrog nws tham.

Tub Ntsuag hais rau tus hluas nkauj tias, “Leej muam koj mus qhov twg?”





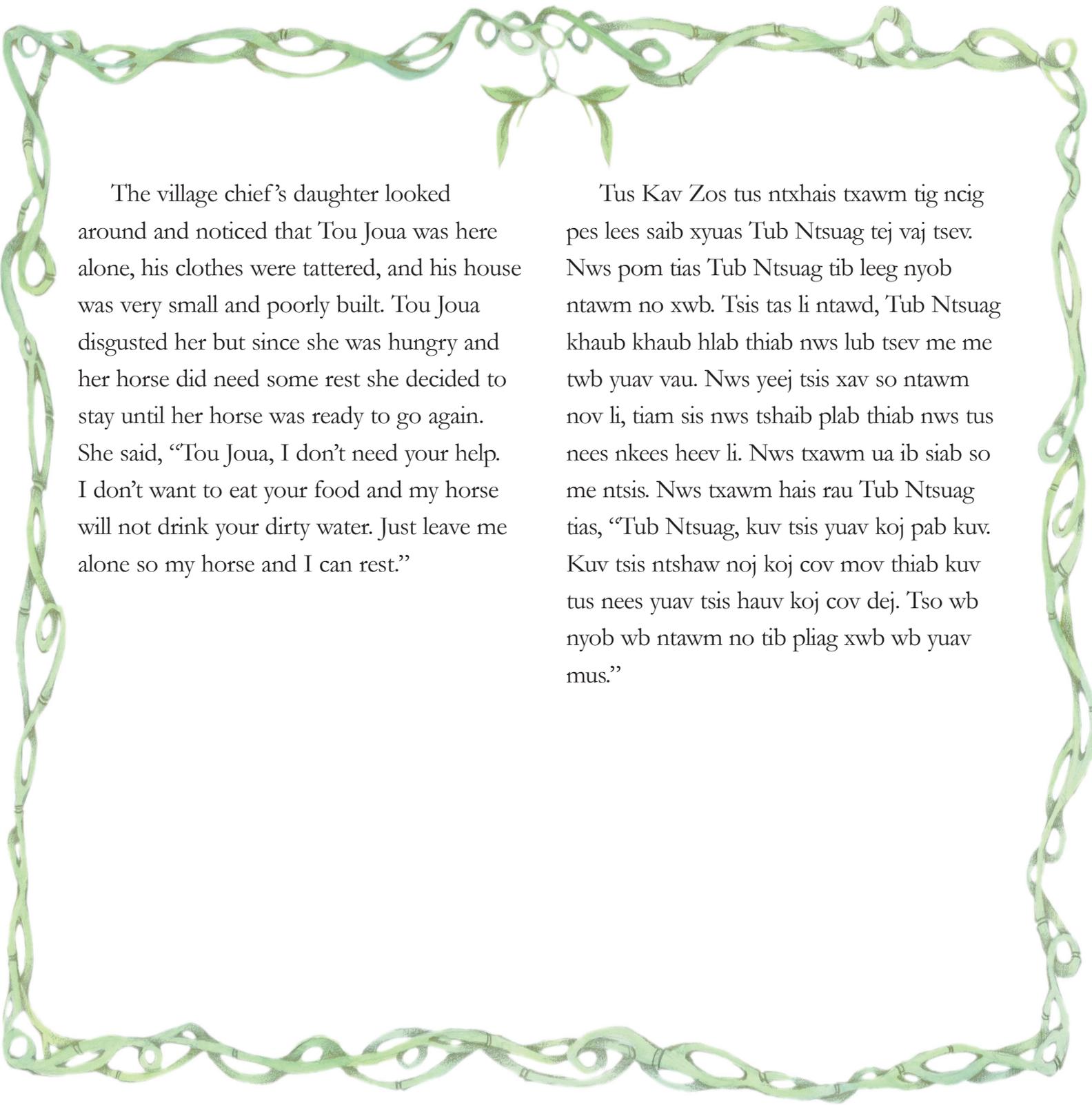
“I am the village chief’s daughter and I am on my way to visit my sister. But somehow, I got lost and my horse brought me here.”

“Your horse looks tired and hungry. Why don’t you stay a while and let your horse rest. I’ll go fetch some water for your horse and get you some food.”

Tus hluas nkauj teb tias, “Kuv yog Tus Kav Zos tus ntshais. Kuv tab tom mus xyuas kuv tus niam laus. Tiam sis xyov ua li cas kuv poob zoo ces kuv tus nees cia li koj kuv los txog qhov nov.”

Tub Ntsuag teb tias, “Xws li koj tus nees tshaib plab thiab nkees heev. Neb kuj so ntawm nov ib me pliag kom tus nees muaj zog tso mam mus? Kuv mam li mus nqa dej rau koj tus nees haus thiab nqa ib qhov mov rau koj noj.”





The village chief's daughter looked around and noticed that Tou Joua was here alone, his clothes were tattered, and his house was very small and poorly built. Tou Joua disgusted her but since she was hungry and her horse did need some rest she decided to stay until her horse was ready to go again. She said, "Tou Joua, I don't need your help. I don't want to eat your food and my horse will not drink your dirty water. Just leave me alone so my horse and I can rest."

Tus Kav Zos tus ntxhais txawm tig ncig pes lees saib xyuas Tub Ntsuag tej vaj tsev. Nws pom tias Tub Ntsuag tib leeg nyob ntawm no xwb. Tsis tas li ntawd, Tub Ntsuag khaub khaub hlab thiab nws lub tsev me me twb yuav vau. Nws yeej tsis xav so ntawm nov li, tiam sis nws tshaib plab thiab nws tus nees nkees heev li. Nws txawm ua ib siab so me ntsis. Nws txawm hais rau Tub Ntsuag tias, "Tub Ntsuag, kuv tsis yuav koj pab kuv. Kuv tsis ntshaw noj koj cov mov thiab kuv tus nees yuav tsis hauv koj cov dej. Tso wb nyob wb ntawm no tib pliag xwb wb yuav mus."

Tou Joua left to go inside his house and a few moments later he came out with a handful of cucumbers. Even though she did not want to accept anything from him, he knew she and her horse were hungry so he decided to offer her the cucumbers anyway. “Sister, I have nothing to offer you but these cucumbers from my field. I just picked them this morning so they are still fresh and juicy. They will quench your thirst.”

Tub Ntsuag txawm nkag mus hauv tsev lawm. Ib me pliag nws nqa tau ob peb lub dib tawm hauv tsev tuaj. Txawm tus hluas nkauj hais tias nws tsis kam txais dab tsi ntawm Tub Ntsuag los Tub Ntsuag paub tias nkawv yeej tshaib plab heev ces nws cia li yuam cov dib rau nkawv noj. “Leej muam, kuv tsis muaj dab tsi muab rau neb li. Kuv tsuas muaj cov dib no xwb. Kuv nyuam qhuav de tag kis no xwb, tseem qab heev li. Lam noj kom neb tsis txhob nqhis nqhis dej.”



Tou Joua took out his harvesting knife from the sheath on his belt and started to peel a cucumber for her. The village chief's daughter wanted the cucumber but she did not want Tou Joua's dirty hands to touch it so she said, "Your hands are dirty! Give me the knife. I will peel the cucumber myself!"

Tou Joua gave her the cucumber and the knife and warned, "Be careful with the knife, Sister, it is very sharp."

Tub Ntsuag txawm thau tau ib rab riam ntawm nws txoj siv hlab los chais dib rau nkawv noj. Tus hluas nkauj xav noj lub dib tiam sis nws tsis xav kom Tub Ntsuag txhais tes chwv lub dib. Nws txawm hais rau Tub Ntsuag tias, "Koj txhais tes qias neeg dhau lawm, muab rab riam rau kuv. Kuv mam li chais dib kuv noj kuv!"

Tub Ntsuag muab lub dib thiab rab riam rau tus hluas nkauj. Ces nws txawm hais tias, "Leej muam, ceev faj tsam rab riam hlais koj. Rab riam koj ntse heev."



“Shut up!” snapped the village chief’s daughter. “I’m not a child, and I know how to use a knife!”

She proceeded to peel the cucumber with the knife. But being a village chief’s daughter, she had never had to peel anything for herself in the past. Not knowing exactly how to handle the knife, her hand slipped and she cut her index finger.

“Ow!” she screamed in pain.

Tus hluas nkauj txawm cem Tub Ntsuag tias, “Kaw koj lub qhov ncauj. Kuv tsis yog me nyuam yaus. Kuv yeej paub siv riam lawm!”

Tus hluas nkauj txawm pib chais lub dib lawm, tiam sis vim nws yog Tus Kav Zos tus ntxhais nws tsis tau chais dib dua li. Nws tsis paub chais nws lam chais mus chais los. Tos paub nws twb ua rab riam plam mus hlais raug nws tus ntiv tes xoo lawm.

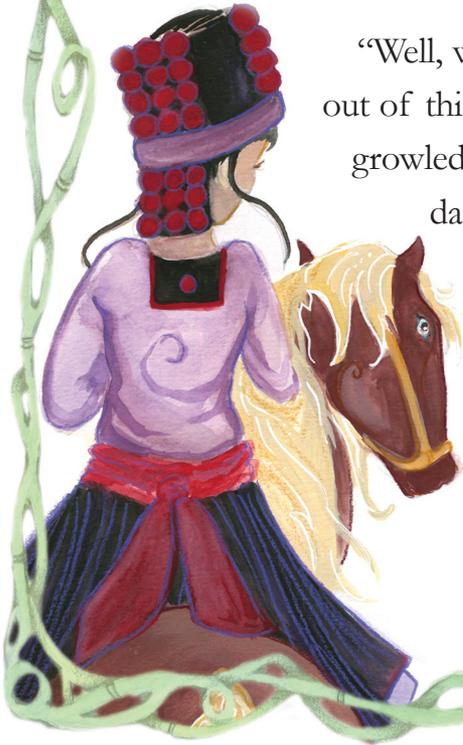
Tus hluas nkauj qw ib suab “Ub o!”



Tou Joua tried to help her but she was too upset and just yelled at him, “Just give me directions to get out of this place and I’ll be on my way.”

Tou Joua thought about taking her as his wife. The old woman had said that all he had to do was ask and the girl would not refuse. She is the village chief’s daughter. If he marries her, everyone will respect him and he might even be chief one day.

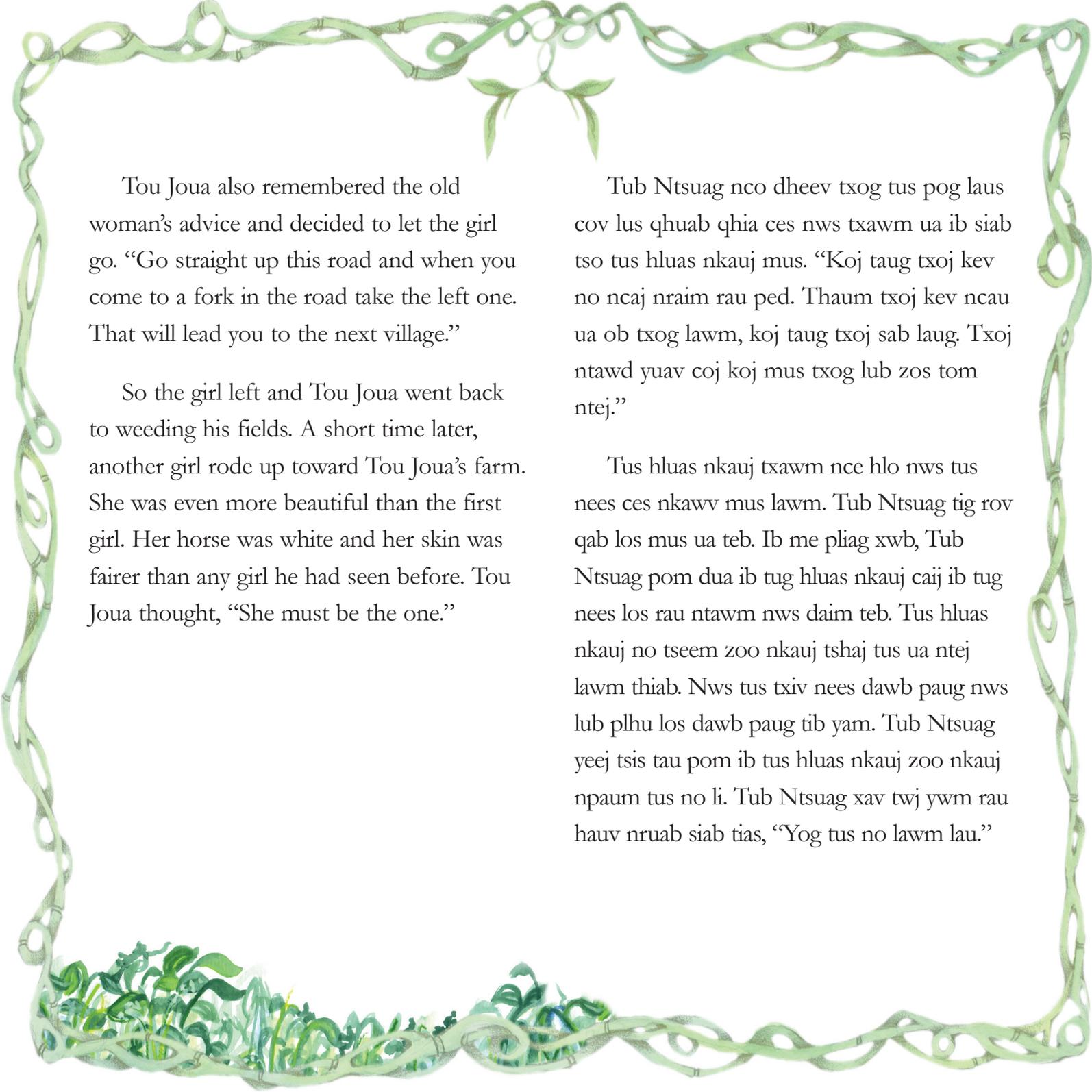
“Well, which way is the way out of this pathetic farm?” growled the village chief’s daughter.



Tub Ntsuag tig los mus pab tus hluas nkauj, tiam sis nws chim heev nws cem Tub Ntsuag tias, “Koj cia li qhia kuv txoj kev tawm ntawm qhov no mus tam sim no. Kuv mam mus kuv!”

Tub Ntsuag xav me ntsis tias yog nws yuav tus hluas nkauj no ua nws tus nyab sawv daws yuav saib nws muaj nqis vim tus hluas nkauj no yog Tus Kav Zos tus ntxhais. Tsis tas li ntawd, tej zaum muaj ib hnuv nws yuav tau ua Tus Kav Zos los kuj muaj. Tus pog laus twb hais tias yog Tub Ntsuag xav yuav ces tus hluas nkauj yeej yuav tsum kam xwb xwb.

Tus hluas nkauj txawm qw nrov nrov tias, “Koj tsis hnov kuv hais los, txoj kev tawm ntawm nov mus yog txoj twg na?”



Tou Joua also remembered the old woman's advice and decided to let the girl go. "Go straight up this road and when you come to a fork in the road take the left one. That will lead you to the next village."

So the girl left and Tou Joua went back to weeding his fields. A short time later, another girl rode up toward Tou Joua's farm. She was even more beautiful than the first girl. Her horse was white and her skin was fairer than any girl he had seen before. Tou Joua thought, "She must be the one."

Tub Ntsuag nco dheev txog tus pog laus cov lus qhuab qhia ces nws txawm ua ib siab tso tus hluas nkauj mus. "Koj taug txoj kev no ncaj nraim rau ped. Thaum txoj kev ncau ua ob txog lawm, koj taug txoj sab laug. Txoj ntawd yuav coj koj mus txog lub zos tom ntej."

Tus hluas nkauj txawm nce hlo nws tus nees ces nkawv mus lawm. Tub Ntsuag tig rov qab los mus ua teb. Ib me pliag xwb, Tub Ntsuag pom dua ib tug hluas nkauj caij ib tug nees los rau ntawm nws daim teb. Tus hluas nkauj no tseem zoo nkauj tshaj tus ua ntej lawm thiab. Nws tus txiv nees dawb paug nws lub plhu los dawb paug tib yam. Tub Ntsuag yeej tsis tau pom ib tus hluas nkauj zoo nkauj npaum tus no li. Tub Ntsuag xav twj ywm rau hauv nruab siab tias, "Yog tus no lawm lau."

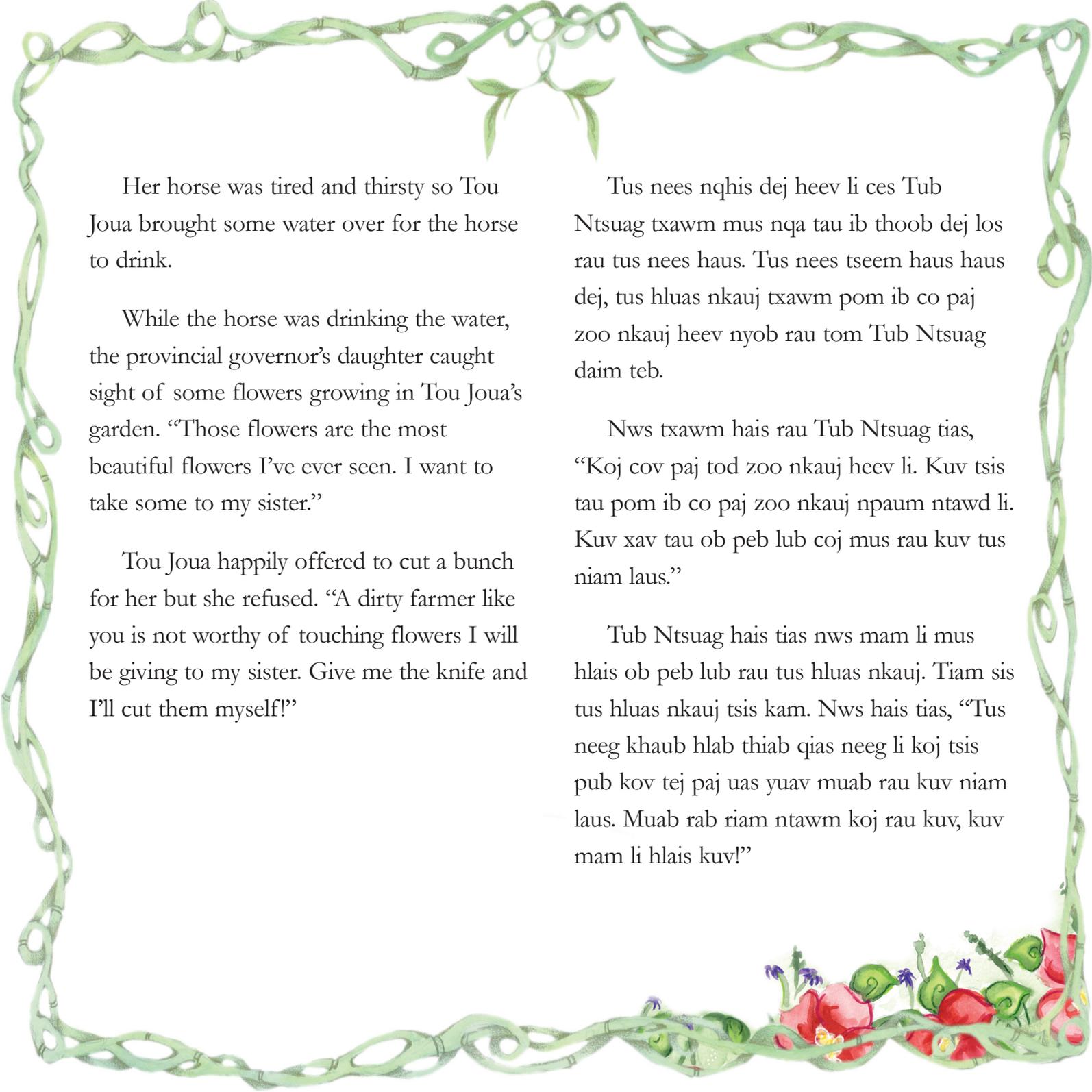
As she approached, Tou Joua went up to her and asked, “Sister, where are you going? Your horse seems tired and you look lost. Can I help you?”

“I am the provincial governor’s youngest daughter and I am going to see my sister in the next province. I was riding with my escorts but somehow my horse got frightened and ran away from the group. The next thing I knew we were coming up this road.”

Thaum tus hluas nkauj los ze zog Tub Ntsuag txawm mus nrog nws tham. “Leej muam koj mus qhov twg? Xws li koj tus nees nkees nkees li thiab zoo li koj poob zoo lawm. Kuv pab koj puas tau?”

Tus hluas nkauj teb tias, “Kuv yog Toj Xeem tus ntxhais ntxawm. Kuv tab tom mus xyuas kuv tus niam laus nyob rau lub xeev tom ntej. Kuv nrog kuv cov tub mab tub qhe tiam sis xyov ua li cas kuv tus nees ceeb, nws txawm khiav coj kuv lawm. Tos kuv nco ces wb twb los txog ntawm no lawm xwb.”





Her horse was tired and thirsty so Tou Joua brought some water over for the horse to drink.

While the horse was drinking the water, the provincial governor's daughter caught sight of some flowers growing in Tou Joua's garden. "Those flowers are the most beautiful flowers I've ever seen. I want to take some to my sister."

Tou Joua happily offered to cut a bunch for her but she refused. "A dirty farmer like you is not worthy of touching flowers I will be giving to my sister. Give me the knife and I'll cut them myself!"

Tus nees nqhis dej heev li ces Tub Ntsuag txawm mus nqa tau ib thoob dej los rau tus nees haus. Tus nees tseem haus haus dej, tus hluas nkauj txawm pom ib co paj zoo nkauj heev nyob rau tom Tub Ntsuag daim teb.

Nws txawm hais rau Tub Ntsuag tias, "Koj cov paj tod zoo nkauj heev li. Kuv tsis tau pom ib co paj zoo nkauj npaum ntawd li. Kuv xav tau ob peb lub coj mus rau kuv tus niam laus."

Tub Ntsuag hais tias nws mam li mus hlais ob peb lub rau tus hluas nkauj. Tiam sis tus hluas nkauj tsis kam. Nws hais tias, "Tus neeg khaub hlab thiab qias neeg li koj tsis pub kov tej paj uas yuav muab rau kuv niam laus. Muab rab riam ntawm koj rau kuv, kuv mam li hlais kuv!"

Tou Joua handed her the knife and warned, “Be careful with the knife, Sister, it is very sharp.”

“I don’t need an ignorant farmer to tell me how to cut some flowers. I can do it myself.” The provincial governor’s daughter walked over to the garden, grabbed a bunch of flowers with one hand and slashed at the stems. Not knowing how to handle such a large knife, she swung too hard and cut her shin.

Tub Ntsuag muab rab riam rau tus hluas nkauj ces nws txawm hais tias, “Ceev faj leej muam. Rab riam koj loj thiab ntse heev.”

Tus hluas nkauj txawm teb hlo tias, “Kuv tsis yuav tus neeg ruam li koj qhia kuv hlais paj. Kuv mam hlais kuv.” Toj Xeem tus ntxhais txawm taug kev mus rau tom cov paj, ntsiab nkaus tau ib teg paj ces txawm tib txiav cov kav paj. Vim nws tsis paub siv rab riam nws ib nyuag sib zog dhau lawm. Rab riam loj los loj, ntse los ntse, ces rab riam txawm tib suam nws plab hlaub.



“Ow!” she screamed in pain.

“Sister, are you okay? Let me help you.”

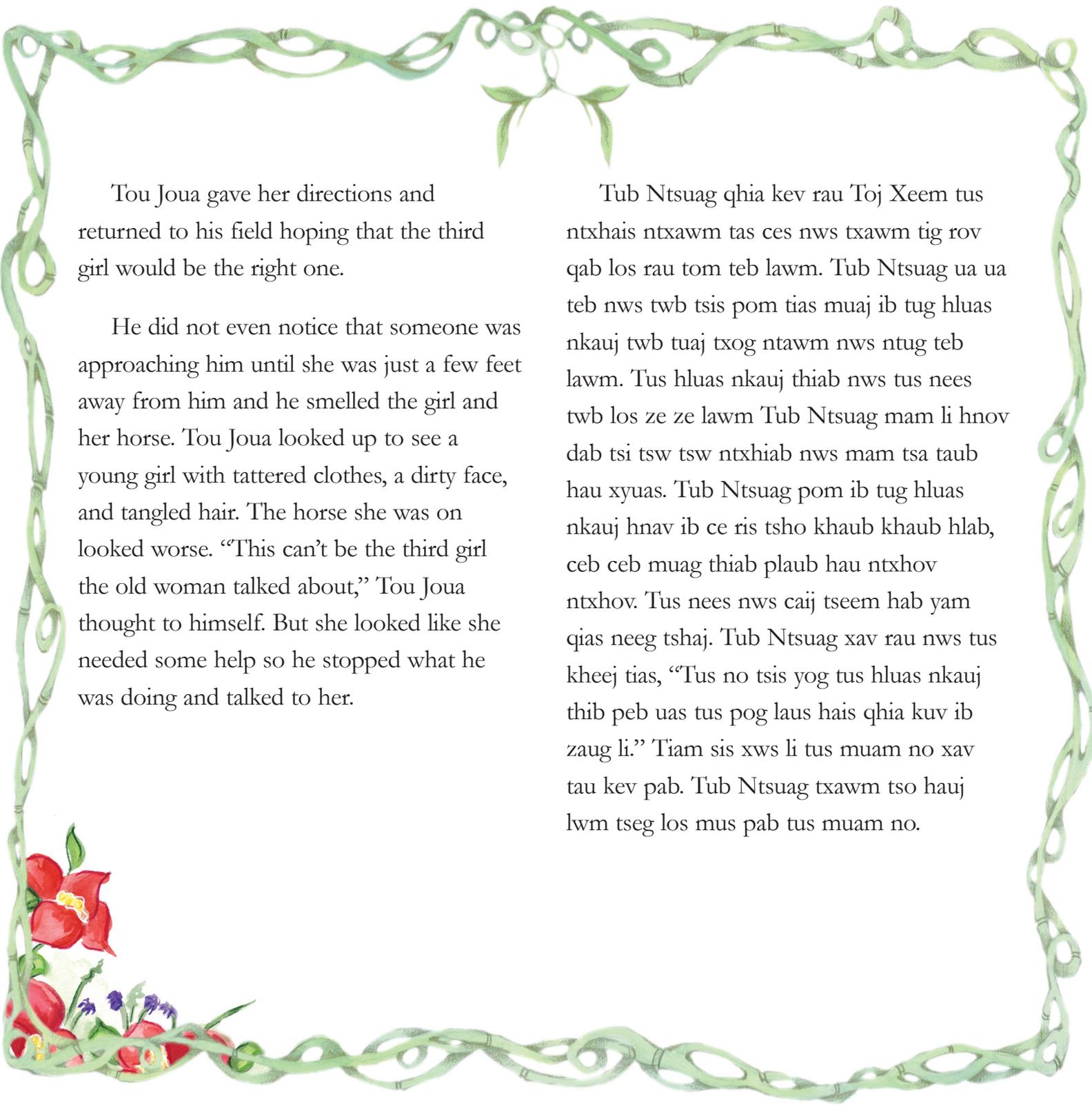
The provincial governor’s daughter was quite upset and said, “You’ve done enough. Just tell me how to get back to the main road and I’ll be on my way.” She took her sash and wrapped it around her wounded shin.

Tus hluas nkauj txawm qw ib suab,
“Ub o!”

Tub Ntsuag khiav mus xyuas, “Leej muam, koj puas raug mob? Cia kuv pab koj.”

Toj Xeem tus ntxhais chim heev nws cem tias, “Koj twb ua txaus lawm. Cia li qhia kuv txoj kev rau tom kev loj, kuv mas li mus kuv.” Nws txawm muab nws daim sev coj los qhwh kiag nws plab hlaub.





Tou Joua gave her directions and returned to his field hoping that the third girl would be the right one.

He did not even notice that someone was approaching him until she was just a few feet away from him and he smelled the girl and her horse. Tou Joua looked up to see a young girl with tattered clothes, a dirty face, and tangled hair. The horse she was on looked worse. “This can’t be the third girl the old woman talked about,” Tou Joua thought to himself. But she looked like she needed some help so he stopped what he was doing and talked to her.

Tub Ntsuag qhia kev rau Toj Xeem tus ntxhais ntxawm tas ces nws txawm tig rov qab los rau tom teb lawm. Tub Ntsuag ua ua teb nws twb tsis pom tias muaj ib tug hluas nkauj twb tuaj txog ntawm nws ntug teb lawm. Tus hluas nkauj thiab nws tus nees twb los ze ze lawm Tub Ntsuag mam li hnov dab tsi tsw tsw ntxhiab nws mam tsa taub hau xyuas. Tub Ntsuag pom ib tug hluas nkauj hnav ib ce ris tsho khaub khaub hlab, ceb ceb muag thiab plaub hau ntxhov ntxhov. Tus nees nws caij tseem hab yam qias neeg tshaj. Tub Ntsuag xav rau nws tus kheej tias, “Tus no tsis yog tus hluas nkauj thib peb uas tus pog laus hais qhia kuv ib zaug li.” Tiam sis xws li tus muam no xav tau kev pab. Tub Ntsuag txawm tso hauj lwm tseg los mus pab tus muam no.

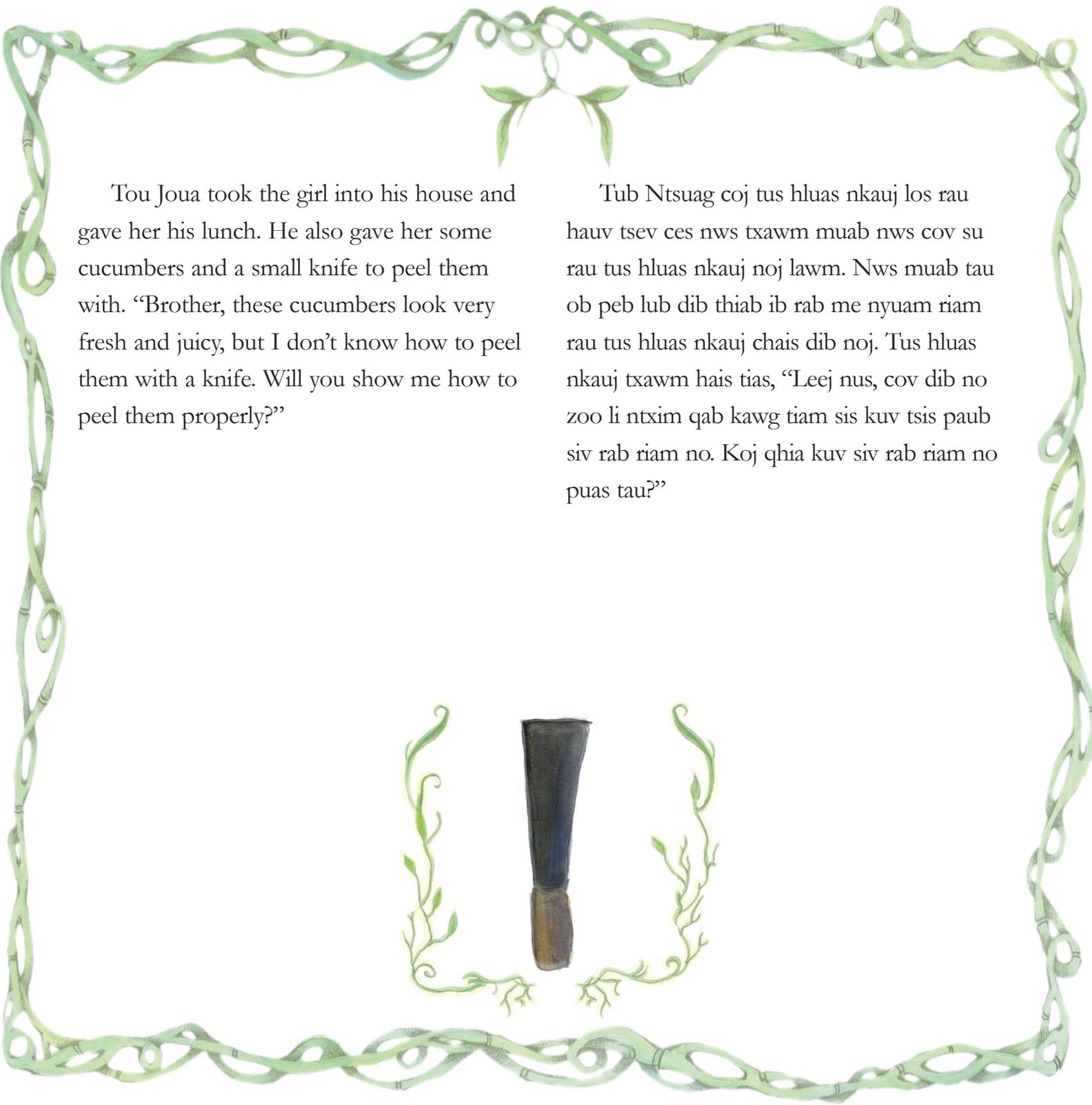
“Sister, you and your horse look like you haven’t eaten in days. Let me give some water to your horse and get some food for you. Come over to my house.”

“Thank you, Brother, we have been lost for three days now and no one has been willing to help us. Every farmer we came upon spat at us and told us to get going before they sent their dogs after us. My horse is very thirsty and hungry.”

Tub Ntsuag hais rau tus hluas nkauj tias, “Leej muam, xws li koj thiab koj tus nees tsis tau noj mov tau ob peb hnuv no lawm. Cia kuv muab dej rau koj tus nees haus thiab nrhiav zaub mov rau koj noj. Los tom kuv tsev no.”

Tus hluas nkauj teb tias, “Ua koj tsaug leej nus, wb poob zoo tau peb hnuv rau hnuv no, tiam sis tsis muaj leej twg kam pab wb li. Txhua txhua tus neeg uas wb ntsib, nti aub ncaug rau wb thiab cem tias yog wb tsis tsiv kev mus luag yuav tso dev caum wb. Kuv tus nees nqhis dej thiab tshaib plab heev li.”

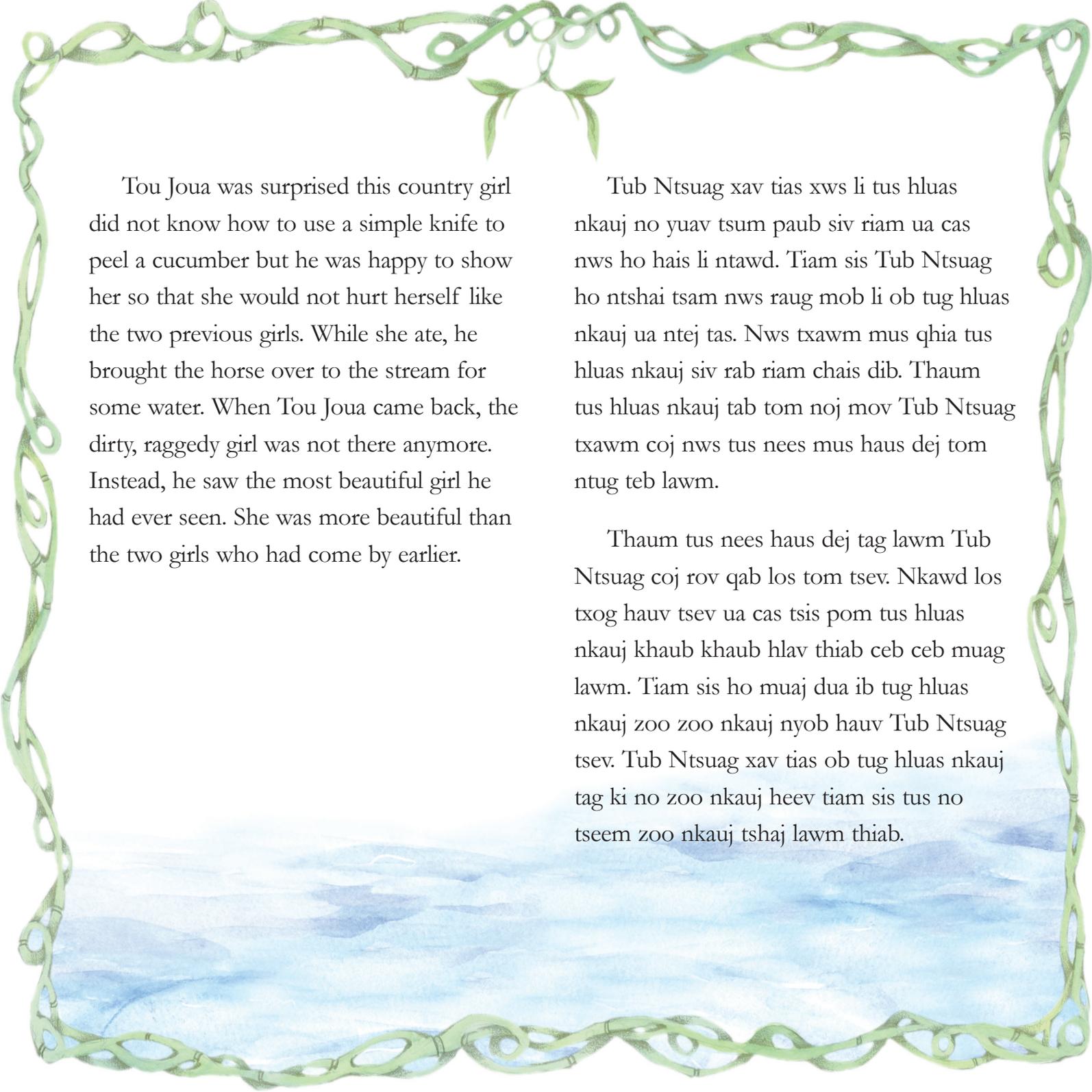




Tou Joua took the girl into his house and gave her his lunch. He also gave her some cucumbers and a small knife to peel them with. “Brother, these cucumbers look very fresh and juicy, but I don’t know how to peel them with a knife. Will you show me how to peel them properly?”

Tub Ntsuag koj tus hluas nkauj los rau hauv tsev ces nws txawm muab nws cov su rau tus hluas nkauj noj lawm. Nws muab tau ob peb lub dib thiab ib rab me nyuam riam rau tus hluas nkauj chais dib noj. Tus hluas nkauj txawm hais tias, “Leej nus, cov dib no zoo li ntxim qab kawg tiam sis kuv tsis paub siv rab riam no. Koj qhia kuv siv rab riam no puas tau?”



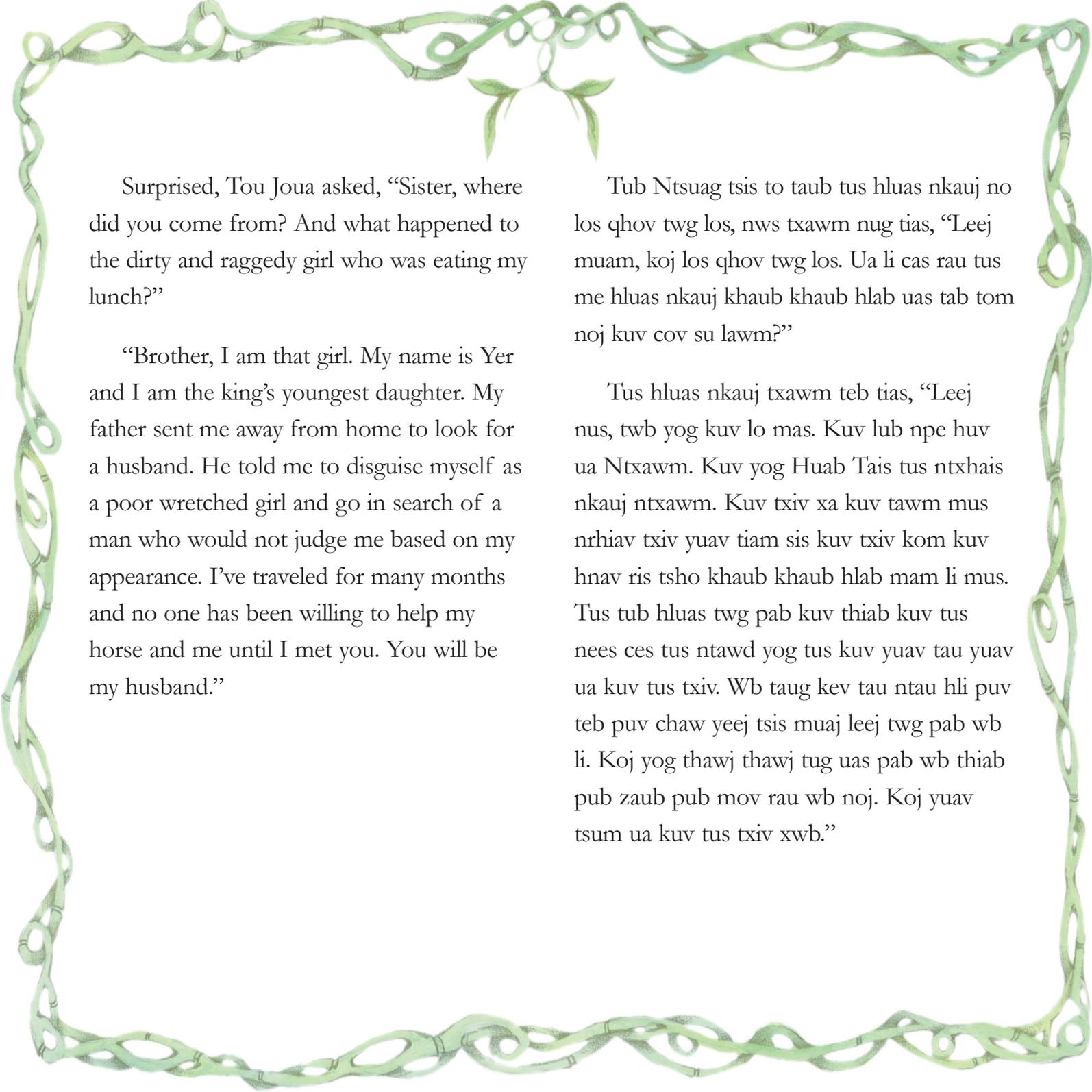


Tou Joua was surprised this country girl did not know how to use a simple knife to peel a cucumber but he was happy to show her so that she would not hurt herself like the two previous girls. While she ate, he brought the horse over to the stream for some water. When Tou Joua came back, the dirty, raggedy girl was not there anymore. Instead, he saw the most beautiful girl he had ever seen. She was more beautiful than the two girls who had come by earlier.

Tub Ntsuag xav tias xws li tus hluas nkauj no yuav tsum paub siv riam ua cas nws ho hais li ntawd. Tiam sis Tub Ntsuag ho ntshai tsam nws raug mob li ob tug hluas nkauj ua ntej tas. Nws txawm mus qhia tus hluas nkauj siv rab riam chais dib. Thaum tus hluas nkauj tab tom noj mov Tub Ntsuag txawm coj nws tus nees mus haus dej tom ntug teb lawm.

Thaum tus nees haus dej tag lawm Tub Ntsuag coj rov qab los tom tsev. Nkawd los txog hauv tsev ua cas tsis pom tus hluas nkauj khaub khaub hlav thiab ceb ceb muag lawm. Tiam sis ho muaj dua ib tug hluas nkauj zoo zoo nkauj nyob hauv Tub Ntsuag tsev. Tub Ntsuag xav tias ob tug hluas nkauj tag ki no zoo nkauj heev tiam sis tus no tseem zoo nkauj tshaj lawm thiab.





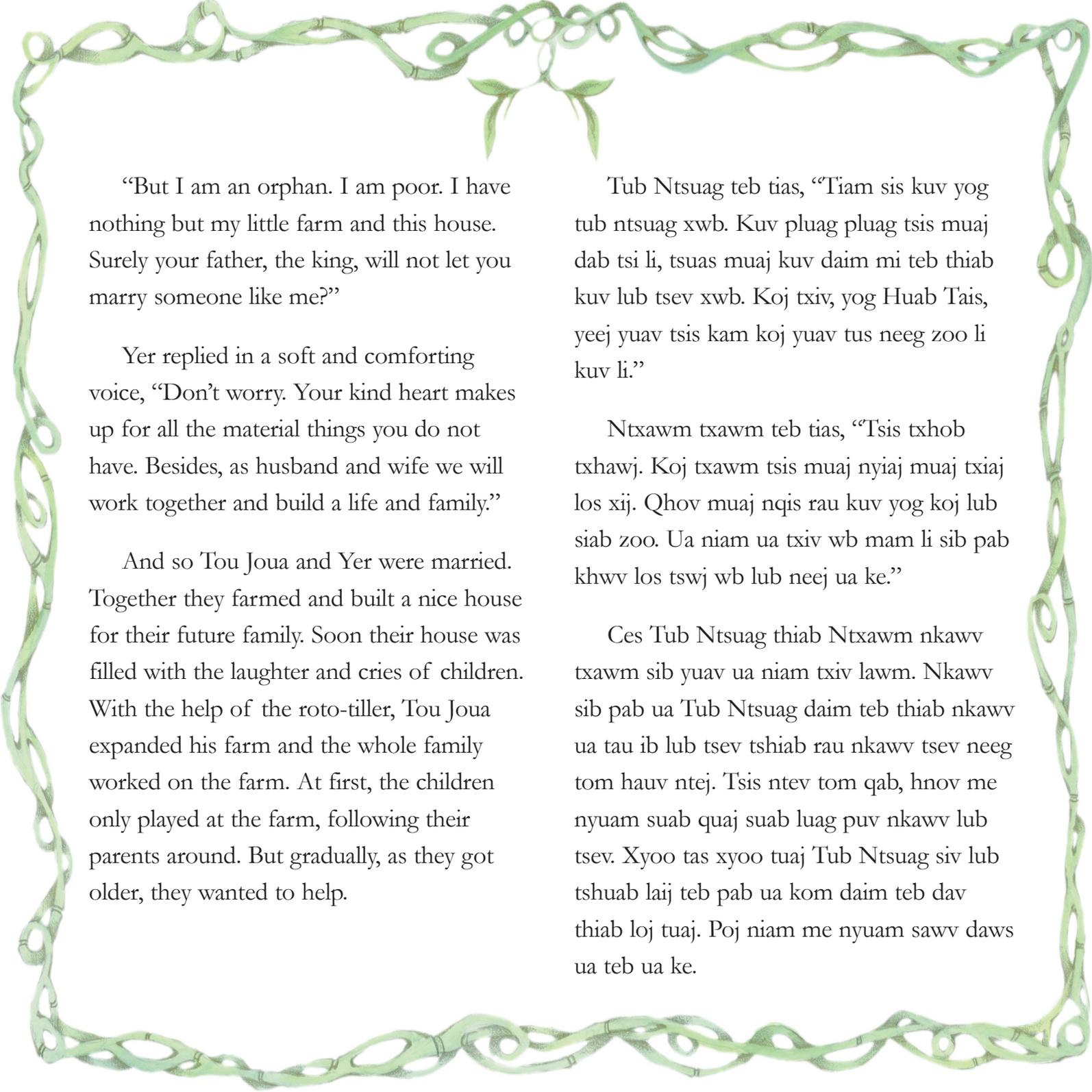
Surprised, Tou Joua asked, “Sister, where did you come from? And what happened to the dirty and raggedy girl who was eating my lunch?”

“Brother, I am that girl. My name is Yer and I am the king’s youngest daughter. My father sent me away from home to look for a husband. He told me to disguise myself as a poor wretched girl and go in search of a man who would not judge me based on my appearance. I’ve traveled for many months and no one has been willing to help my horse and me until I met you. You will be my husband.”

Tub Ntsuag tsis to taub tus hluas nkauj no los qhov twg los, nws txawm nug tias, “Leej muam, koj los qhov twg los. Ua li cas rau tus me hluas nkauj khaub khaub hlab uas tab tom noj kuv cov su lawm?”

Tus hluas nkauj txawm teb tias, “Leej nus, twb yog kuv lo mas. Kuv lub npe huv ua Ntxawm. Kuv yog Huab Tais tus ntxhais nkauj ntxawm. Kuv txiv xa kuv tawm mus nrhiav txiv yuav tiam sis kuv txiv kom kuv hnav ris tsho khaub khaub hlab mam li mus. Tus tub hluas twg pab kuv thiab kuv tus nees ces tus ntawd yog tus kuv yuav tau yuav ua kuv tus txiv. Wb taug kev tau ntau hli puv teb puv chaw yeej tsis muaj leej twg pab wb li. Koj yog thawj thawj tug uas pab wb thiab pub zaub pub mov rau wb noj. Koj yuav tsum ua kuv tus txiv xwb.”





“But I am an orphan. I am poor. I have nothing but my little farm and this house. Surely your father, the king, will not let you marry someone like me?”

Yer replied in a soft and comforting voice, “Don’t worry. Your kind heart makes up for all the material things you do not have. Besides, as husband and wife we will work together and build a life and family.”

And so Tou Joua and Yer were married. Together they farmed and built a nice house for their future family. Soon their house was filled with the laughter and cries of children. With the help of the roto-tiller, Tou Joua expanded his farm and the whole family worked on the farm. At first, the children only played at the farm, following their parents around. But gradually, as they got older, they wanted to help.

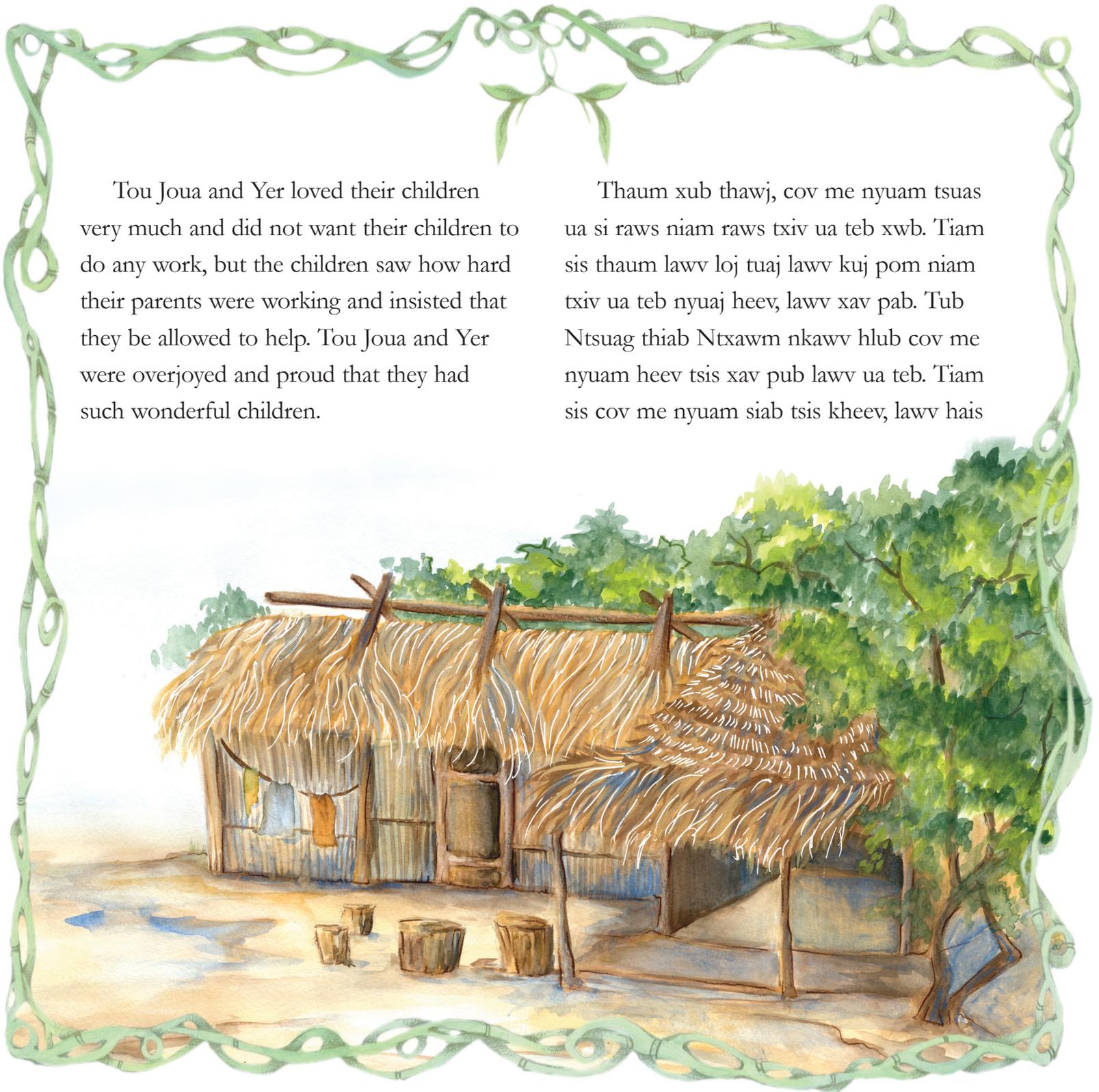
Tub Ntsuag teb tias, “Tiam sis kuv yog tub ntsuag xwb. Kuv pluag pluag tsis muaj dab tsi li, tsuas muaj kuv daim mi teb thiab kuv lub tsev xwb. Koj txiv, yog Huab Tais, yeej yuav tsis kam koj yuav tus neeg zoo li kuv li.”

Ntxawm txawm teb tias, “Tsis txhob txhawj. Koj txawm tsis muaj nyiaj muaj txiaj los xij. Qhov muaj nqis rau kuv yog koj lub siab zoo. Ua niam ua txiv wb mam li sib pab khwv los tswj wb lub neej ua ke.”

Ces Tub Ntsuag thiab Ntxawm nkawv txawm sib yuav ua niam txiv lawm. Nkawv sib pab ua Tub Ntsuag daim teb thiab nkawv ua tau ib lub tsev tshiab rau nkawv tsev neeg tom hauv ntej. Tsis ntev tom qab, hnov me nyuam suab quaj suab luag puv nkawv lub tsev. Xyoo tas xyoo tuaj Tub Ntsuag siv lub tshuab laij teb pab ua kom daim teb dav thiab loj tuaj. Poj niam me nyuam sawv daws ua teb ua ke.

Tou Joua and Yer loved their children very much and did not want their children to do any work, but the children saw how hard their parents were working and insisted that they be allowed to help. Tou Joua and Yer were overjoyed and proud that they had such wonderful children.

Thaum xub thawj, cov me nyuam tsuas ua si raws niam raws txiv ua teb xwb. Tiam sis thaum lawv loj tuaj lawv kuj pom niam txiv ua teb nyuaj heev, lawv xav pab. Tub Ntsuag thiab Ntxawm nkawv hlub cov me nyuam heev tsis xav pub lawv ua teb. Tiam sis cov me nyuam siab tsis kheev, lawv hais





There was a lot to do on the farm, but the children liked harvesting best. Unfortunately, this task involved a lot of cutting with sharp knives. They begged Tou Joua and Yer to let them help with this task.

Tou Joua had farmed for most of his life and knew the dangers involved with harvesting. He was reluctant to let his children use any sharp tools as he had been hurt by them before. Still, the children insisted, so he relented. But only the oldest two would be allowed to use the knives, and only after they had watched him show the proper way to use them.

tias lawv yuav pab xwb xwb li. Tub Ntsuag thiab Ntxawm kuj zoo siab heev tias cov me nyuam xav pab nkawv.

Nyob tom teb muaj ntau txoj hauj lwm, tiam sis cov me nyuam nyiam de zaub thiab hlais ub hlais no tshaj. Kev txhawj ntawm txoj hauj lwm no yog tau siv riam ntse heev los mus hlais zaub, hlais paj. Tub Ntsuag yeej tsis xav pub cov me nyuam siv riam siv txuas hlo li. Nws tus kheej nws twb raug mob ntau zaus los lawm, tsis xav kom cov me nyuam raug mob li nws thiab. Tiam sis cov me nyuam thov heev kom lawv txiv pub lawv de thiab hlais zaub. Tub Ntsuag ua ib siab pub lawv xyaum siv riam siv txuas, tiam sis tsuas pub ob tug hlob hlais thiab txiav zaub xwb.



He gathered all the children together and taught them all, but only Bee, who was 16, and Coua, who was 15, would be allowed to use the knives.

Tub Ntsuag coj tas nrho cov me nyuam los nyob ua ke xyauv siv riam siv txuas. Tiam sis, thaum txog caij ua hauj lwm tsuas pub Npis thiab Cua nkawv ob leeg ua xwb, vim Npis muaj 16 xyoos hos Cua muaj 15 xyoos lawm.



“The first thing,” said Tou Joua, “is that knives are not toys. They are tools of the farm. Never play with knives. They are sharp and should be handled with care. Never point a knife towards yourself or anyone. And when you are cutting, always, always cut away from your body, like



this.” Tou Joua held a knife in front of him and showed how to cut vegetable stems, moving his knife

hand away from his

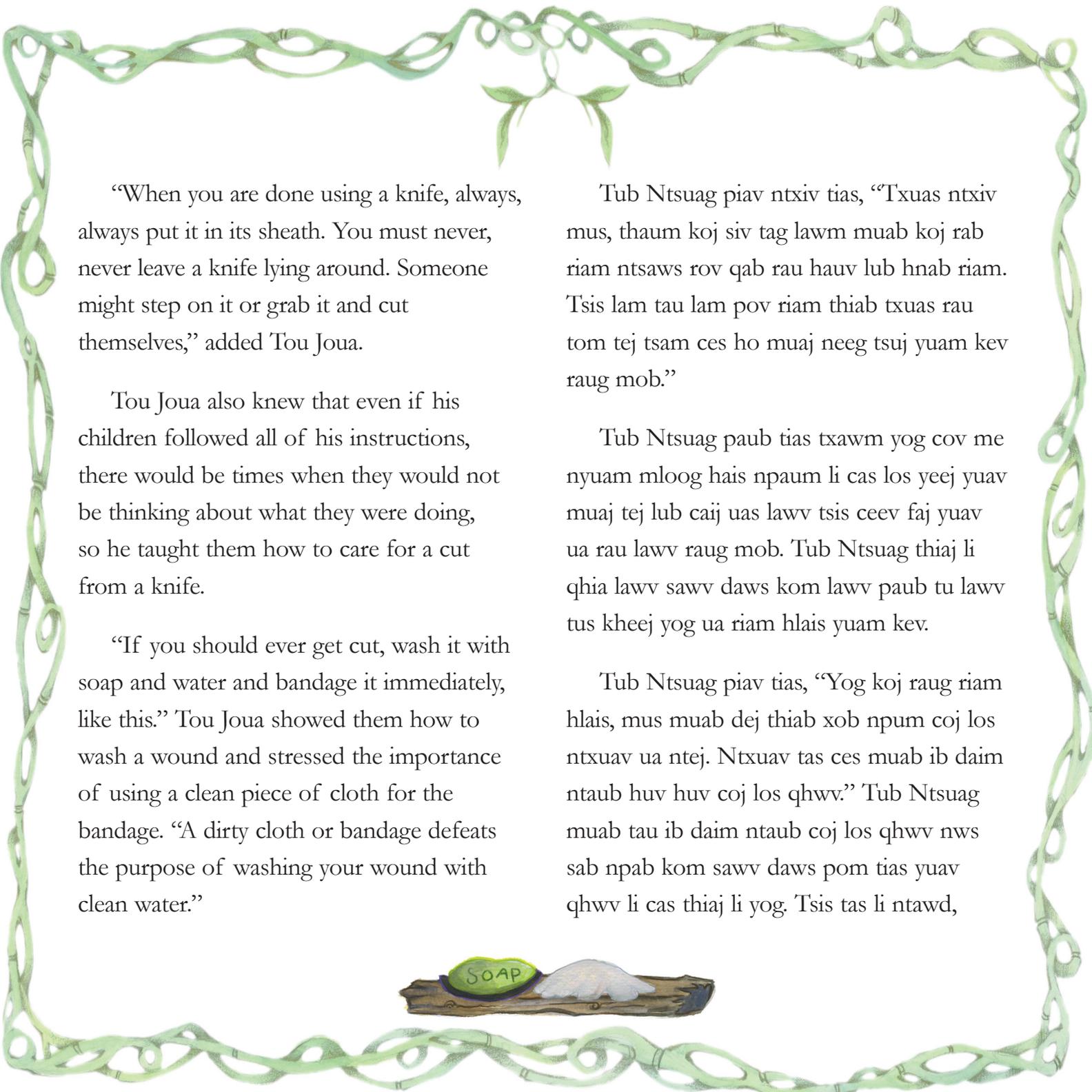
body as he made the cuts.
“When you cut vegetables or flower stems, never set them on your lap. Find a cutting board or something else, like a log, to put your vegetables on and cut them that way.”

Tub Ntsuag piav rau cov me nyuam tias, “Qhov tseem ceeb tshaj plaws uas nej yuav tsum paub yog qhov nov: Tej riam thiab txuas no tsis yog khoom ua si. Tsis yeem siv riam txuas ua si ib zaug li. Tsuas siv los ua liaj ua teb xwb. Qhov ob, riam thiab txuas no ntse ntse li, yuav tsum ceev faj txhua lub caij. Qhov peb, tsis yeem taw riam thiab txuas rau yus tus kheej los yog lwm tus neeg. Qhov plaub, thaum koj txiav thiab hlais ub hlais no yuav tsum hlais mus deb koj lub cev li nov. Tsis txhob hlais rov qab los rau ntawm yus lub cev.” Tub Ntsuag muab rab riam los txiav ib co kav paj rau cov me nyuam pom.



Tub Ntsuag piav ntxiv tias, “Thaum koj txiav zaub thiab kav paj tsis yeem txiav rau ntawm koj phab ceg ib zaug li. Nrhiav ib yav ntog ntoo los yog ib daim txiag ntoo coj los tiag mam li txiav.”





“When you are done using a knife, always, always put it in its sheath. You must never, never leave a knife lying around. Someone might step on it or grab it and cut themselves,” added Tou Joua.

Tou Joua also knew that even if his children followed all of his instructions, there would be times when they would not be thinking about what they were doing, so he taught them how to care for a cut from a knife.

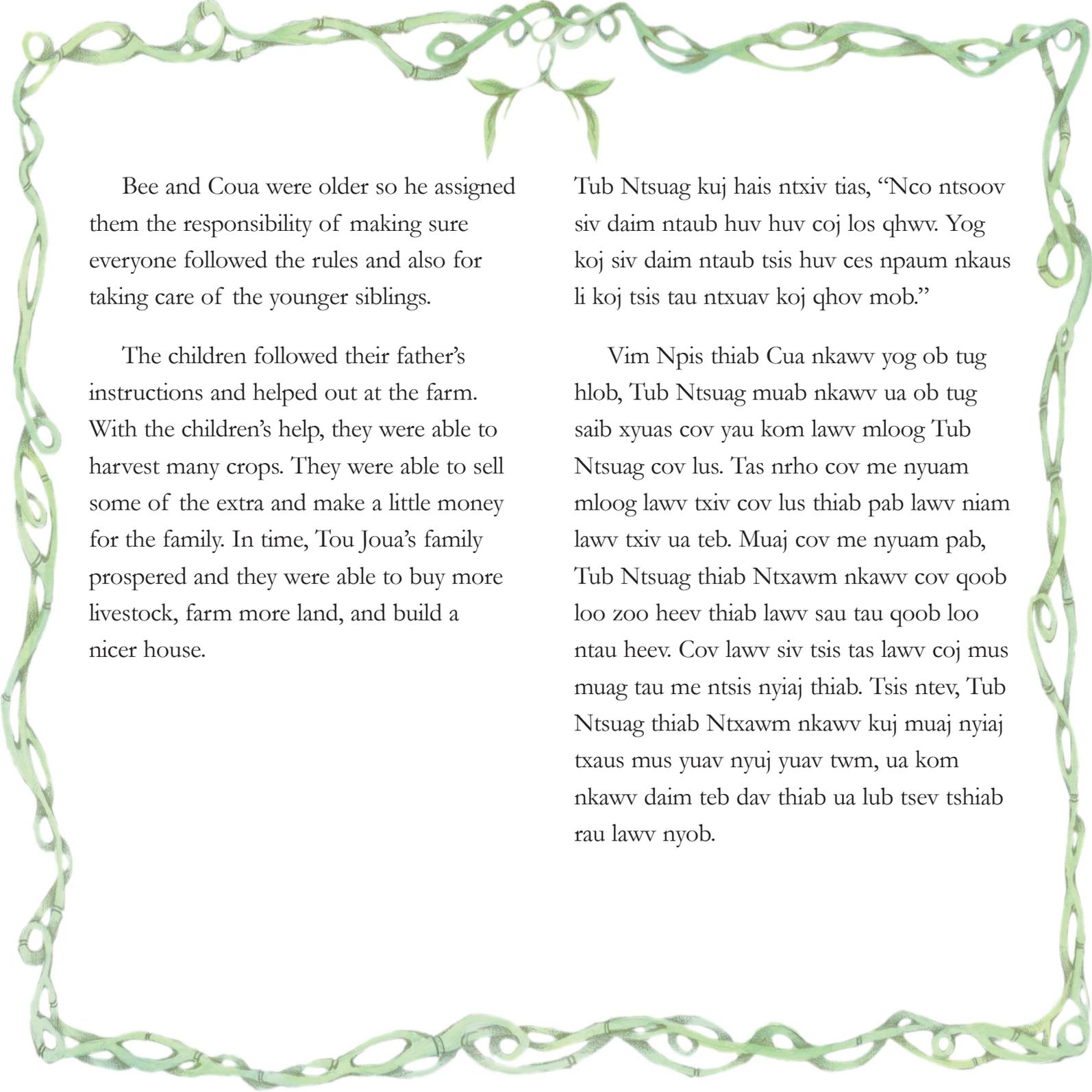
“If you should ever get cut, wash it with soap and water and bandage it immediately, like this.” Tou Joua showed them how to wash a wound and stressed the importance of using a clean piece of cloth for the bandage. “A dirty cloth or bandage defeats the purpose of washing your wound with clean water.”

Tub Ntsuag piav ntxiv tias, “Txuas ntxiv mus, thaum koj siv tag lawm muab koj rab riam ntsaws rov qab rau hauv lub hnab riam. Tsis lam tau lam pov riam thiab txuas rau tom tej tsam ces ho muaj neeg tsuj yuam kev raug mob.”

Tub Ntsuag paub tias txawm yog cov me nyuam mloog hais npaum li cas los yeej yuav muaj tej lub caij uas lawv tsis ceev faj yuav ua rau lawv raug mob. Tub Ntsuag thiaj li qhia lawv sawv daws kom lawv paub tu lawv tus kheej yog ua riam hlais yuam kev.

Tub Ntsuag piav tias, “Yog koj raug riam hlais, mus muab dej thiab xob npum coj los ntxuav ua ntej. Ntxuav tas ces muab ib daim ntaub huv huv coj los qhvw.” Tub Ntsuag muab tau ib daim ntaub coj los qhvw nws sab npab kom sawv daws pom tias yuav qhvw li cas thiaj li yog. Tsis tas li ntawd,





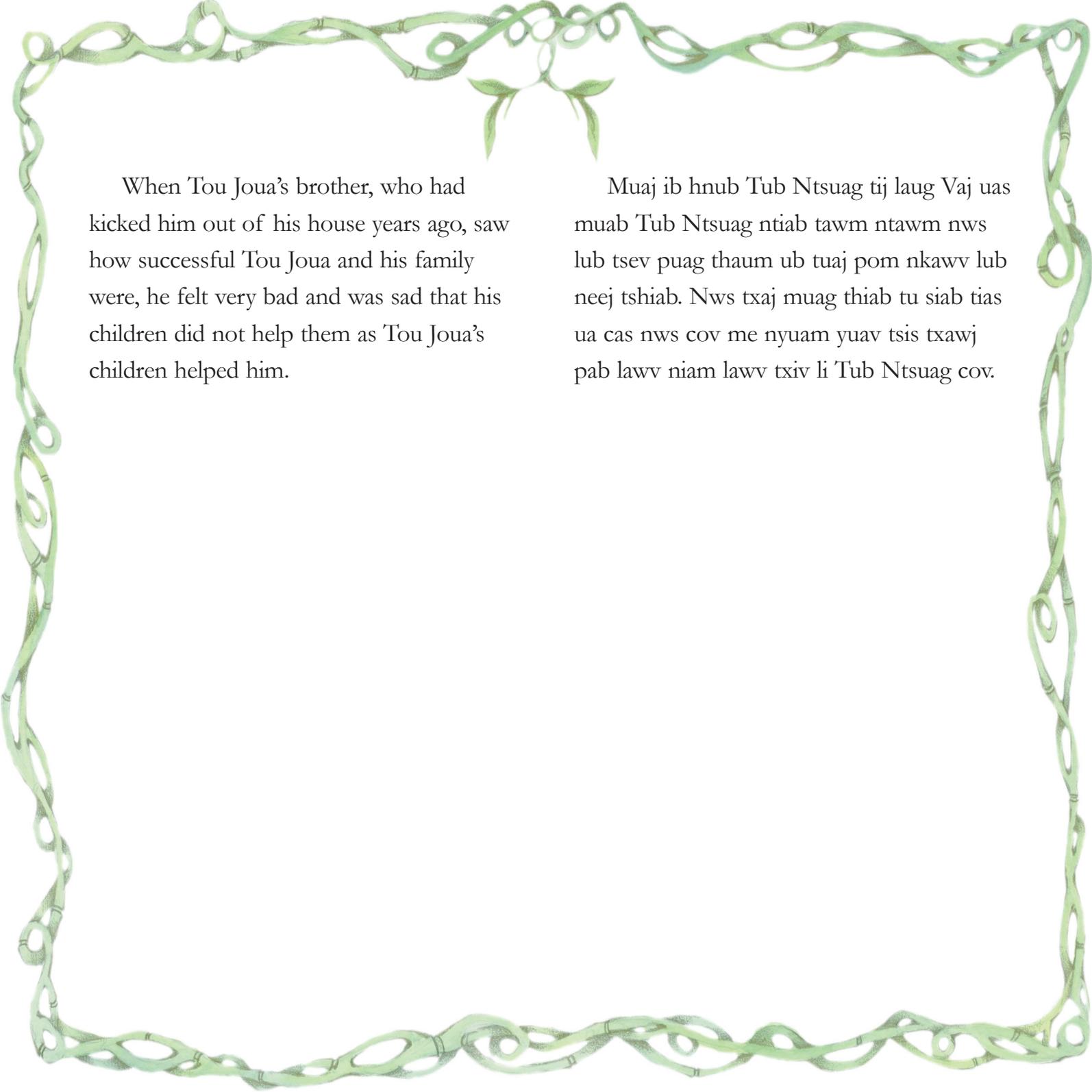
Bee and Coua were older so he assigned them the responsibility of making sure everyone followed the rules and also for taking care of the younger siblings.

The children followed their father's instructions and helped out at the farm. With the children's help, they were able to harvest many crops. They were able to sell some of the extra and make a little money for the family. In time, Tou Joua's family prospered and they were able to buy more livestock, farm more land, and build a nicer house.

Tub Ntsuag kuj hais ntxiv tias, “Nco ntsoov siv daim ntaub huv huv koj los qhvw. Yog koj siv daim ntaub tsis huv ces npaum nkaus li koj tsis tau ntxuav koj qhov mob.”

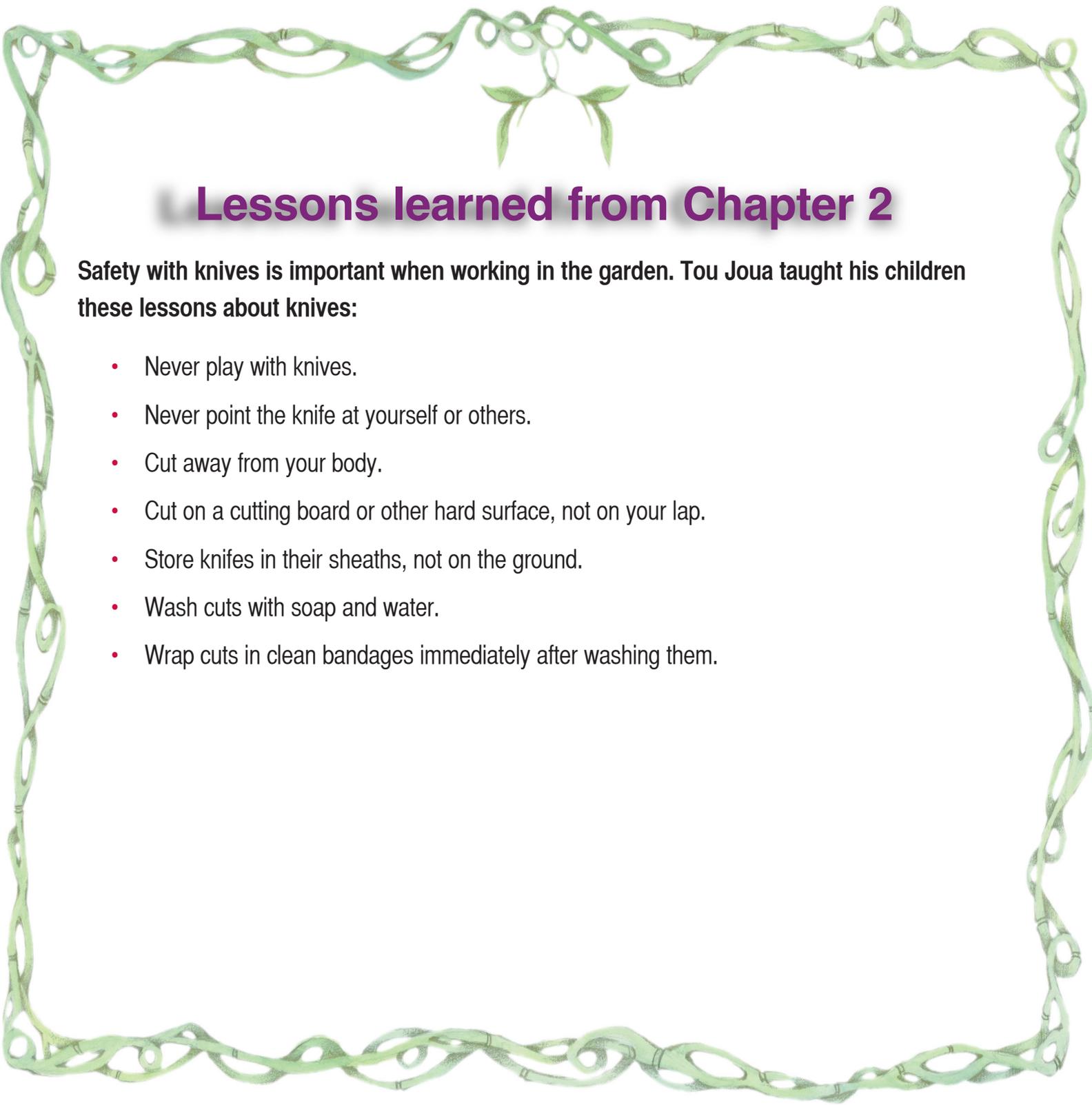
Vim Npis thiab Cua nkawv yog ob tug hlob, Tub Ntsuag muab nkawv ua ob tug saib xyuas cov yau kom lawv mloog Tub Ntsuag cov lus. Tas nrho cov me nyuam mloog lawv txiv cov lus thiab pab lawv niam lawv txiv ua teb. Muaj cov me nyuam pab, Tub Ntsuag thiab Ntxawm nkawv cov qoob loo zoo heev thiab lawv sau tau qoob loo ntau heev. Cov lawv siv tsis tas lawv koj mus muag tau me ntsis nyiaj thiab. Tsis ntev, Tub Ntsuag thiab Ntxawm nkawv kuj muaj nyiaj txaus mus yuav nyuj yuav twm, ua kom nkawv daim teb dav thiab ua lub tsev tshiab rau lawv nyob.





When Tou Joua's brother, who had kicked him out of his house years ago, saw how successful Tou Joua and his family were, he felt very bad and was sad that his children did not help them as Tou Joua's children helped him.

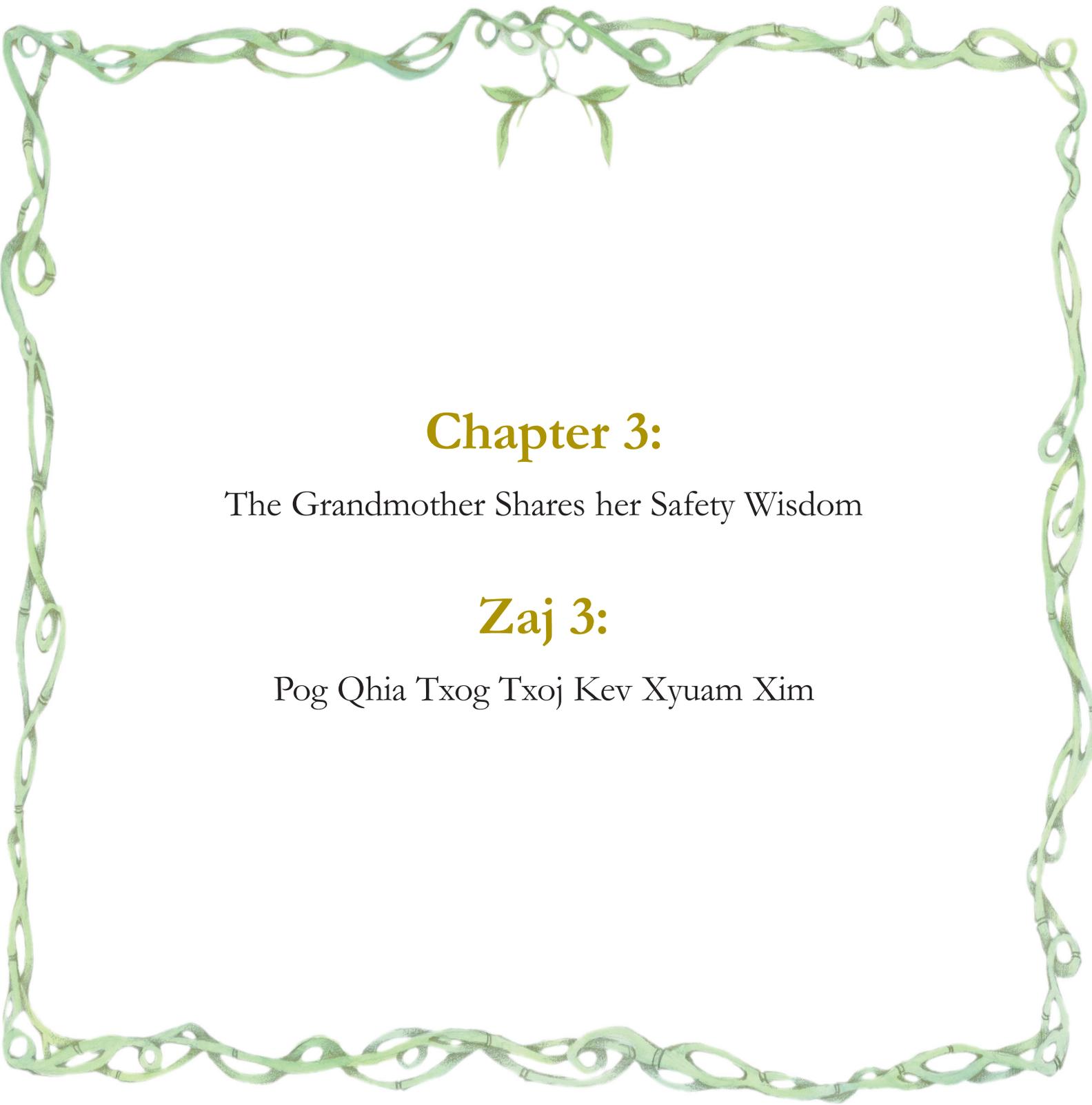
Muaj ib hnuv Tub Ntsuag tij laug Vaj uas muab Tub Ntsuag ntiab tawm ntawm nws lub tsev puag thaum ub tuaj pom nkawv lub neej tshiab. Nws txaj muag thiab tu siab tias ua cas nws cov me nyuam yuav tsis txawj pab lawv niam lawv txiv li Tub Ntsuag cov.



Lessons learned from Chapter 2

Safety with knives is important when working in the garden. Tou Joua taught his children these lessons about knives:

- Never play with knives.
- Never point the knife at yourself or others.
- Cut away from your body.
- Cut on a cutting board or other hard surface, not on your lap.
- Store knives in their sheaths, not on the ground.
- Wash cuts with soap and water.
- Wrap cuts in clean bandages immediately after washing them.



Chapter 3:

The Grandmother Shares her Safety Wisdom

Zaj 3:

Pog Qhia Txog Txoj Kev Xyuam Xim

Tou Joua and Yer, with the help of their roto-tiller and their children, were harvesting more crops than they could use. Tou Joua decided that they should go and sell the extra crops at the market for additional income. He had never sold anything at the market before, but thought that it would not be so hard. He had been to the market before and he thought if he had fresh vegetables people would just come and buy them.

After discussing it with Yer, they decided to go ahead with the plan. The family would work all day to harvest the vegetables the day

Tub Ntsuag thiab Ntxawm nkawv cov qoob loo zoo heev. Vim nkawv muaj lub tshuab laij teb thiab nkawv cov me nyuam pab nkawv ua teb. Tub Ntsuag xav tias cov qoob loo uas lawv noj tsis tas coj mus muag tom tsev khw ntshe yuav tau nyiaj los pab tsev neeg. Nws tsis tau muag khoom tom tsev khw ib zaug li tiam sis xws li yuav tsis nyuaj npaum li cas thiab. Tub Ntsuag xav tias yog nws muaj qoob loo tshiab thiab huv neeg yeej yuav tsum yuav xwb.

Tub Ntsuag thiab Ntxawm nkawd xav thiab ntsuas tas nkawv ua ib siab mus muag qoob loo tom tsev khw. Sawv daws de zaub



before and then Tou Joua would take all the vegetables they had for sale and go to the market early in the morning. Yer and the children would stay behind to harvest more vegetables for the next day. It sounded like a good plan and so they went ahead with it.

When the day came for Tou Joua to go to the market, everyone got up at the first crow of the rooster and prepared the

ib hnuv ces hnuv tom ntej Tub Ntsuag mam li sawv ntxov ntxov coj mus muag tom tsev khw. Ntxawm thiab cov me nyuam mam li nyob tsev de zaub ntxiv npaj rau hnuv tom ntej. Xav mus xav los xws li yog ib qhov tswv yim zoo thiab tsis nyuaj.

Txog hnuv uas Tub Ntsuag yuav mus muag qoob loo tom tsev khw, tas nrho sawv daws sawv nrog qaib qua los

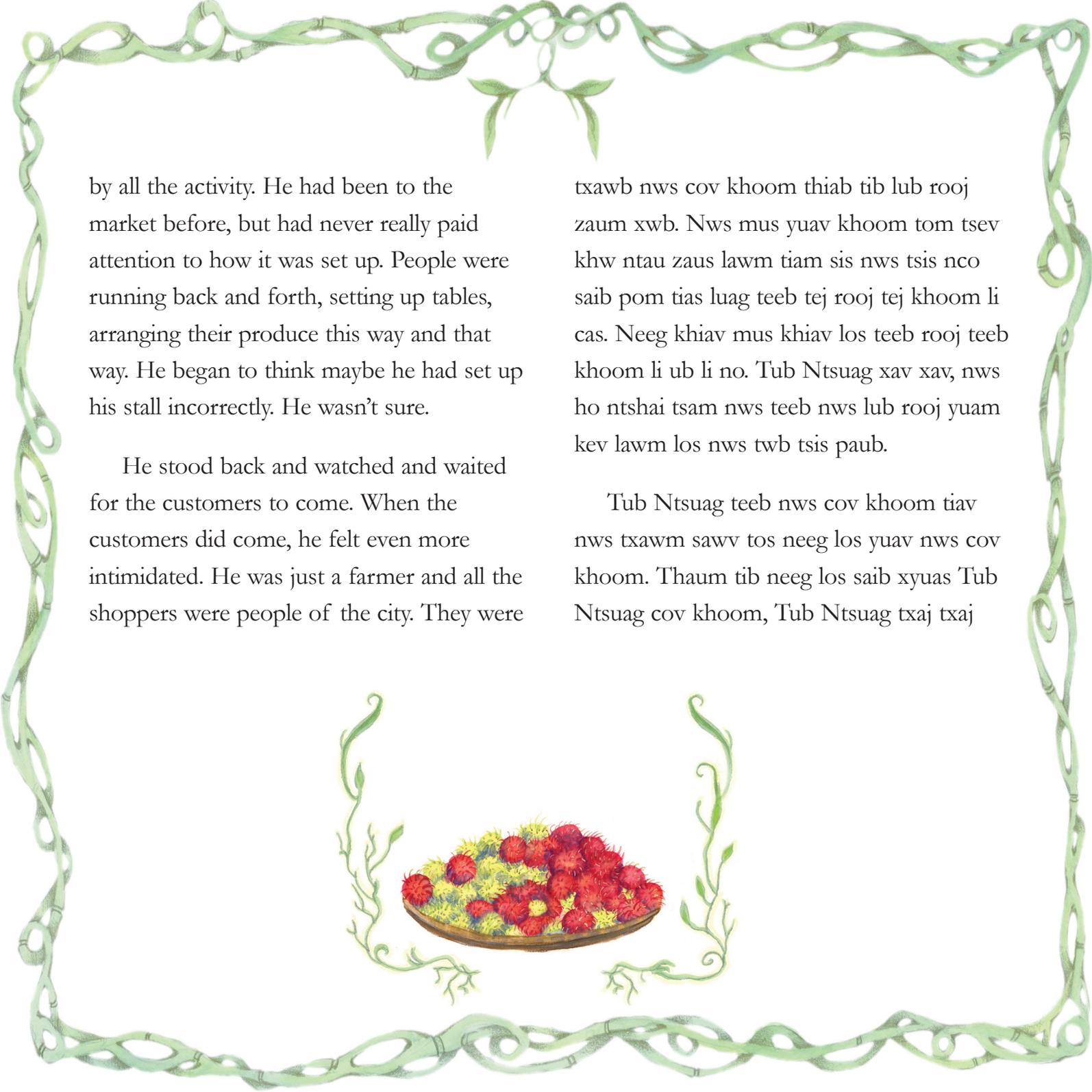




vegetables. Tou Joua took off before the sun rose and arrived at the market place just as all the other farmers were arriving. This was his first time so he did not have much to set up. He only had a small table and a chair to sit on. He did not have a tent like most of the other farmers. Tou Joua was intimidated

npaj cov khoom uas Tub Ntsuag yuav coj mus muag. Tub Ntsuag sawv kev mus ua ntej lub hnuv tuaj. Nws mus txog tom tsev khw tib lub sij hawm li luag lwm cov thiab. Zaum no yog nws thawj thawj zaug xwb ces nws tsis muaj khoom ntau npaum li luag lwm tus. Tub Ntsuag tsis muaj tsev ntaub yas li luag tej, nws tsuas muaj tib lub rooj





by all the activity. He had been to the market before, but had never really paid attention to how it was set up. People were running back and forth, setting up tables, arranging their produce this way and that way. He began to think maybe he had set up his stall incorrectly. He wasn't sure.

He stood back and watched and waited for the customers to come. When the customers did come, he felt even more intimidated. He was just a farmer and all the shoppers were people of the city. They were

txawb nws cov khoom thiab tib lub rooj zaum xwb. Nws mus yuav khoom tom tsev khw ntau zaus lawm tiam sis nws tsis nco saib pom tias luag teeb tej rooj tej khoom li cas. Neeg khiav mus khiav los teeb rooj teeb khoom li ub li no. Tub Ntsuag xav xav, nws ho ntshai tsam nws teeb nws lub rooj yuam kev lawm los nws twb tsis paub.

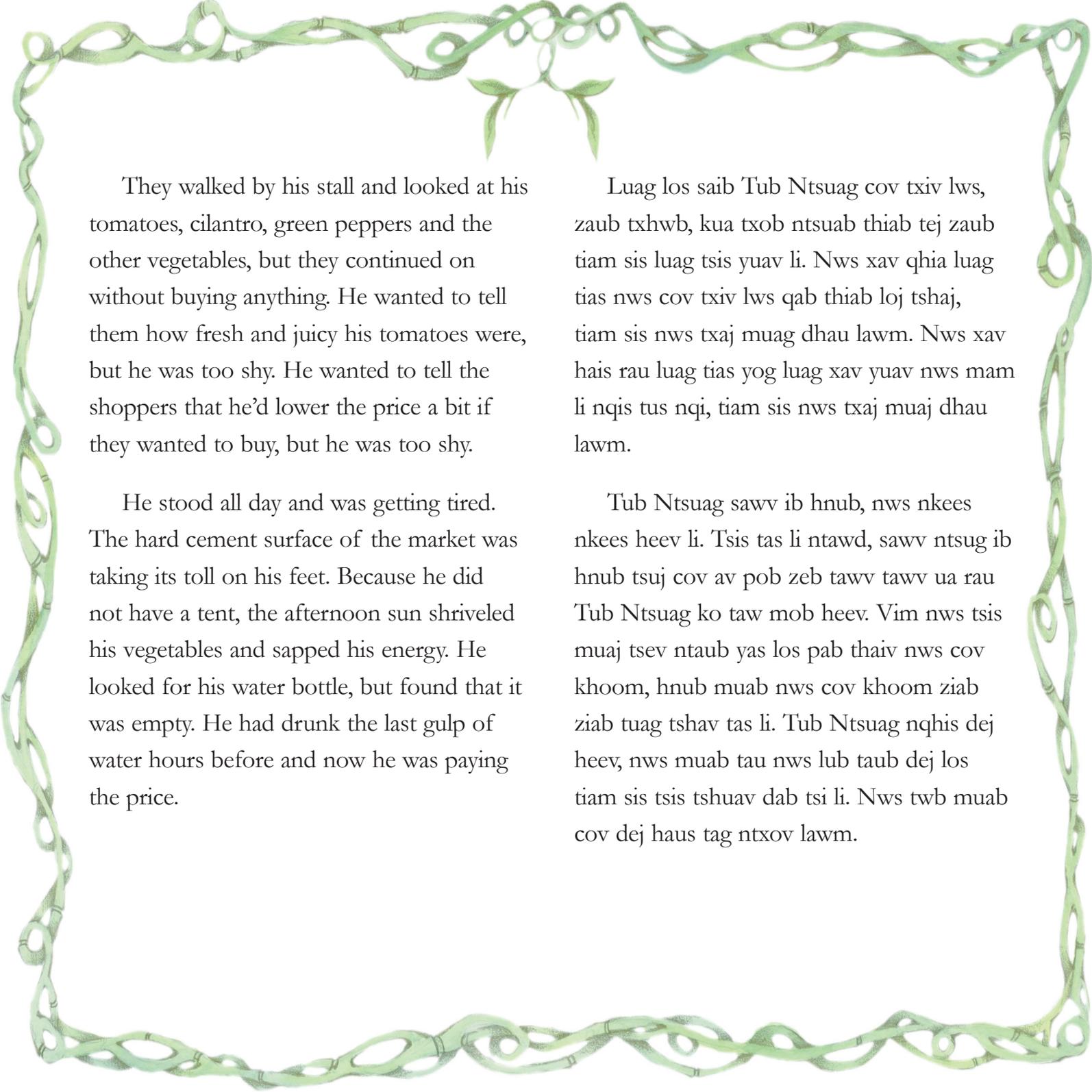
Tub Ntsuag teeb nws cov khoom tiav nws txawm sawv tos neeg los yuav nws cov khoom. Thaum tib neeg los saib xyuas Tub Ntsuag cov khoom, Tub Ntsuag txaj txaj



educated and dressed differently. They spoke differently and some of them did not even speak Hmong. He was afraid to talk to them, to negotiate, to say anything. So he just sat there behind his table and waited for them to buy.

muag tsis hais ib lo li. Nws txaj muag vim nws yog ib tug neeg ua teb xwb hos cov neeg tuaj yuav khoom yog neeg nyob zos loj. Luag yog neeg txawj ntse, hnav ris tsho txawv, hais lus txawv, tsis tas li ntawd muaj tej cov twb tsis paub lus Hmoob li. Tub Ntsuag txaj muag heev, nrog luag tham tsis tau, hais tsis tau ib lo li. Ces cia li zaum twj ywm tos seb puas muaj neeg los yuav nws cov khoom xwb.



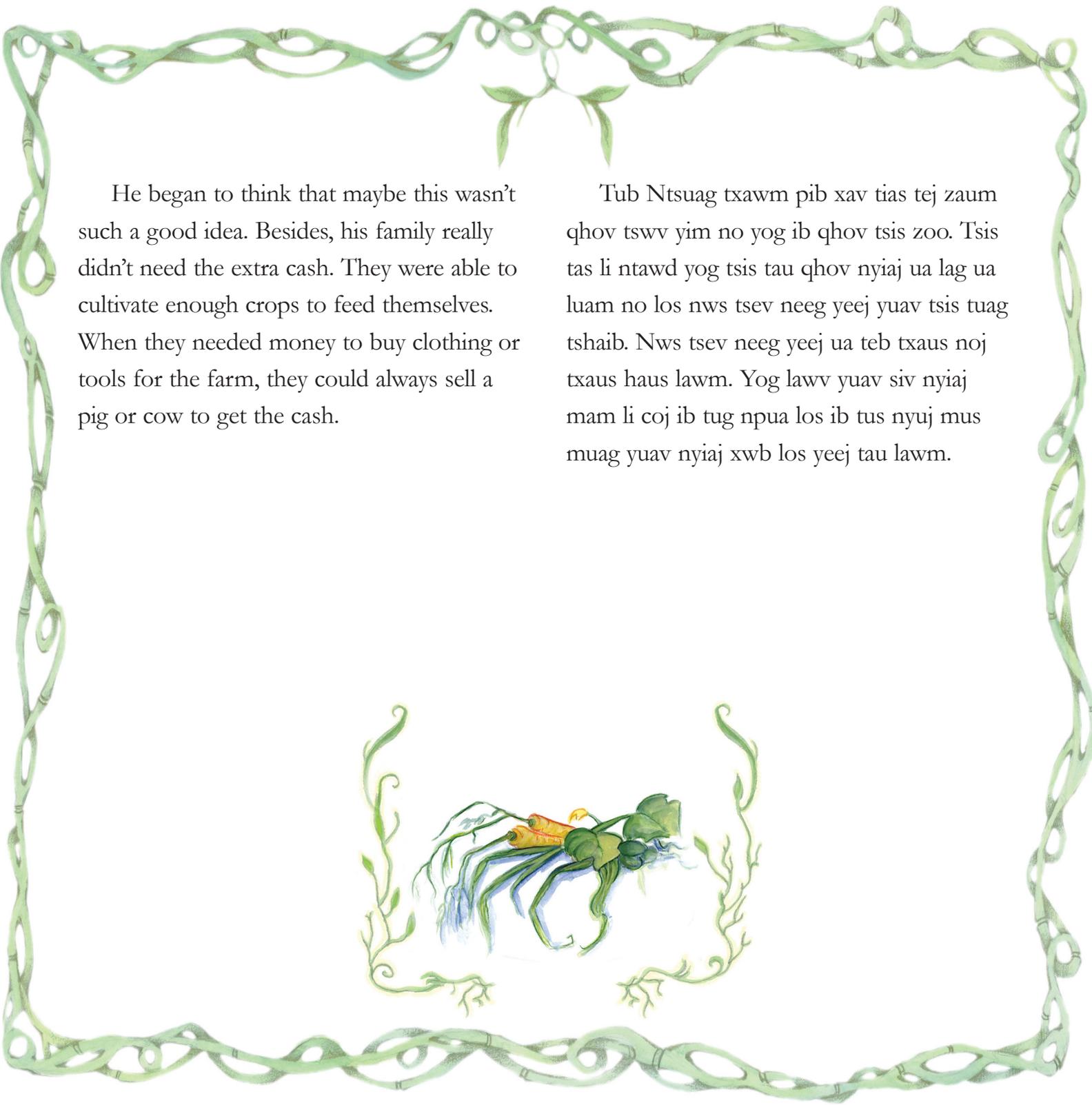


They walked by his stall and looked at his tomatoes, cilantro, green peppers and the other vegetables, but they continued on without buying anything. He wanted to tell them how fresh and juicy his tomatoes were, but he was too shy. He wanted to tell the shoppers that he'd lower the price a bit if they wanted to buy, but he was too shy.

He stood all day and was getting tired. The hard cement surface of the market was taking its toll on his feet. Because he did not have a tent, the afternoon sun shriveled his vegetables and sapped his energy. He looked for his water bottle, but found that it was empty. He had drunk the last gulp of water hours before and now he was paying the price.

Luag los saib Tub Ntsuag cov txiv lws, zaub txhwb, kua txob ntsuab thiab tej zaub tiam sis luag tsis yuav li. Nws xav qhia luag tias nws cov txiv lws qab thiab loj tshaj, tiam sis nws txaj muag dhau lawm. Nws xav hais rau luag tias yog luag xav yuav nws mam li nqis tus nqi, tiam sis nws txaj muaj dhau lawm.

Tub Ntsuag sawv ib hnuv, nws nkees nkees heev li. Tsis tas li ntawd, sawv ntsug ib hnuv tsuj cov av pob zeb tawv tawv ua rau Tub Ntsuag ko taw mob heev. Vim nws tsis muaj tsev ntaub yas los pab thaiv nws cov khoom, hnuv muab nws cov khoom ziaab ziaab tuag tshav tas li. Tub Ntsuag nqhis dej heev, nws muab tau nws lub taub dej los tiam sis tsis tshuav dab tsi li. Nws twb muab cov dej haus tag ntxov lawm.



He began to think that maybe this wasn't such a good idea. Besides, his family really didn't need the extra cash. They were able to cultivate enough crops to feed themselves. When they needed money to buy clothing or tools for the farm, they could always sell a pig or cow to get the cash.

Tub Ntsuag txawm pib xav tias tej zaum qhov tswv yim no yog ib qhov tsis zoo. Tsis tas li ntawd yog tsis tau qhov nyiaj ua lag ua luam no los nws tsev neeg yeej yuav tsis tuag tshaib. Nws tsev neeg yeej ua teb txaus noj txaus haus lawm. Yog lawv yuav siv nyiaj mam li coj ib tug npua los ib tus nyuj mus muag yuav nyiaj xwb los yeej tau lawm.



Tou Joua was ready to give up when an old woman approached his stall. He had seen her walking around the market from stall to stall talking to people, but not buying anything. She looked familiar but he could not remember where he had seen her before.

When she reached his stall she said to him, “Son, may I beg of you a cucumber to quench my thirst and a couple of potatoes for my dinner tonight?”

Tou Joua replied, “Grandmother, take this whole box of cucumbers and here, take this box of potatoes as well. No one is going to buy them anyway. And they will not be fit to sell tomorrow. So please take them.”



Tub Ntsuag tab tom npaj yuav los tsev thiab txiav txim siab tsis rov qab tuaj tom tsev khw lawm. Tiam sis ho muaj ib tus pog laus laus taug kev los rau ntawm Tub Ntsuag. Tub Ntsuag twb pom tus pog laus no taug kev mus mus los los ncig puv lub tsev khw tiam sis tsis pom nws yuav dab tsi li. Xws li Tub Ntsuag twb pom tus pog laus no ib zaug ntev los lawm tiam sis nws tsis nco qab tias yog qhov twg thiab thaum twg.

Thaum tus pog laus los txog Tub Ntsuag lub rooj nws txawm hais tias, “Me tub, kuv nqhis nqhis dej li thov koj ib lub dib noj thiab thov koj ob peb lub qos coj mus ua hmo noj puas tau?”

Tub Ntsuag teb tias, “Pog, koj yuav dib ces koj nqa hlo kuv thawv dib no mus thiab koj yuav qos ces kuv muab hlo thawv qos nov rau koj. Yeej tsis muaj leej twg yuav lawm. Tsis tas li ntawd tag kig yuav tsis zoo muab muag lawm. Cia li nqa mus rau koj noj.”

“Son, I only want one cucumber and a couple of potatoes. I do not want to make you lose money.”

“Grandmother, don’t worry. I want you to have them. I don’t know why no one wants to buy my vegetables. My vegetables are as clean and as fresh as anyone else’s here, but people just walk by without even taking a look. I am tired, thirsty, and my feet hurt. I just want to go home, but I can’t take all these vegetable back with me. So take what you need.”

Tus pog laus teb tias, “Me tub, kuv yuav tib lub dib thiab ob peb lub qos xwb. Kuv tsis xav ua rau koj poob nyiaj.”

Tub Ntsuag txawm teb tias, “Pog, tsis txhob txhawj txog kuv. Kuv xav muab rau koj. Kuv tsis paub tias ua li cas tsis muaj neeg yuav kuv cov khoom li. Kuv cov khoom no yeej qab tib yam, huv tib yam tiam sis luag yeej tsis kov kuv cov li. Kuv nkees nkees, nqhis nqhis dej, thiab mob mob kotaw li. Kuv xav mus tsev tiam sis kuv nqa tsis taus cov khoom no rov qab mus tsev. Koj xav yuav dab tsi los kav tsij khaws mus.”

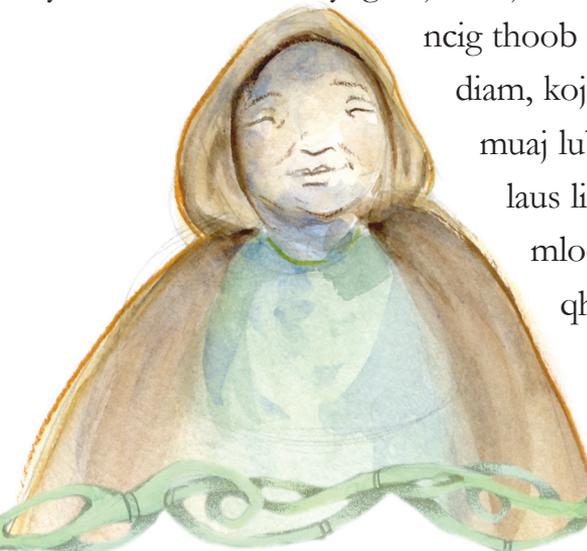


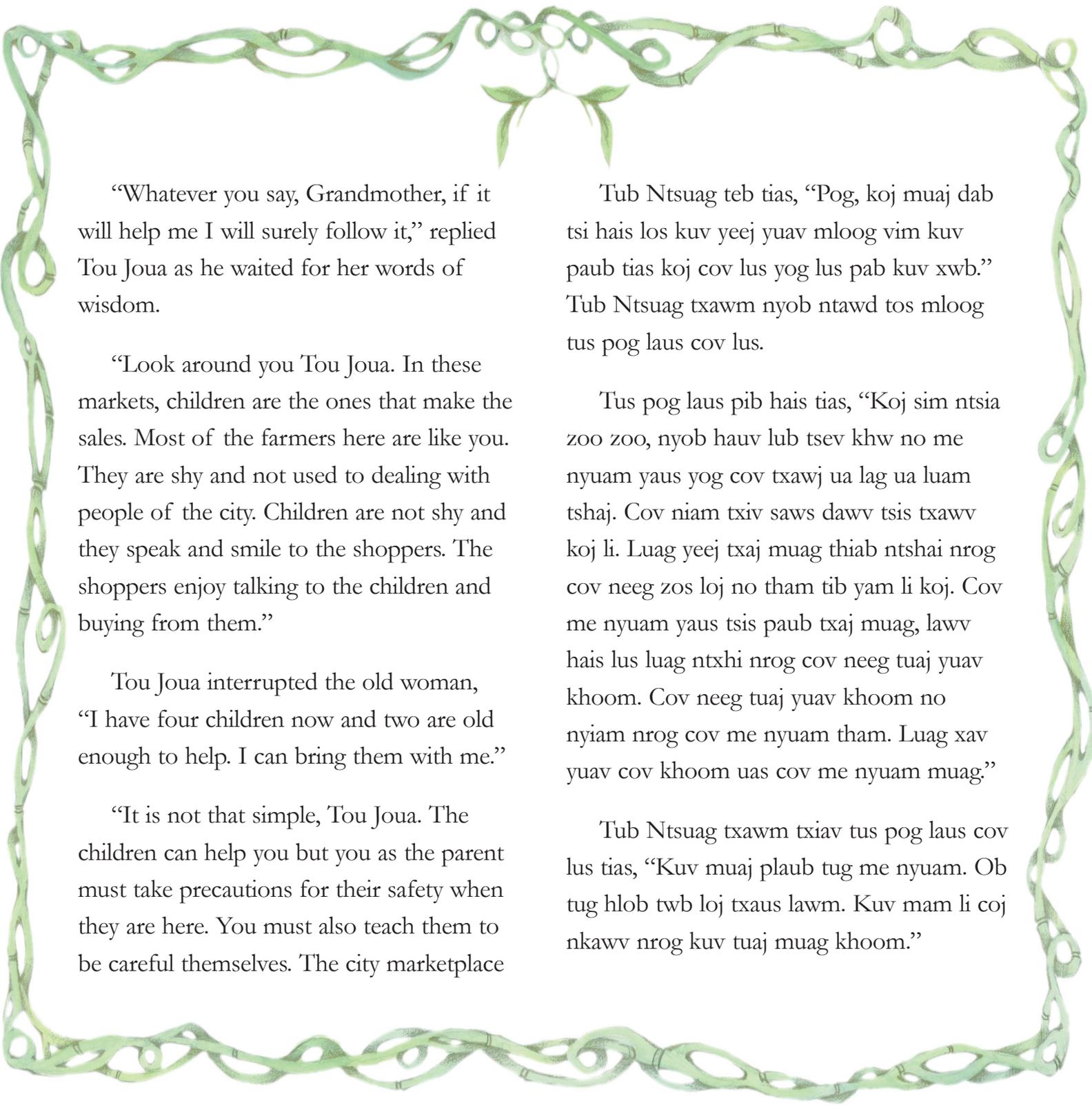
The old lady smiled and looked at Tou Joua. Upon seeing the kindness and wisdom in her eyes, Tou Joua remembered where he had seen her before. She was the old woman who had come to him years ago when he was lonely and wanted a wife. She had given him advice back then and he hoped that she would do the same now.

“Thank you, Son, but I don’t need it all. And don’t give up. This is only your first day. I have been through these markets many times today. You are the first person I have met who was willing to help an old woman. Listen to me, do as I say, and you will have success, Tou Joua.”

Tus pog laus tsa taub hau los ntsia Tub Ntsuag. Tub Ntsuag pom tias tus pog laus no yog ib tug neeg siab zoo. Tub Ntsuag txawm nco dheev tias nws pom tus pog laus no ib zaug lawm. Tus pog laus no yog tus uas pab Tub Ntsuag nrhiav tau poj niam. Nws pab Tub Ntsuag ib zaug lawm, Tub Ntsuag xav tias tej zaum nws yuav rov qab pab Tub Ntsuag ib zaug ntxiv thiab.

Tus pog laus txawm hais rau Tub Ntsuag tias, “Ua tsaug me tub, tiam sis kuv siv tsis tas. Koj tsis txhob rawm tso txoj kev ua lag ua laum pov tseg. Hnub no nyuam qhuav yog koj thawj thawj hnub xwb. Hnub no kuv ncig thoob lub tsev khw ob peb zaug diam, koj yog thawj thawj tus uas muaj lub siab zoo los pab tus pog laus li kuv. Tub Ntsuag, yog koj mloog kuv hais, ua raws li kuv qhia ces koj yuav muaj nyiaj muaj txiaj.”





“Whatever you say, Grandmother, if it will help me I will surely follow it,” replied Tou Joua as he waited for her words of wisdom.

“Look around you Tou Joua. In these markets, children are the ones that make the sales. Most of the farmers here are like you. They are shy and not used to dealing with people of the city. Children are not shy and they speak and smile to the shoppers. The shoppers enjoy talking to the children and buying from them.”

Tou Joua interrupted the old woman, “I have four children now and two are old enough to help. I can bring them with me.”

“It is not that simple, Tou Joua. The children can help you but you as the parent must take precautions for their safety when they are here. You must also teach them to be careful themselves. The city marketplace

Tub Ntsuag teb tias, “Pog, koj muaj dab tsi hais los kuv yeej yuav mloog vim kuv paub tias koj cov lus yog lus pab kuv xwb.” Tub Ntsuag txawm nyob ntawd tos mloog tus pog laus cov lus.

Tus pog laus pib hais tias, “Koj sim ntsia zoo zoo, nyob hauv lub tsev khw no me nyuam yaus yog cov txawj ua lag ua luam tshaj. Cov niam txiv saws dawv tsis txawj koj li. Luag yeej txaj muag thiab ntshai nrog cov neeg zos loj no tham tib yam li koj. Cov me nyuam yaus tsis paub txaj muag, lawv hais lus luag ntxhi nrog cov neeg tuaj yuav khoom. Cov neeg tuaj yuav khoom no nyiam nrog cov me nyuam tham. Luag xav yuav cov khoom uas cov me nyuam muag.”

Tub Ntsuag txawm txiav tus pog laus cov lus tias, “Kuv muaj plaub tug me nyuam. Ob tug hlob twb loj txaus lawm. Kuv mam li coj nkawv nrog kuv tuaj muag khoom.”



is not a place where you can let your children work without constant supervision. Listen, Tou Joua, there are a few things that you need to understand before letting your children help you at the market.”

First, you need to think about the physical strain that they will be under when working at the market place. Never let them lift or carry anything that is heavier than what they can carry for a short distance. Typically, this means no more than a half crate of tomatoes further than 50 or 60 steps. Look over there; do you see that boy who is carrying that box of potatoes? See how much he has to strain to pick it up and then carry it all the way to the table? One trip like that may be fine, but day after day of doing that will lead to a lifetime of back and muscle problems for him.”



Tus pog laus txawm teb tias, “Yuav tsis yooj yim npaum li koj hais ko. Cov me nyuam pab tau koj, tiam sis yus ua niam ua txiv yus yuav tsum saib xyuas kom tsis txhob muaj teeb meem rau cov me nyuam. Tsis tas li ntawd, koj yuav tsum qhia kom lawv paub ceev faj lawv tus kheej. Tsev khw no tsis yog ib qhov chaw uas yuav tso tau me nyuam yaus khiav hauj lwm raws li lawv siab xav. Ua niam ua txiv yuav tsum saib xyuas txhua lub caij. Mloog zoo Tub Ntsuag, muaj ob peb yam koj yuav tsum paub ua ntej koj tso cov me nyuam tuaj pab koj.”

“Qhov ib, koj yuav tsum xav txog tias yog cov me nyuam tuaj pab koj, lawv puas yuav muaj zog ua tej hauj lwm no. Tsis yeem pub lawv nqa tej thawv khoom uas hnyav tshaj qhov lawv nqa tau mus ob peb kauj ruam. Feem ntau, lawv tsuas nqa tau ib nrab thawv txiv lws suav mus li tsib caug rau rau caum

“Children have so much energy, they may want to stand and work all day. But you, as the parent, must tell them to take breaks and sit down. Standing on this cement all day long is neither good for them nor you.”

“That must be why my heels have been burning all day,” Tou Joua interrupted again.

“They may be excited about selling so many things and collecting money that they do not notice that they are tired. You have to watch them and make them take their breaks and drink plenty of water. Being tired, they may slip or trip over boxes and hurt themselves.”

kauj ruam xwb. Tej thawv hnyav tshaj los yog mus deb tshaj no yuav tsis pub lawv nqa. Koj puas pom tus me tub uas nqa thawv qos tod? Koj puas pom tias nws siv zog kawg nkaus nws twb yuav luag nqa tsis tau lub thawv qos coj los rau pem lub rooj? Nqa ib zaug li ntawd kuj tsis ua li cas tiam sis yog niaj hnuv nqa li ntawd tus me nyuam yuav mob laug mus tas ib sim.”

“Me nyuam yaus thev taus tshaj yus cov laus. Tej zaum lawv twb nkees nkees lawm los lawv twb tsis paub. Ua niam ua txiv, yus yuav tsum nthu kom lawv los zaum so thiab. Sawv ib hnuv ntawm cov av pob zeb no tsis zoo rau leej twg kiag li tsis hais tus laus tus hluas.”

Tub Ntsuag txiav tus pog laus cov lus dua, “Vim li ntawd kuv qab xib taws thiaj li kub lug puas yog?”

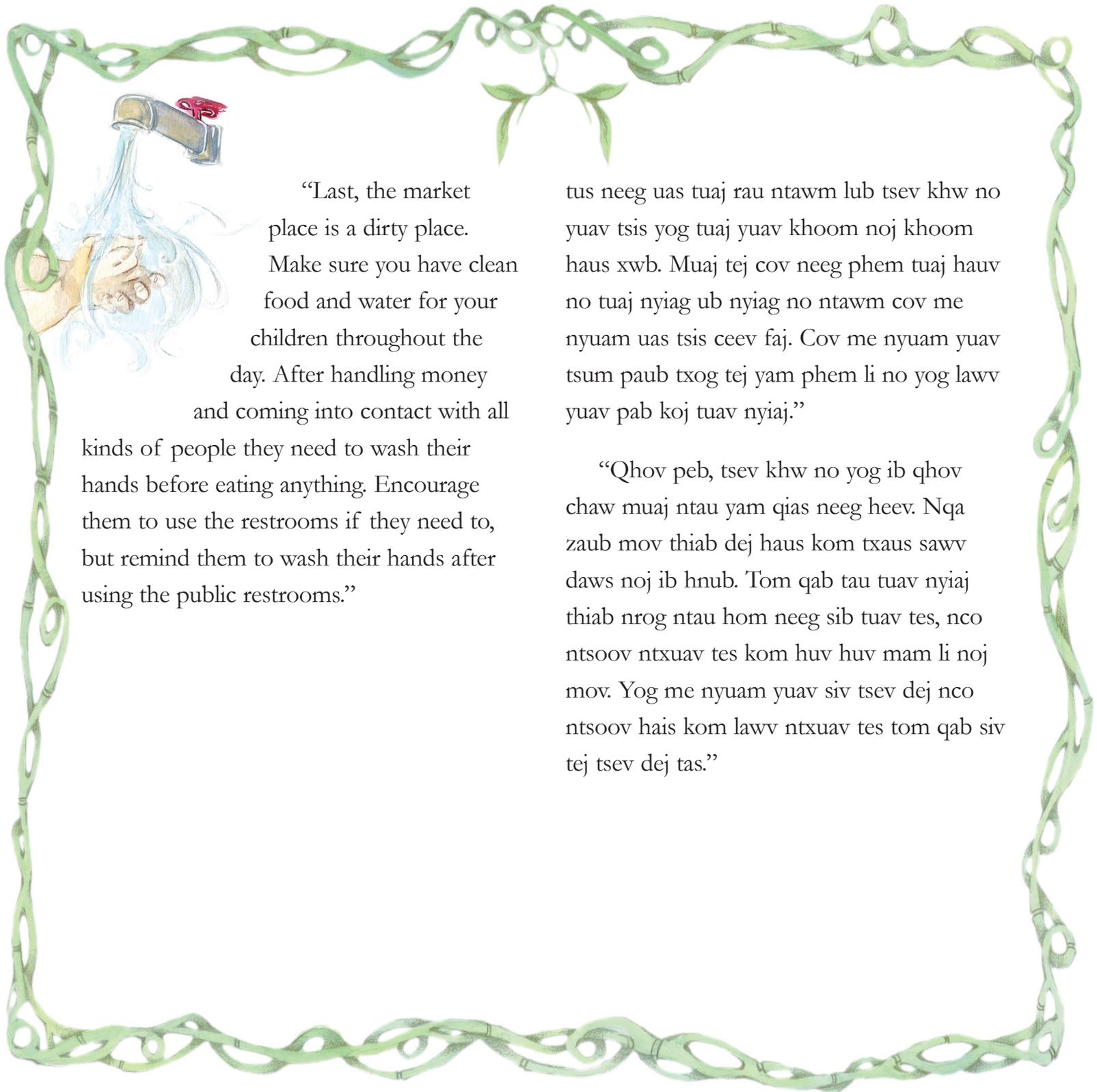


“Second, children are very innocent and, more often than not, very trusting of people, which can be a bad thing. They should remain close to your stall and stay within your vision. Tell them to never move away from their stall if they are asked to do so by a stranger. The city market is full of different kinds of people. Not everyone is here to just buy vegetables. Some are here to steal from unsuspecting children. The children must be aware of these dangers, especially if they are handling money.”



Tus pog laus hais ntxiv tias, “Ntxiv mus, cov me nyuam muaj kev lom zem muag khoom thiab tau nyiaj ces ua rau lawv tsis nkees lawm. Koj ua txiv koj yuav tsum yuam lawv los so thiab haus dej kom txaus lawv lub cev. Thaum lawv nkees heev lawm, lawv yuav tsis ceev faj tej zaum lawv ho dawm tej thawv khoom ces yuav vau raug mob.”

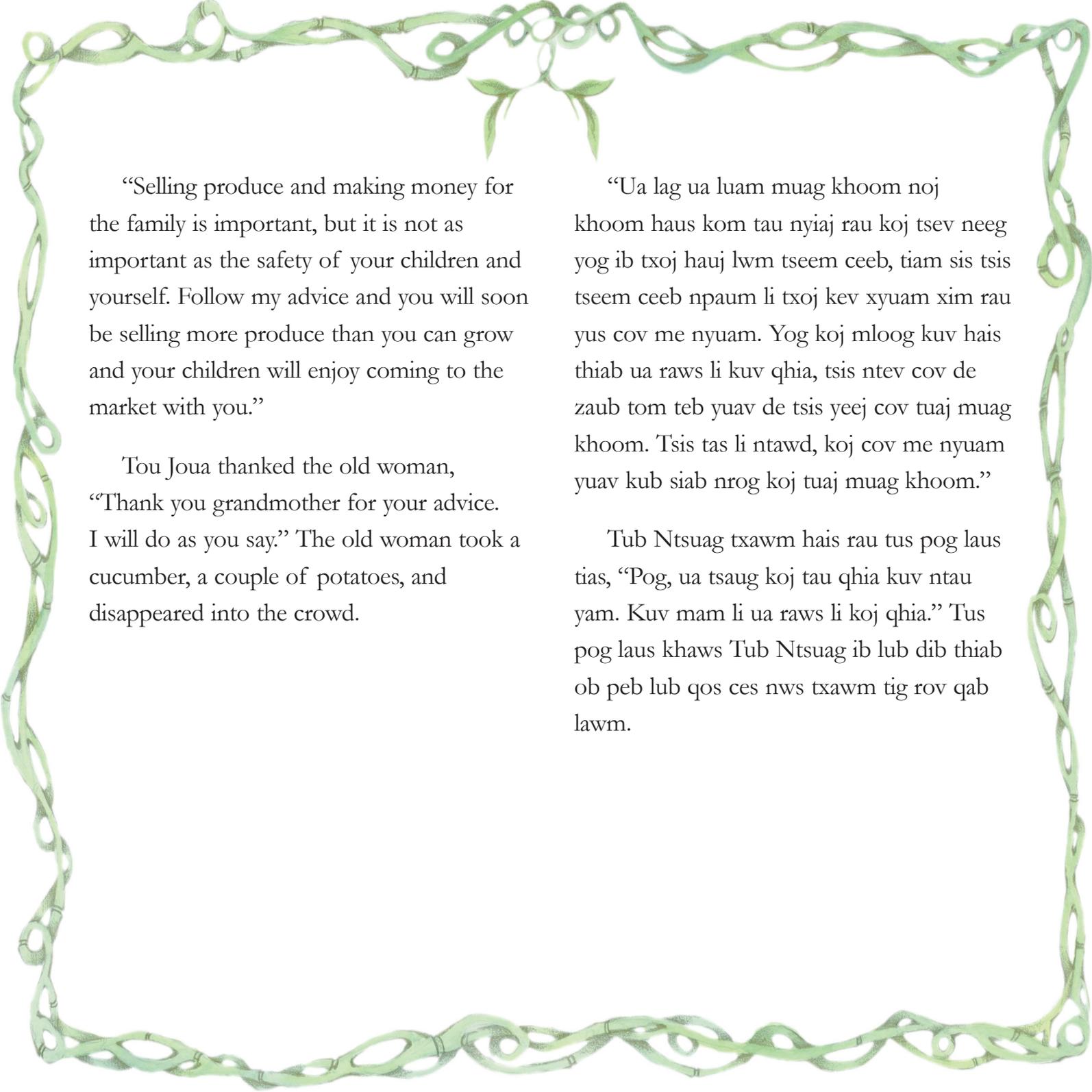
“Qhov ob, me nyuam yaus tsis paub ceev faj txog neeg phem. Qhov no yog ib qho tsis zoo. Koj nco ntsoov tsis yeem pub lawv tawm mus deb deb ntawm koj lub rooj muag khoom. Yuav tsum hais kom lawv nyob ze koj lub rooj muag khoom kom koj pom lawv txhua txhua lub sij hawm. Qhia rau cov me nyuam paub thiab yog muaj neeg ntxias kom lawv tawm mus deb ntawm koj lub rooj muag khoom, kom lawv tsis yeem mus. Lawv yuav tsum paub tias hauv zos loj no muaj ntau hom neeg. Txhua txhua



“Last, the market place is a dirty place. Make sure you have clean food and water for your children throughout the day. After handling money and coming into contact with all kinds of people they need to wash their hands before eating anything. Encourage them to use the restrooms if they need to, but remind them to wash their hands after using the public restrooms.”

tus neeg uas tuaj rau ntawm lub tsev khw no yuav tsis yog tuaj yuav khoom noj khoom haus xwb. Muaj tej cov neeg phem tuaj hauv no tuaj nyiag ub nyiag no ntawm cov me nyuam uas tsis ceev faj. Cov me nyuam yuav tsum paub txog tej yam phem li no yog lawv yuav pab koj tuav nyiaj.”

“Qhov peb, tsev khw no yog ib qhov chaw muaj ntau yam qias neeg heev. Nqa zaub mov thiab dej haus kom txaus sawv daws noj ib hnub. Tom qab tau tuav nyiaj thiab nrog ntau hom neeg sib tuav tes, nco ntsoov ntxuav tes kom huv huv mam li noj mov. Yog me nyuam yuav siv tsev dej nco ntsoov hais kom lawv ntxuav tes tom qab siv tej tsev dej tas.”



“Selling produce and making money for the family is important, but it is not as important as the safety of your children and yourself. Follow my advice and you will soon be selling more produce than you can grow and your children will enjoy coming to the market with you.”

Tou Joua thanked the old woman, “Thank you grandmother for your advice. I will do as you say.” The old woman took a cucumber, a couple of potatoes, and disappeared into the crowd.

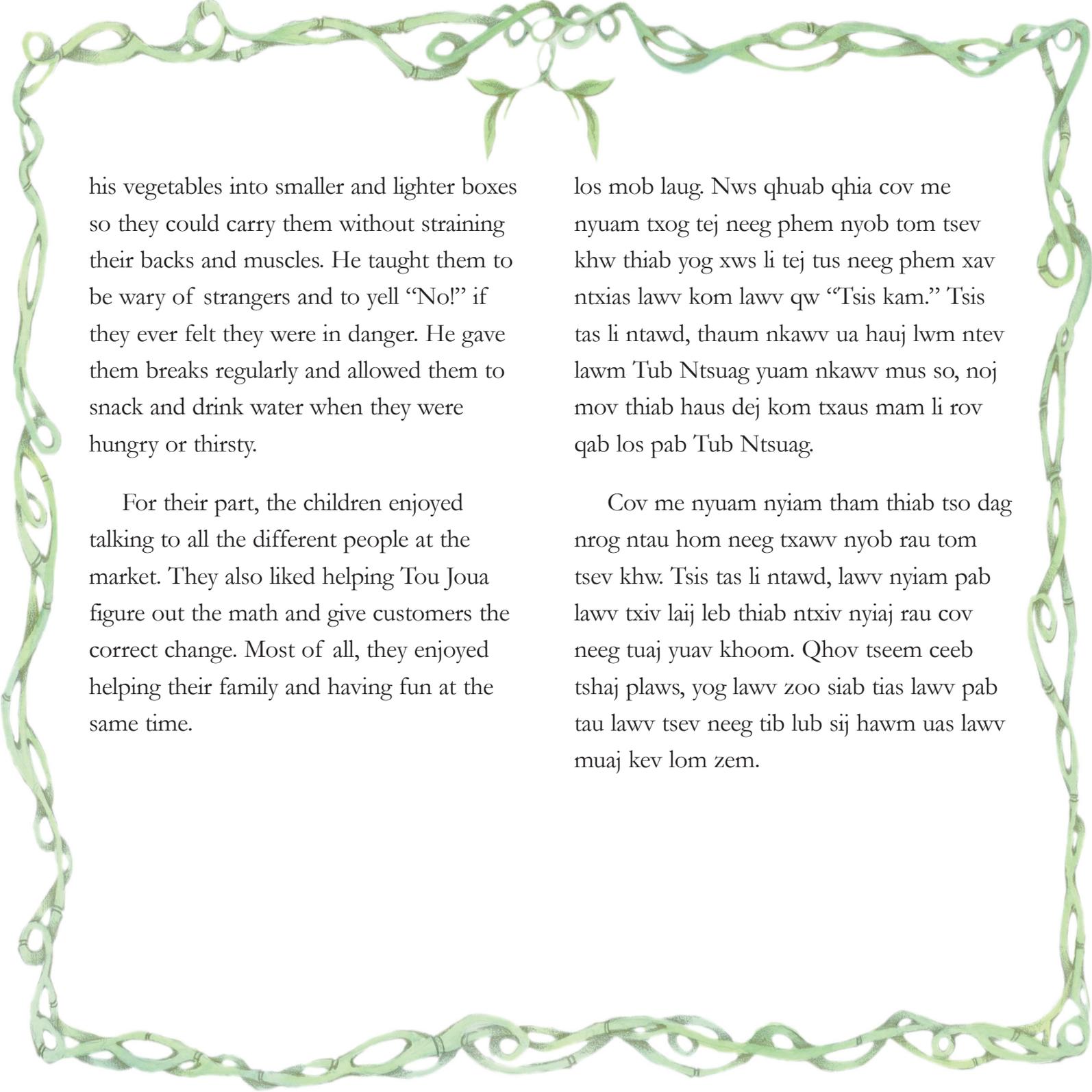
“Ua lag ua luam muag khoom noj khoom haus kom tau nyiaj rau koj tsev neeg yog ib txoj hauj lwm tseem ceeb, tiam sis tsis tseem ceeb npaum li txoj kev xyuam xim rau yus cov me nyuam. Yog koj mloog kuv hais thiab ua raws li kuv qhia, tsis ntev cov de zaub tom teb yuav de tsis yeej cov tuaj muag khoom. Tsis tas li ntawd, koj cov me nyuam yuav kub siab nrog koj tuaj muag khoom.”

Tub Ntsuag txawm hais rau tus pog laus tias, “Pog, ua tsaug koj tau qhia kuv ntau yam. Kuv mam li ua raws li koj qhia.” Tus pog laus khaws Tub Ntsuag ib lub dib thiab ob peb lub qos ces nws txawm tig rov qab lawm.

Tou Joua took the old woman's advice and brought his oldest children to the market with him. Every morning he made sure they had plenty to eat for breakfast before leaving for the market. At the market, he had plenty of clean water and food for them throughout the day. He also packaged

Tub Ntsuag txawm khaws tus pog laus cov lus, ua raws li nws qhia. Hnub tom qab nws koj nws ob tug me nyuam hlob tuaj nrog nws muag khoom. Txhua txhua tag kis ua ntej sawv kev mus tom tsev khw lawv sawv daws noj tshais kom txaus mam li mus. Tsis tas li ntawd, Ntxawm kuj ntim zaub ntim mov thiab dej txaus lawv noj thiab haus ib hnub tom tsev khw. Thaum mus txog tom tsev khw Tub Ntsuag muab nws cov khoom ntim rau cov thawv me zog rau cov me nyuam nqa lawv thiaj li tsis sav duav





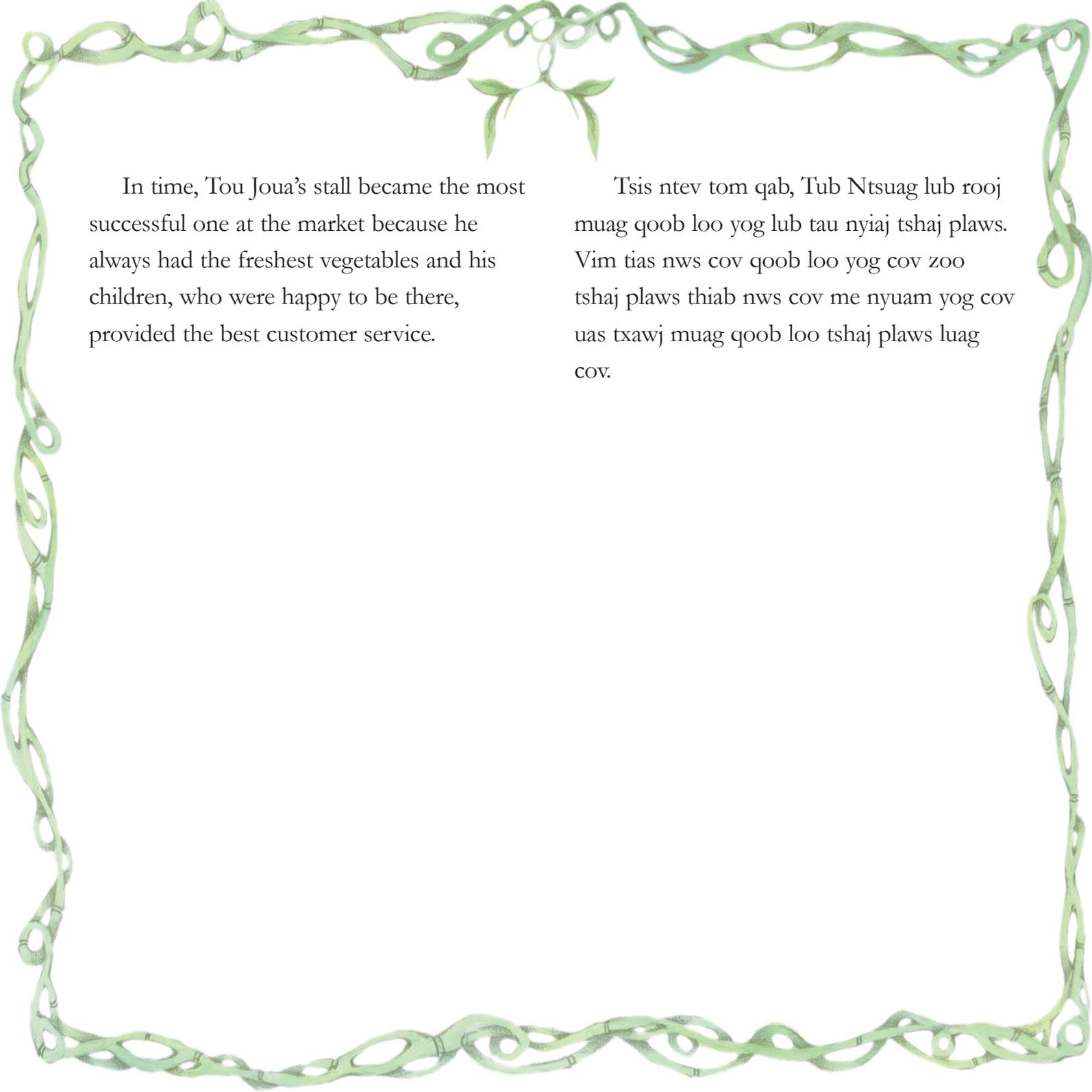
his vegetables into smaller and lighter boxes so they could carry them without straining their backs and muscles. He taught them to be wary of strangers and to yell “No!” if they ever felt they were in danger. He gave them breaks regularly and allowed them to snack and drink water when they were hungry or thirsty.

For their part, the children enjoyed talking to all the different people at the market. They also liked helping Tou Joua figure out the math and give customers the correct change. Most of all, they enjoyed helping their family and having fun at the same time.

los mob laug. Nws qhuab qhia cov me nyuam txog tej neeg phem nyob tom tsev khw thiab yog xws li tej tus neeg phem xav ntxias lawv kom lawv qw “Tsis kam.” Tsis tas li ntawd, thaum nkawv ua hauj lwm ntev lawm Tub Ntsuag yuam nkawv mus so, noj mov thiab haus dej kom txaus mam li rov qab los pab Tub Ntsuag.

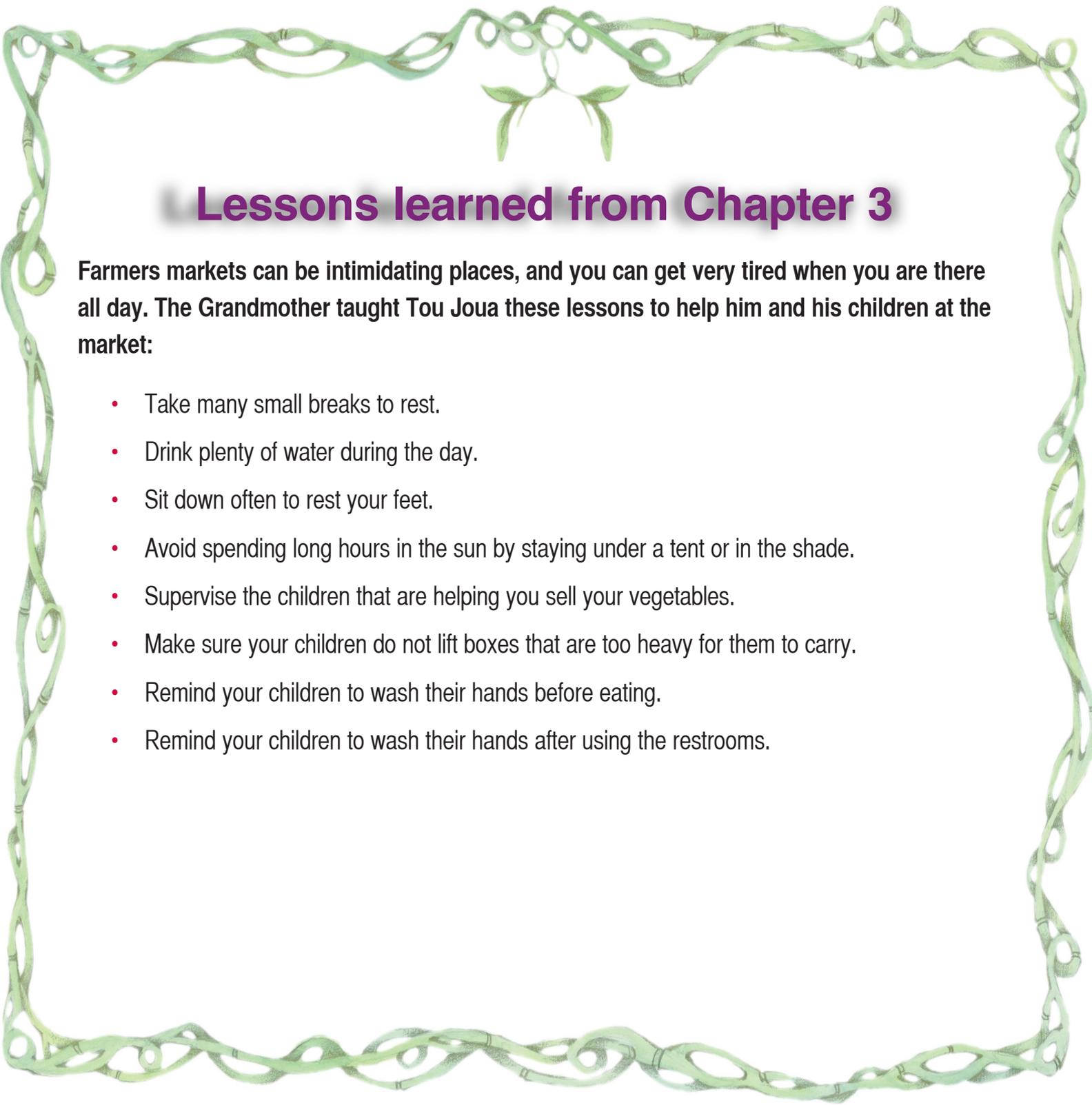
Cov me nyuam nyiam tham thiab tso dag nrog ntau hom neeg txawv nyob rau tom tsev khw. Tsis tas li ntawd, lawv nyiam pab lawv txiv laij leb thiab ntxiv nyiaj rau cov neeg tuaj yuav khoom. Qhov tseem ceeb tshaj plaws, yog lawv zoo siab tias lawv pab tau lawv tsev neeg tib lub sij hawm uas lawv muaj kev lom zem.





In time, Tou Joua's stall became the most successful one at the market because he always had the freshest vegetables and his children, who were happy to be there, provided the best customer service.

Tsis ntev tom qab, Tub Ntsuag lub rooj muag qoob loo yog lub tau nyiaj tshaj plaws. Vim tias nws cov qoob loo yog cov zoo tshaj plaws thiab nws cov me nyuam yog cov uas txawj muag qoob loo tshaj plaws luag cov.



Lessons learned from Chapter 3

Farmers markets can be intimidating places, and you can get very tired when you are there all day. The Grandmother taught Tou Joua these lessons to help him and his children at the market:

- Take many small breaks to rest.
- Drink plenty of water during the day.
- Sit down often to rest your feet.
- Avoid spending long hours in the sun by staying under a tent or in the shade.
- Supervise the children that are helping you sell your vegetables.
- Make sure your children do not lift boxes that are too heavy for them to carry.
- Remind your children to wash their hands before eating.
- Remind your children to wash their hands after using the restrooms.

About the Author

Cha Yang was born in Laos in 1972. Along with thousands of other Hmong families who contributed to the United States' Secret War in Laos, Yang's family had to escape to Thailand after the Communist takeover of Laos in 1975. After spending a short period in a refugee camp in Thailand, Yang's family immigrated to the United States in 1980. Yang grew up in the public housing projects in St. Paul, Minnesota, and attended Como Park Senior High where he graduated in the top ten of his class. He went on to receive a Bachelor of Arts degree in political science from Carleton College in Northfield, Minnesota in 1996.

Cha Yang has been a respected actor, stage manager, co-playwright and cultural consultant for seven productions in the Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area since 1991. He made his theater debut as a young writer and performer of the highly acclaimed "*Hmong Tapestry: Voices from the Cloth*," and "*Peb Yog Hmoob: We Are Hmong*." His creative skills have been used by Theater Mu, the SteppingStone Theater, Pom Siab Hmoob Theater, the Hmong American Partnership, the Hmong Youth Association, and the Playwrights' Center.

Yang writes about Hmong traditions and values with an insider's perspective and sensitivity. He couples that culturally rich background with the realities of life in the United States today for Hmong people. His most recent work, "*Hmong Tiger Tales*," retells a trio of Hmong folk tales that at once reinforce ancient traditions and provide lessons for life in America.

Cha Yang draws on research and personal experience to synthesize and translate complex cultural information into moving and entertaining performances. He is driven by a passion to pass on Hmong traditions and folktales to the children and grandchildren of those who learned these stories from their parents and grandparents.

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About the Illustrator

I find the human mind to be very fascinating. I spent half my life studying psychology dreaming to become a psychiatrist, until one profound dream. My dream told me to quit psychology and pursue my true passion in life, art.

My artwork is a visual diary of both the progression of my artistic growth and my continual stride toward becoming fully the ambitious and responsible artist. The majority of my artwork is an indirect reflection of myself; born of my personal experience, my dreams, and my willingness to create artwork that illuminates a fond memory, inspire an idea, or enlighten my viewers. Style and uniqueness, the soul and spark of art cannot be derived from anywhere else but from the artist's subconscious mind and from the firm commitment to represent ones image as nothing less than a whole being.

— *Kao Lee Thao*

Please visit: www.folklorestudio.com to view more of my work.

