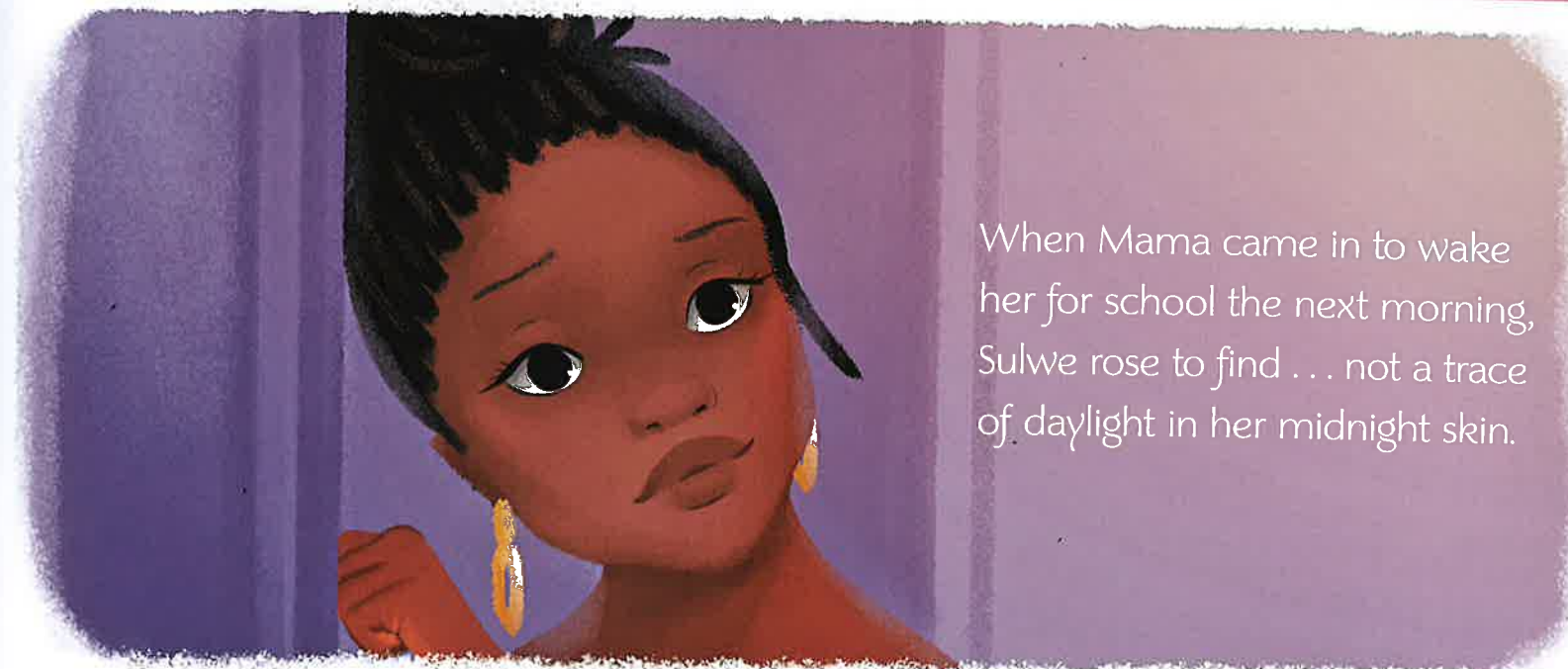


With a stomach ache, she went to bed
and turned to God for a miracle.

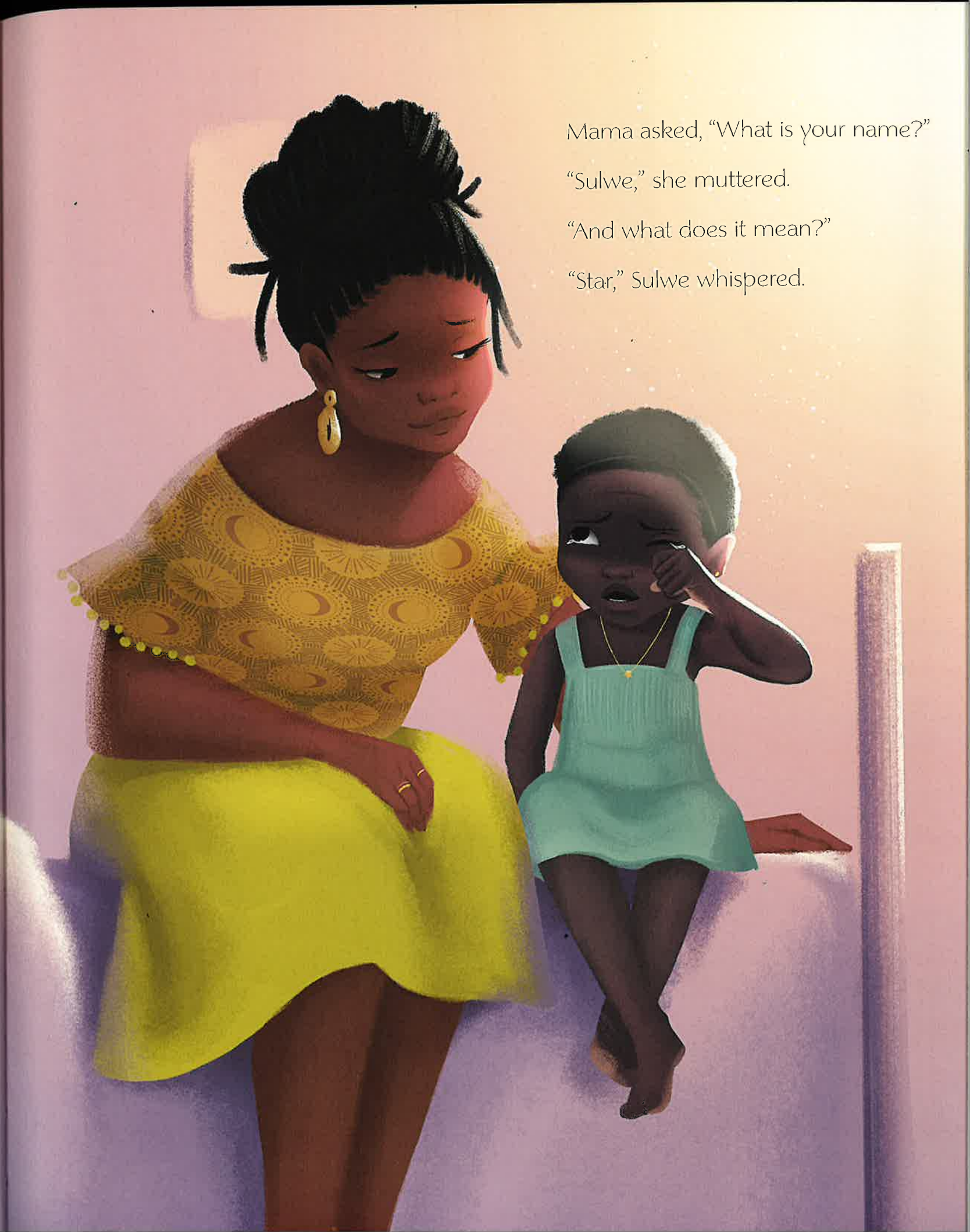
Dear Lord,
Why do I look like midnight,
when my mother looks like dawn?
Please make me as fair
as the parents I'm from.
I want to be beautiful,
not just to pretend.
I want to have daylight.
I want to have friends.
If you hear me, my Lord,
and would like to comply,
may I wake up as bright
as the sun in the sky.
Amen."



When Mama came in to wake
her for school the next morning,
Sulwe rose to find . . . not a trace
of daylight in her midnight skin.



Sulwe told Mama everything.



Mama asked, "What is your name?"

"Sulwe," she muttered.

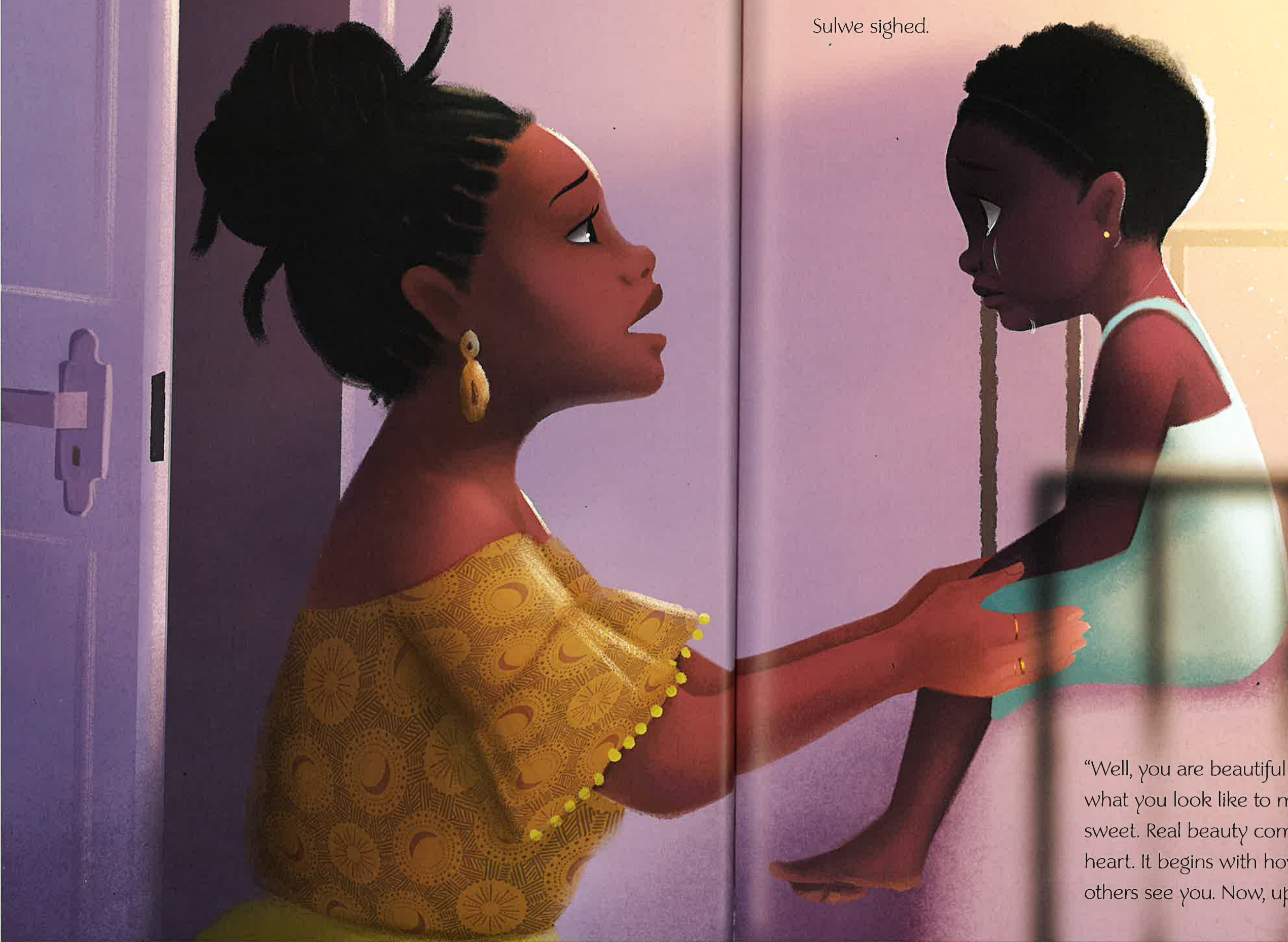
"And what does it mean?"

"Star," Sulwe whispered.

"Brightness is not in your skin, my love. Brightness is just who you are. As for beauty," Mama said, rubbing Sulwe's stomach the way she always did to comfort her. "You *are* beautiful."

Sulwe sighed.

"Well, you are beautiful to me. But you can't rely on what you look like to make you feel beautiful, my sweet. Real beauty comes from your mind and your heart. It begins with how *you* see *yourself*, not how others see you. Now, up you get and out you go."



How could she, as dark as she was,
have brightness in her?



How could she have beauty when no
one but her mother seemed to see it?



How could she be a star?

at night, a shooting star appeared at Sulwe's window.
he night sent me," the star said. "Come with me."

Sulwe hopped on to the
star and off they went.

