



Beato is a curious cat who likes to explore different countries around the world. In Indonesia, he comes across exotic animals, climbs volcanoes, goes scuba diving, and learns to do yoga.

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Beato Goes to Greenland and *Beato Goes to Israel*.

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SUCHETA RAWAL

BEATO GOES TO INDONESIA

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BY SUCHETA RAWAL



ILLUSTRATIONS BY
ALEXANDRA ABAGIU
& OANA COCHECI

Ten percent of the profits from *Beato Goes to Indonesia* will be donated to Bali Children's Project, a nonprofit organization that helps the children on the Indonesian island of Bali escape poverty through education.



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Beato Goes to Indonesia

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Library of Congress Control Number: 2017900166

CPSIA Code: PRT0317A
ISBN: 978-1-63177-630-4

Printed in the United States



BEATO GOES TO INDONESIA

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One morning, Beato was playing with his brother, Russo, when he noticed his mommy in their backyard. Beato was puzzled. "What are they doing out there?"

"It looks like our mommy and her friends are doing yoga," Russo informed Beato. "Mommy mentioned she learned yoga in Bali."



Where is Bali? Beato thought.

Beato was still curious when his mommy came back inside, so he decided to ask.

His mommy smiled. "Bali is an island in the country of Indonesia. Did you know Indonesia has 13,000 islands?"

"Wow! It must be a huge country!" Beato exclaimed.

"Yes, but it's also very far away from us," his mommy said.

Perhaps I should go there, thought Beato, as he imagined what Indonesia might be like.



Beato flew for twenty-four hours on an airplane from his home in Atlanta to Bali, Indonesia. He had never been up in the air this long. He felt tired and sleepy.

I think I have jet lag, he thought, remembering what his mommy would say when she returned from a long trip. *Is jet lag curable?*



Beato was about to take a catnap when a young boy grabbed him.

"Where am I? Who are you? What's going on?" Beato asked as he woke up.

"Hi, my name is Putu, and you are in Bali, Indonesia! We are celebrating the festival of Kuningan (koo-knee-gan)," Putu informed. "Since you had a long journey, why don't you come to my house and rest?"

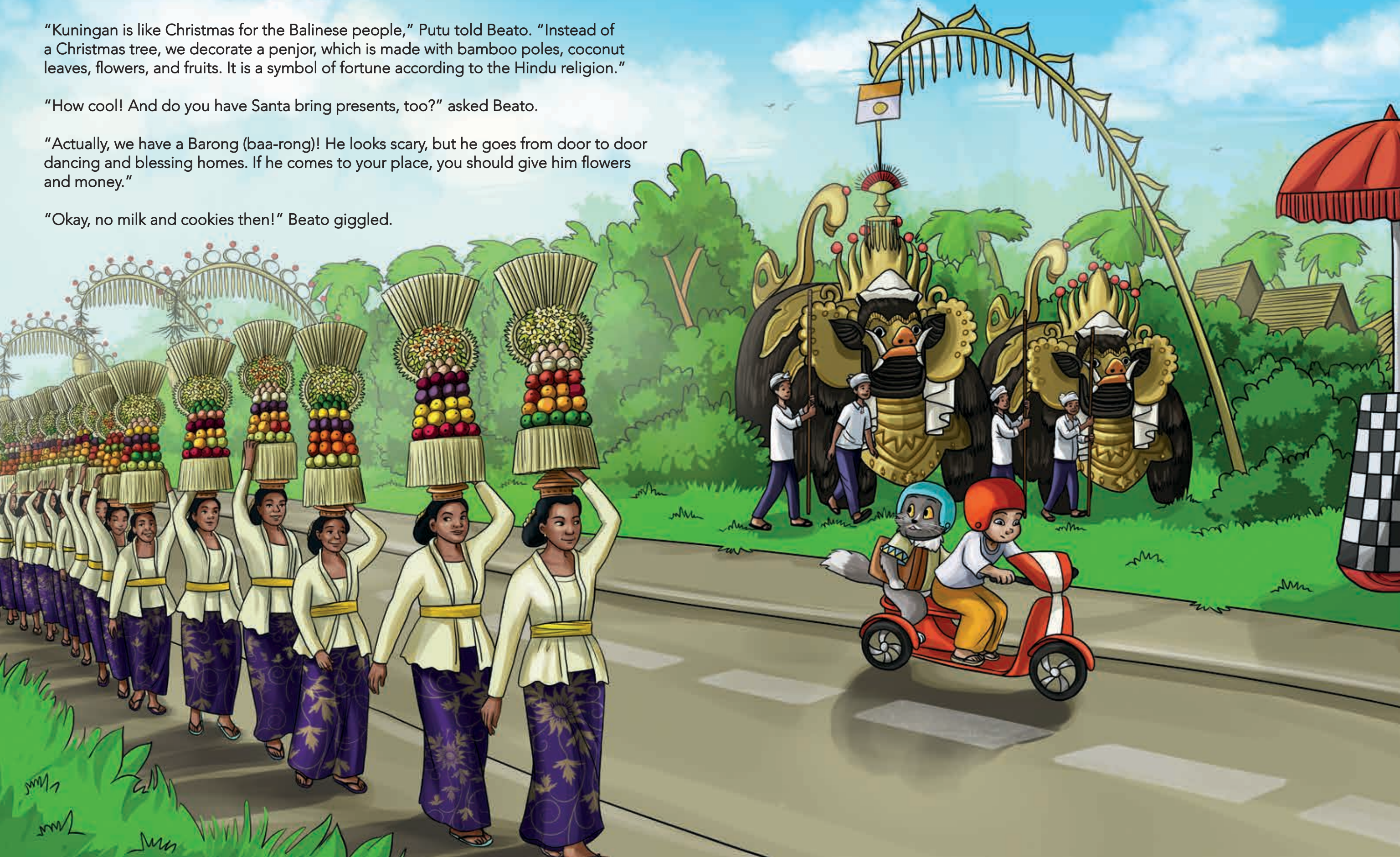


"Kuningan is like Christmas for the Balinese people," Putu told Beato. "Instead of a Christmas tree, we decorate a penjor, which is made with bamboo poles, coconut leaves, flowers, and fruits. It is a symbol of fortune according to the Hindu religion."

"How cool! And do you have Santa bring presents, too?" asked Beato.

"Actually, we have a Barong (baa-rong)! He looks scary, but he goes from door to door dancing and blessing homes. If he comes to your place, you should give him flowers and money."

"Okay, no milk and cookies then!" Beato giggled.



Putu took Beato to his home. They walked barefoot into the house.

They went into the courtyard and stood in front of an altar. "Every Balinese home has a temple. Say a prayer and ask your ancestors to bless us," he whispered.



"It's time to eat!" announced Putu, pointing to the lunch his family had laid out.

Beato was hungry, but the food looked strange to him. Putu's dad was grilling chicken on bamboo skewers, while his mom made colorful rice cakes.

"Have some Satay and Ja-Ja," Putu's mom offered politely.

I'm so hungry. I might as well give it a try, Beato thought as his stomach growled.



"Did you know every family in Bali grows their own rice?" Putu informed.

"Sounds like a lot of work!" remarked Beato.

"Yes, in fact, all of our neighbors get together to help and harvest each other's rice twice a year. Then we take it to the mill to clean the husk. Home grown rice tastes delicious!"

"I agree!" Beato said, remembering the rice he ate with Putu's family earlier.



"What's that sound? Is it a snake?" Beato felt his claws extending as he prepared for self-defense.

"Don't be scared, Beato. The snake is just as afraid of us as we are of him."

They waited in silence as the snake slithered past.

"We have lots of snakes in the rice paddies," Putu explained, "but they don't bite us unless we threaten them."



When they returned home, it looked like there was a concert going on. Boys around Putu's age were playing the gamelan (gaa-mi-laan) in chorus, and girls in colorful clothing were moving their hands and eyes to the beats. They were doing a dance of short, rhythmic movements that Beato had never seen.

"We Balinese kids learn to dance, even before we learn to walk!" Putu smiled and told Beato.

"I wish I could do that!" Beato was impressed.



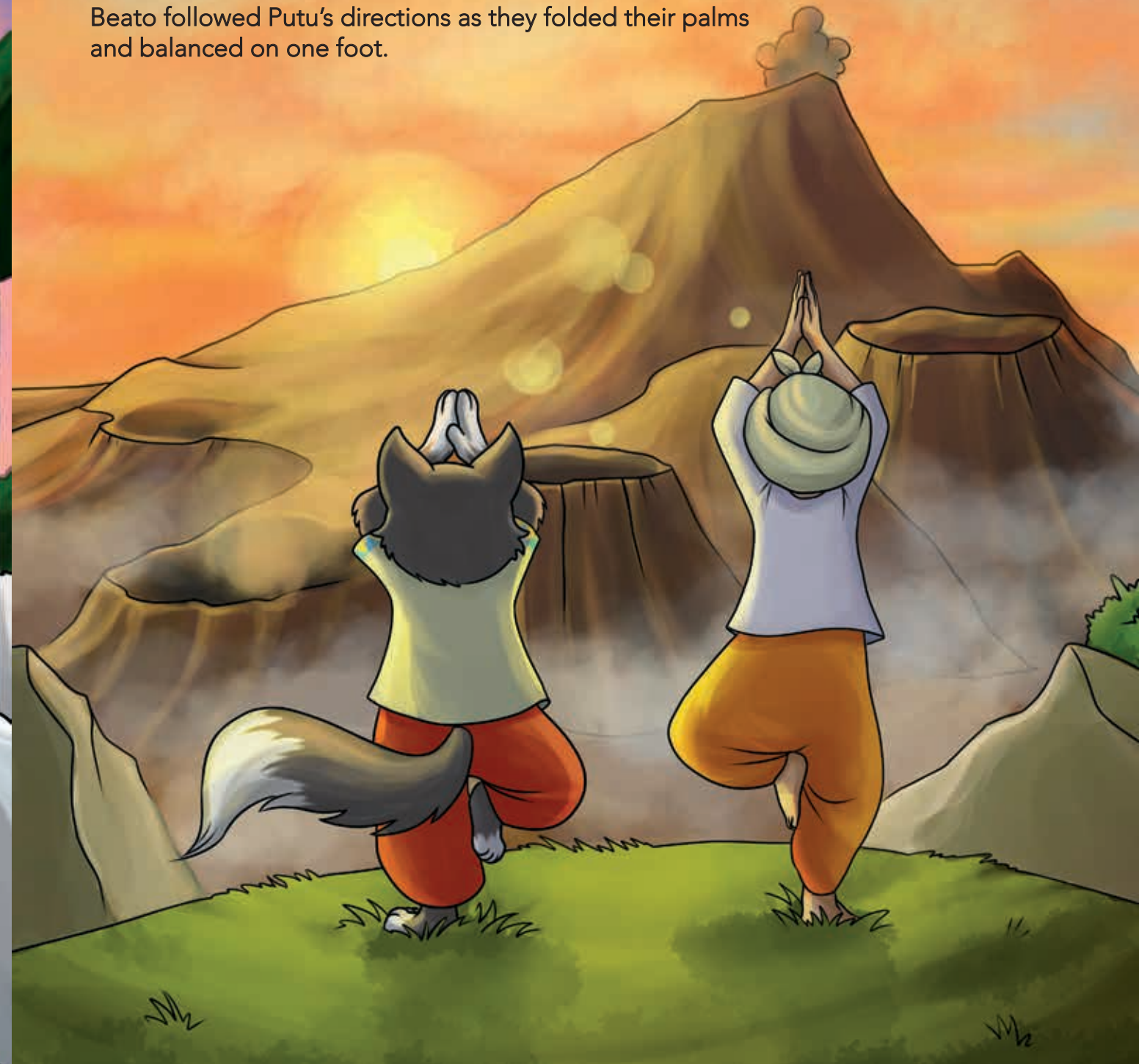
The next morning, Putu woke Beato up early and took him to his secret place.

"I come here to do yoga and watch the sunrise," he told Beato.

Oh, that's what my mommy was doing in our backyard, Beato remembered.

"Yoga is an ancient way to exercise the body, breath, and mind—all at the same time," said Putu. "Here, let me show you."

Beato followed Putu's directions as they folded their palms and balanced on one foot.



Putu led Beato to the beach in Sanur, where they saw huge, colorful kites.

"Look up, Beato!"

They joined a group of boys and competed in a kite flying festival.

"We thank the heavens for abundant crops by flying kites," said Putu, as he handed over the reel to Beato.

Kite flying is so much fun! I can't believe I've never tried it before, thought Beato.



Putu and Beato were chowing down their warm rice porridge at breakfast when Putu broke the news to Beato.

"We're going diving today!" Putu exclaimed.

"That sounds like fun!" Beato was excited to go under water.

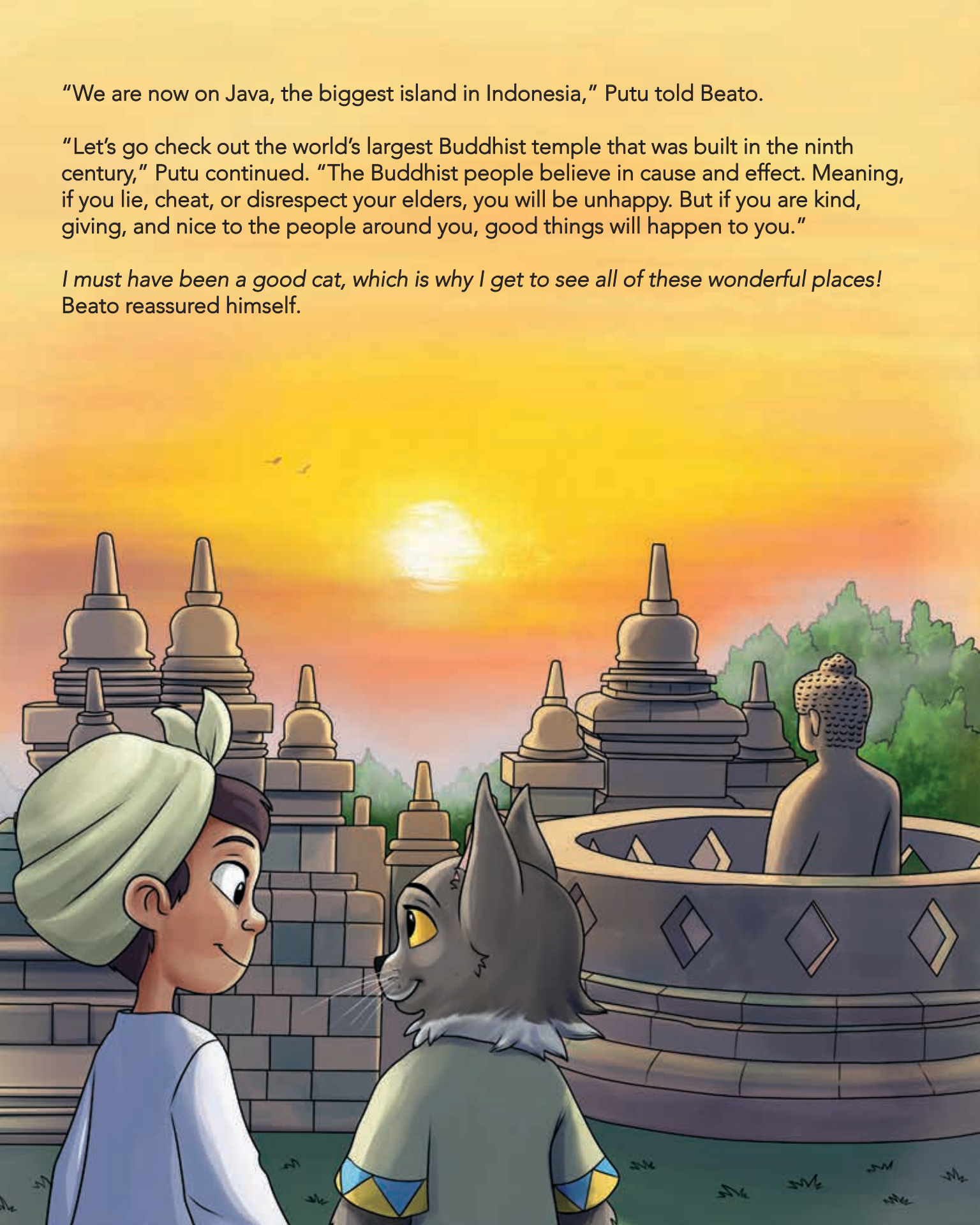
They went scuba diving to see the coral reef off of Gili island, but Beato was not afraid to go underwater. He was a good swimmer. Hundreds of colorful fish and even a few friendly turtles surrounded him!



"We are now on Java, the biggest island in Indonesia," Putu told Beato.

"Let's go check out the world's largest Buddhist temple that was built in the ninth century," Putu continued. "The Buddhist people believe in cause and effect. Meaning, if you lie, cheat, or disrespect your elders, you will be unhappy. But if you are kind, giving, and nice to the people around you, good things will happen to you."

I must have been a good cat, which is why I get to see all of these wonderful places!
Beato reassured himself.

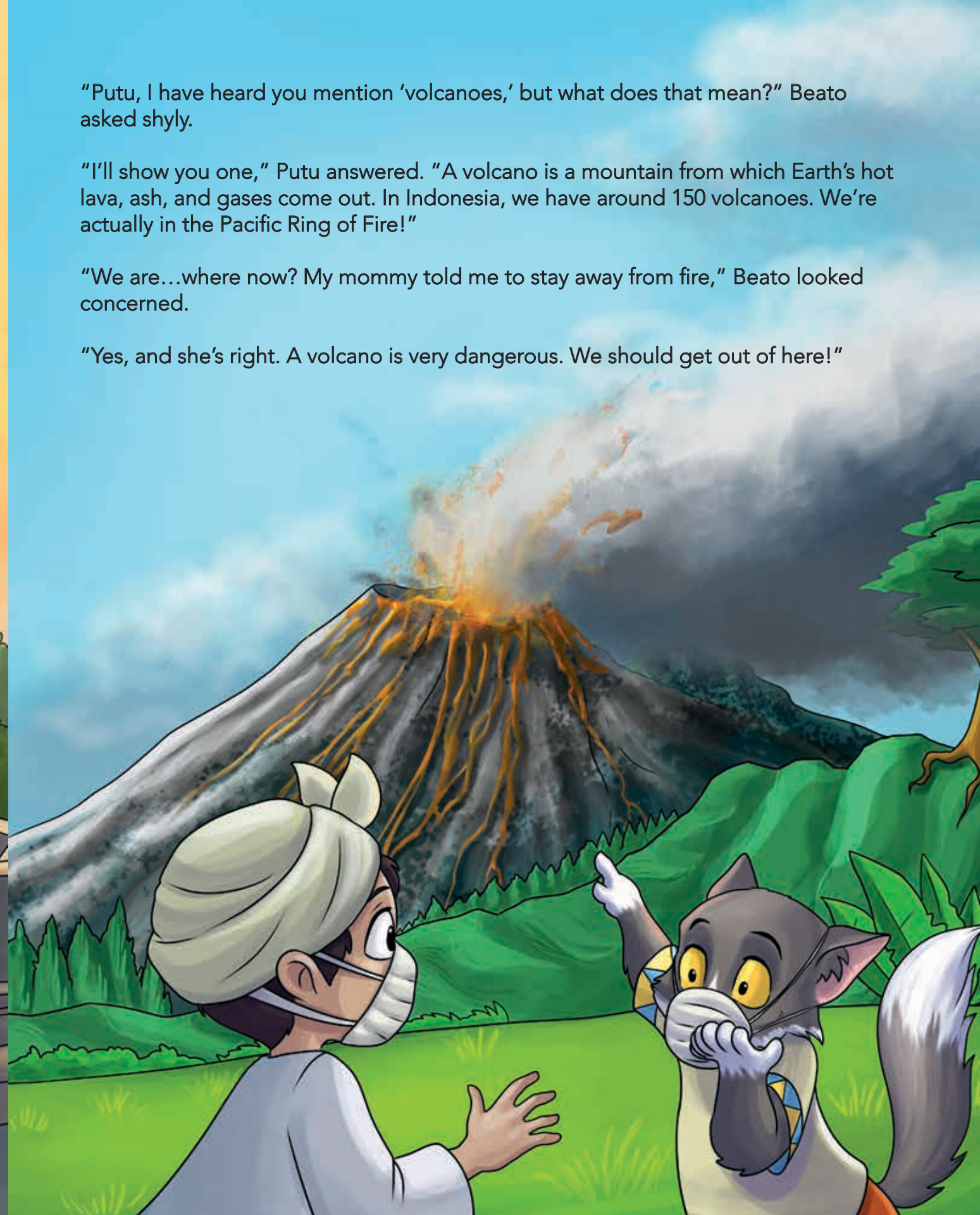


"Putu, I have heard you mention 'volcanoes,' but what does that mean?" Beato asked shyly.

"I'll show you one," Putu answered. "A volcano is a mountain from which Earth's hot lava, ash, and gases come out. In Indonesia, we have around 150 volcanoes. We're actually in the Pacific Ring of Fire!"

"We are...where now? My mommy told me to stay away from fire," Beato looked concerned.

"Yes, and she's right. A volcano is very dangerous. We should get out of here!"



"We're going to stay in the jungle in Borneo tonight," Putu informed.

They floated on a boat on Kinabatangan river, and Putu showed Beato some of the birds he spotted. "That's a hornbill, woodpecker, pitta, black brown babbler, and white crowned shama."

I never knew there were so many kinds of birds! Beato was amazed.

"Where's that honking sound coming from?" Beato asked his friend.

"Those must be orangutans, a friendly and smart species of monkey. They eat fruit, leaves, honey, insects, and eggs. They live in these forests, but humans have been cutting the trees and now the orangutans don't have enough places to nest."

"That is very sad," said Beato. "They look so cute with their fur!"



Beato spotted a grey animal with large ears in the forest.

"Look, a baby elephant!"

"That's not a baby, silly! It's a fully grown Borneo's pygmy elephant. They are smaller than most elephants. There are only 1,500 of this kind of elephant left on the planet!"

Wow, I'm so lucky to have seen an endangered animal and will have to tell Russo all about it, thought Beato.



"Hey, Beato! Have you seen a proboscis (pro-bosses) monkey before?" asked Putu.

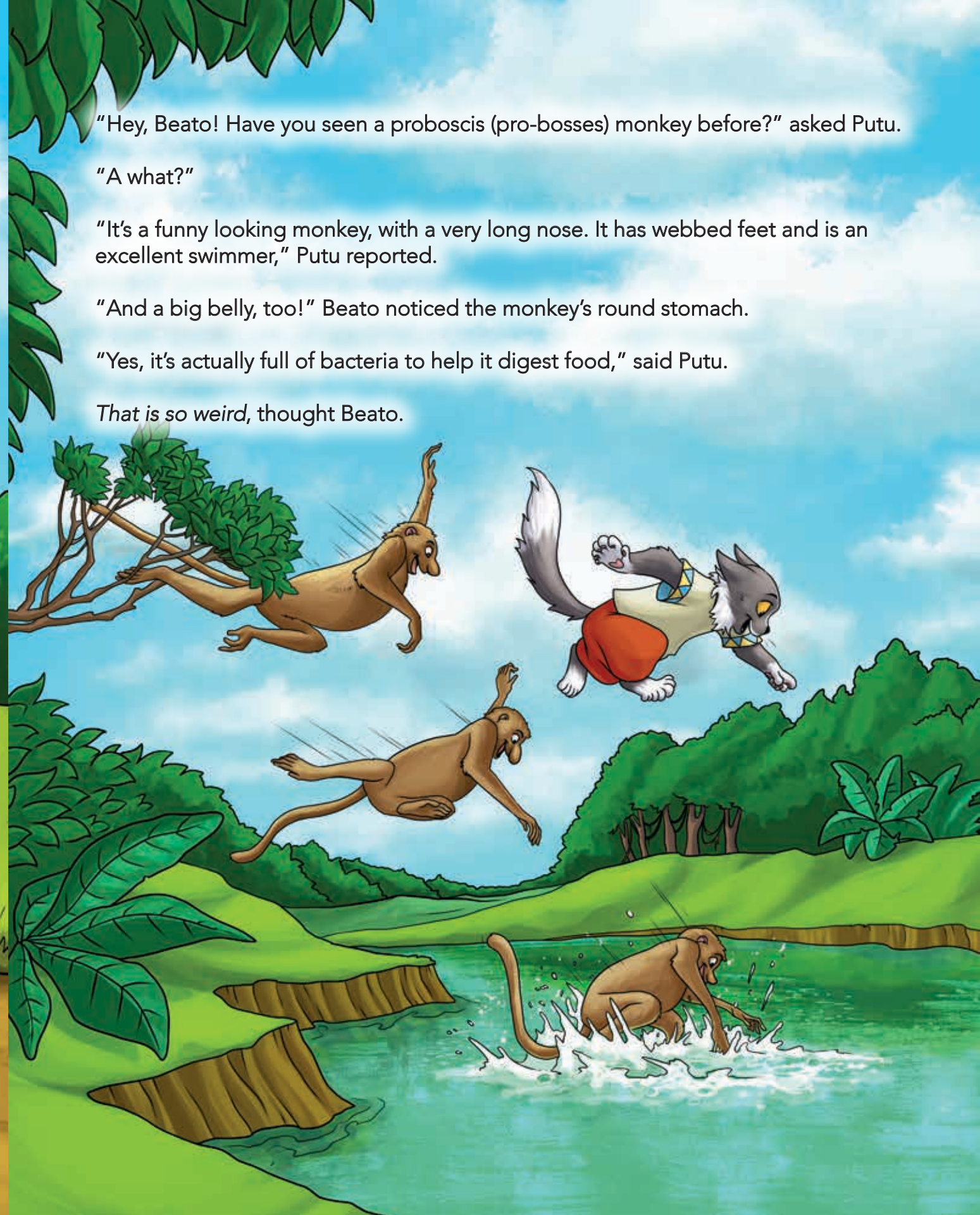
"A what?"

"It's a funny looking monkey, with a very long nose. It has webbed feet and is an excellent swimmer," Putu reported.

"And a big belly, too!" Beato noticed the monkey's round stomach.

"Yes, it's actually full of bacteria to help it digest food," said Putu.

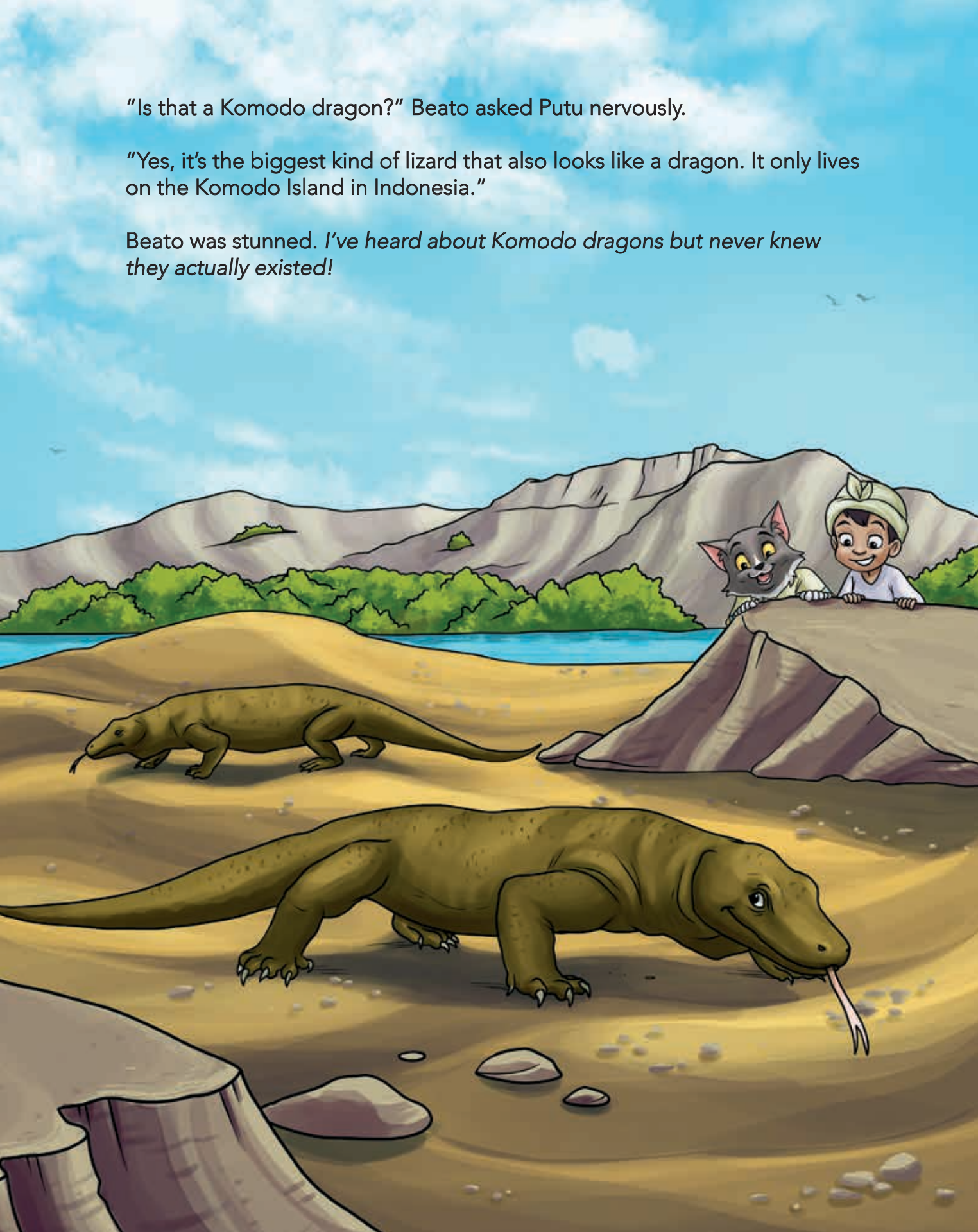
That is so weird, thought Beato.



"Is that a Komodo dragon?" Beato asked Putu nervously.

"Yes, it's the biggest kind of lizard that also looks like a dragon. It only lives on the Komodo Island in Indonesia."

Beato was stunned. *I've heard about Komodo dragons but never knew they actually existed!*



"Putu, are we still in Indonesia?" Beato asked, when he saw stores full of chocolates and pastries.

"Yes, we are still in West Java. Did you know that chocolates are made of cacao beans? Most of the chocolate in the world comes from the cacao trees in Indonesia," Putu replied. "Come, let's try some."

They went to a bakery and stuffed themselves with delicious chocolates and cakes.



"The people here in West Java speak the Sundanese language," said Putu.

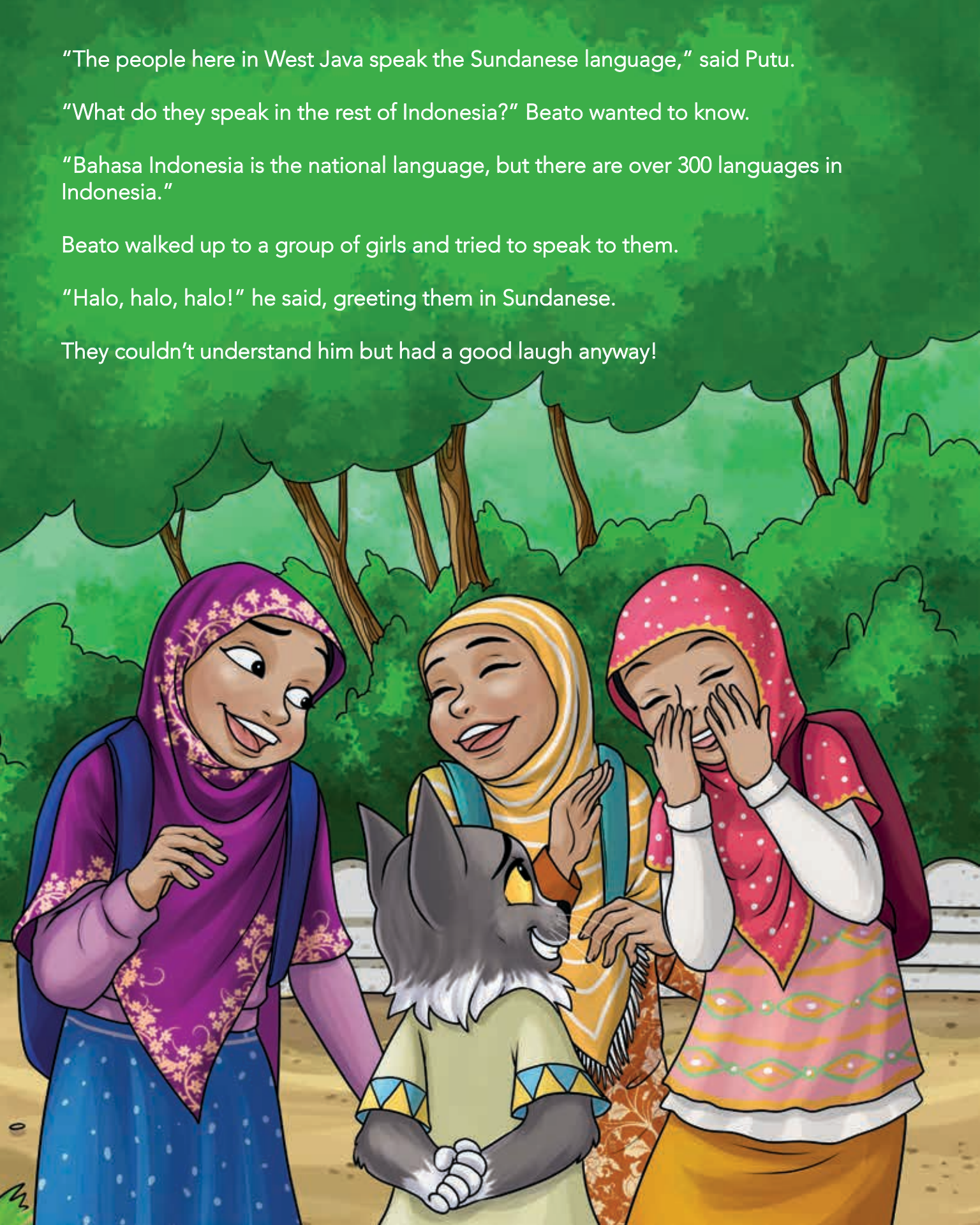
"What do they speak in the rest of Indonesia?" Beato wanted to know.

"Bahasa Indonesia is the national language, but there are over 300 languages in Indonesia."

Beato walked up to a group of girls and tried to speak to them.

"Halo, halo, halo!" he said, greeting them in Sundanese.

They couldn't understand him but had a good laugh anyway!



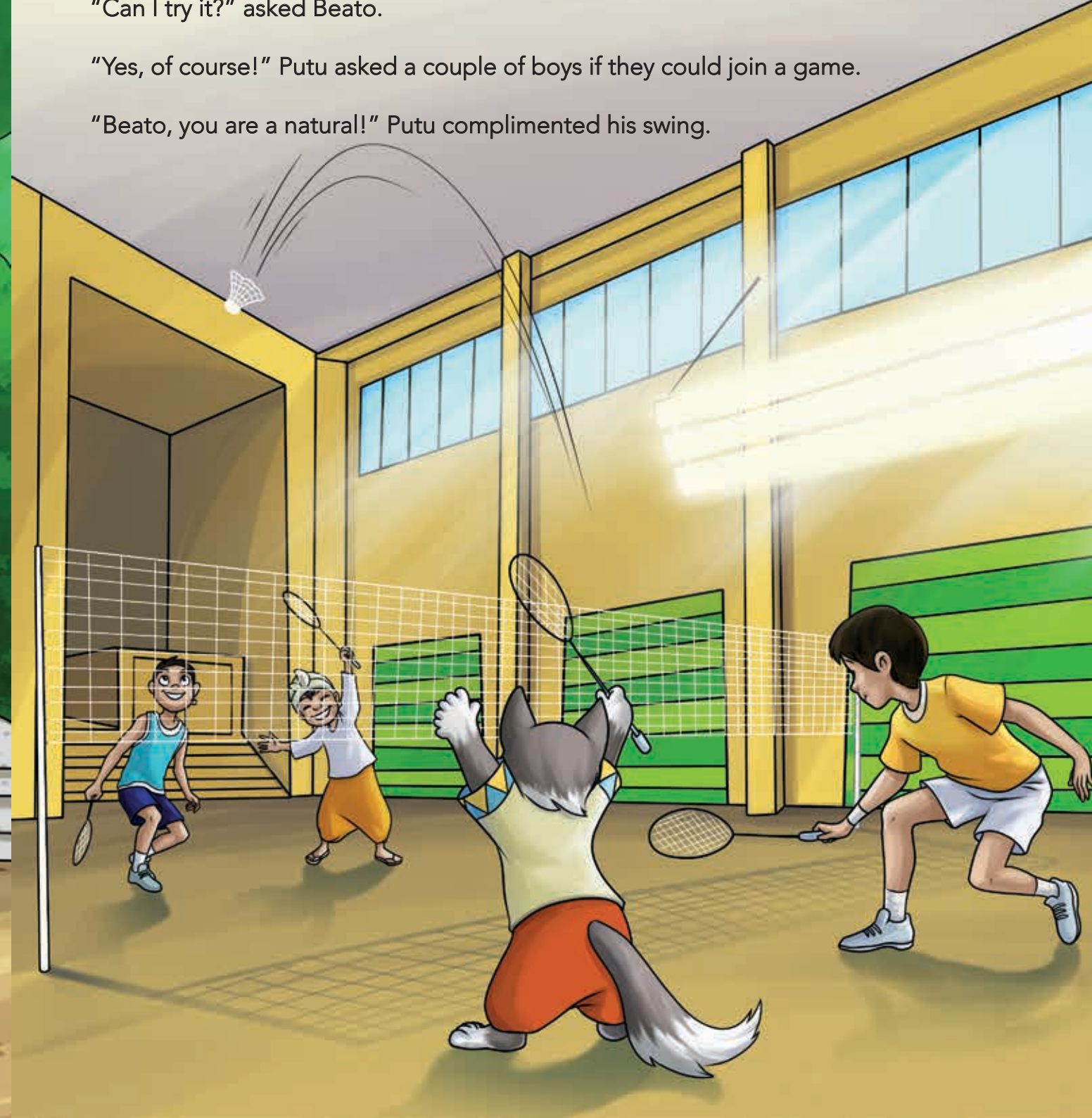
"Putu, what sports do you play here?" Beato was curious as he watched kids play with a racket and a white cone.

"Oh, we love badminton! Did you know that Indonesia always wins in badminton in the Olympic Games? They're always one of the best teams in the world!"

"Can I try it?" asked Beato.

"Yes, of course!" Putu asked a couple of boys if they could join a game.

"Beato, you are a natural!" Putu complimented his swing.



"We also like to race...but on stilts!" said Putu.

What does that even mean? thought Beato.

"Egrang is a local game. We balance on bamboo sticks and race each other to the finish line," Putu explained as he hopped on to two sticks.

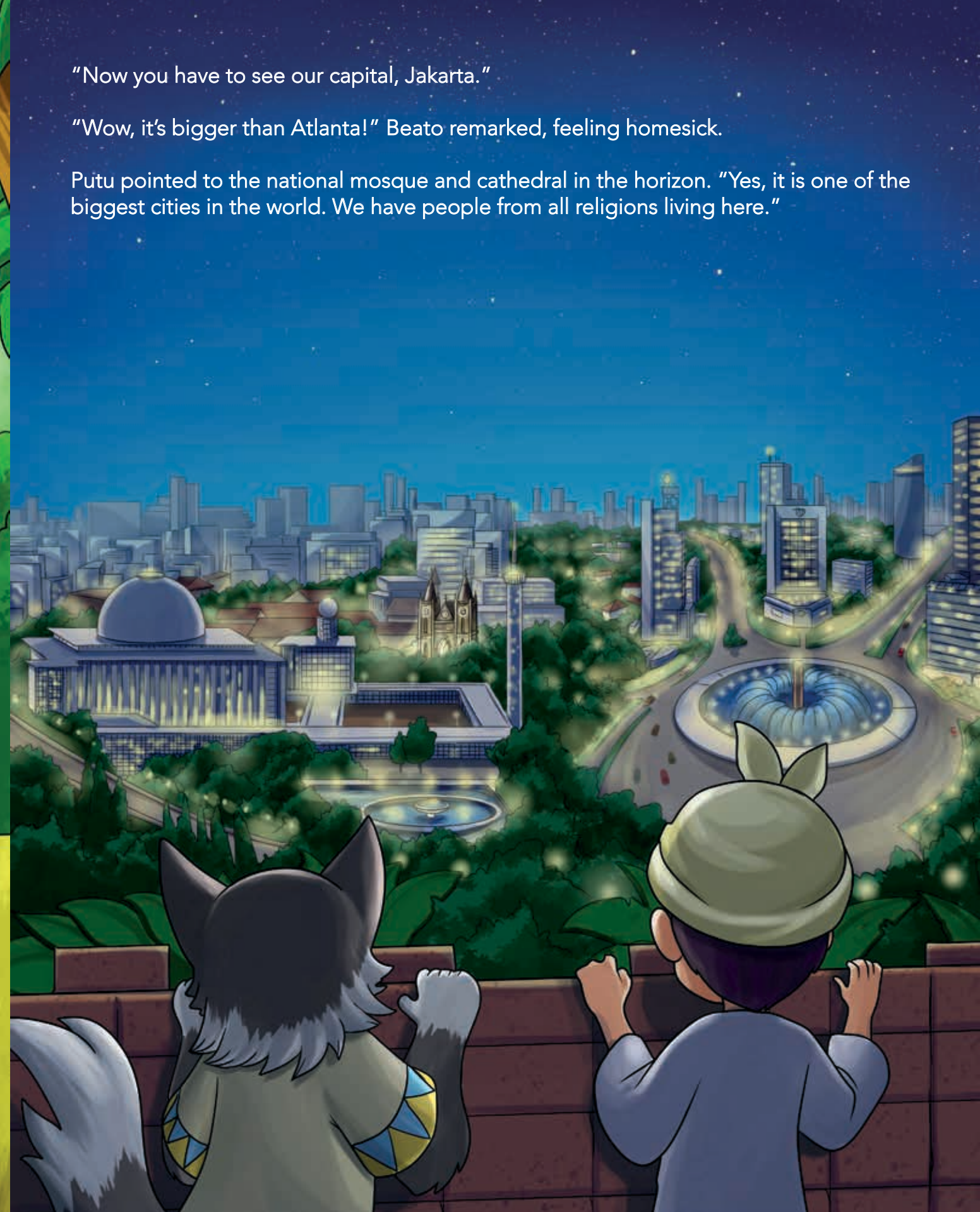
"So, no video games around?" Beato was puzzled.



"Now you have to see our capital, Jakarta."

"Wow, it's bigger than Atlanta!" Beato remarked, feeling homesick.

Putu pointed to the national mosque and cathedral in the horizon. "Yes, it is one of the biggest cities in the world. We have people from all religions living here."



"Putu, this has been one of my most exciting trips so far! I saw so many things I never knew even existed."

"I'm very happy you got to see so many animals and people in my beautiful country," Putu replied. "I hope you will share your experiences with your friends around the world."

"Yes, I sure will! I learned that we must care for our environment and save the habitats of these exotic animals so more people can see them!"

Beato waived goodbye and ran to catch his plane back home. He couldn't wait to tell his family about his trip.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Sucheta Rawal is an award-winning food and travel writer, cooking instructor, and philanthropist.

As the founder of Go Eat Give, a 501(c)(3) registered non-profit, Sucheta's personal mission is to raise cultural and diversity awareness through meaningful travel, ethnic food, and community interaction. The organization educates people through international tours, cooking classes, speaker events and a blog.

Originally from India, Sucheta moved to United States at the age of 17, and received her Bachelors and Masters in Finance from Georgia State University. After working as an investment banker and a corporate consultant, she pursued her passion for food and travel. Sucheta has been a freelance writer for various print and digital publications, including *CNN*, *Creative Loafing*, *CheapOAir*, and *The Huffington Post*. She motivates kids and adults to follow their own passion and travel with a purpose, by speaking at corporations, schools, universities, women's organizations, travel shows, and conferences.

Sucheta was named "One of the Five Most Influential Cultural Bloggers in The World" by the Foundation of Florence, Italy in 2012. She was a finalist for the Atlanta Press Club 2012 Award of Excellence, nominated for Caribbean Journalism Award 2015, and named "40 Under 40 - Georgia's Best and Brightest" by Georgia Trend magazine in 2016.