"Long ago, at the beginning of Time," said the star,
"there was Night and Day, and they were sisters."

They loved each other very much.

But people didn't treat the sisters the same.

People gave Day pet names like "Lovely" and "Nice" and "Pretty".

People gave Night names like "Scary" and "Bad" and "Ugly". She felt hurt every time.

Well, Night got fed up and walked right off the earth.

Day stayed behind and enjoyed making everybody happy in the sun.

But then Day grew *too* long.

Day began to really miss her sister.
So did everybody else.

There had to be a way to get her back.

Day set off to find Night.

And she did!

"I miss you," said Day.

"I miss you, too," said Night. "But you don't know what it's like to be treated badly for being dark."

"You're right, I don't," Day replied. "But what I do know is that we need you just the way you are. Come and see."

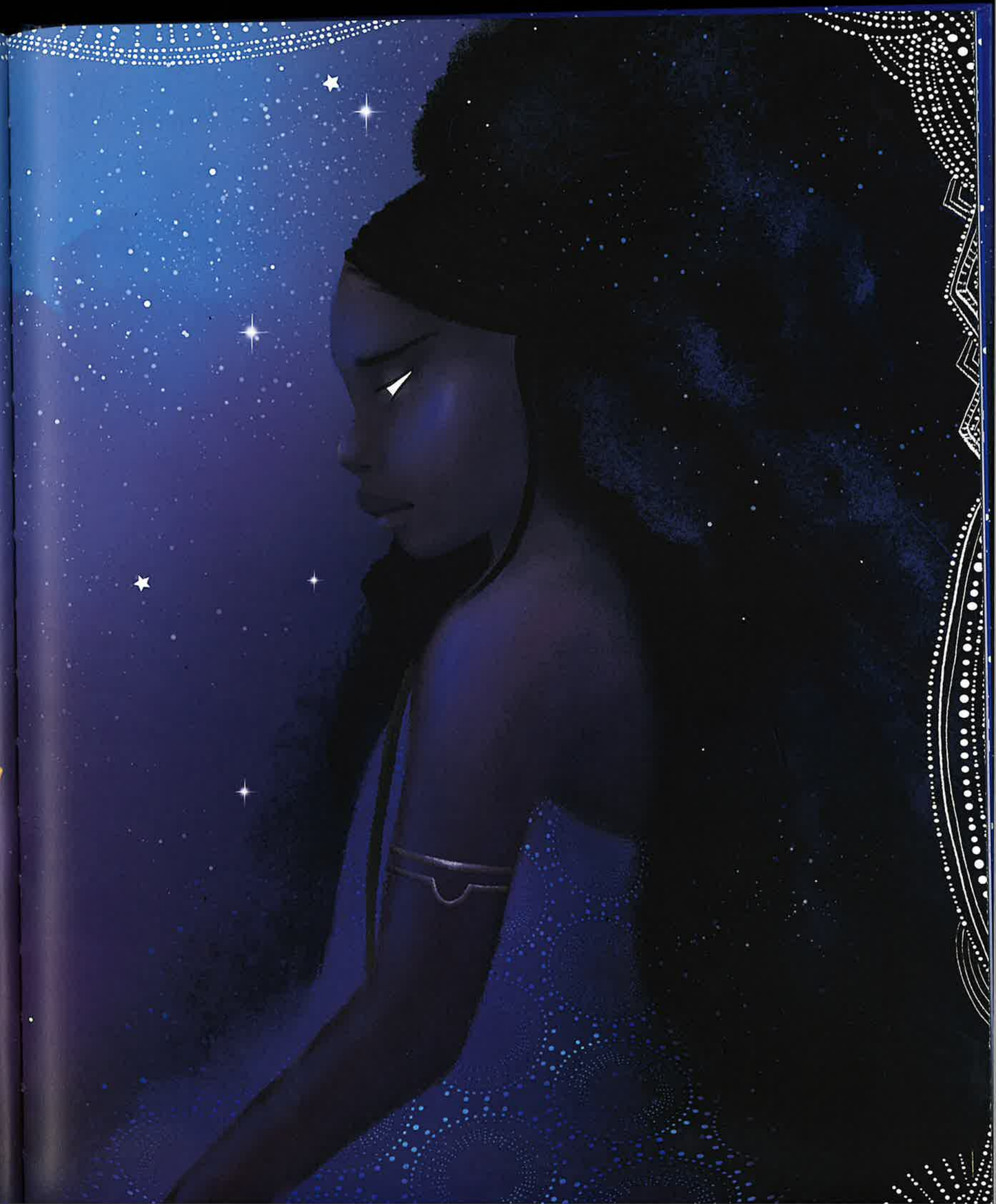
Night returned and the people rejoiced. "We need the darkest night to get the deepest rest. We need you so that we can grow and dream and keep our secrets to ourselves."

The stars chimed in, "Brightness isn't just for daylight. Light comes in all colours. And some light can only be seen in the dark."

While Day had a golden glow, with Night everything had a silver sheen, elegant and fine.

Day told her sister, "When you are darkest is when you are most beautiful. It's when you are most *you*."

Could it be that Night did not need to change, not even a little, not even at all?



ıat Night and Day were back together,
ɔit of Night returned to Day in the form
dows. And a little bit of Day returned to
ı the form of moonlight.

They were inseparable from that moment on,
and promised to celebrate the brightness in
each other, whether people chose to see it
or not.

"You see," the star explained, "we need them both, on their sunniest day and their darkest night, and every shade in between.

"Together they make the world we know, light and dark, strong and beautiful."

Sulwe rose the next morning, beaming.

There would be no hiding any more. She belonged out in the world! Dark and beautiful, bright and strong.

And if she ever needed a reminder of her brightness, she could look up at the sky on the darkest night to see for herself.

Sulwe felt beautiful inside and out!

AUTHOR'S NOTE

Much like Sulwe, I got teased and taunted about my night-shaded skin. I prayed to God that I would wake up with paler skin. I tried all sorts of things to lighten my complexion. My mother told me often that I was beautiful – but she's my mother, of course she's supposed to think that!

It wasn't until I was much older that my feelings about my skin changed. It helped to see darker-skinned women being celebrated for their beauty. If they were beautiful, I could be too. I began to see myself differently.

While both Sulwe and I had to learn to see our beauty, I hope that more and more children begin their lives knowing that they are beautiful. That they can look to the beauty in the world and know they are a part of it.

And yet what is on the outside is only one part of being beautiful. Yes, it is important to feel good about yourself when you look in the mirror, but what is even more important is working on being beautiful inside. That means being kind to yourself and to others. That is the beauty that truly shines through.

The journey I went on was very different from Sulwe's night-time adventure, but the lesson was the same: there is so much beauty in this world and inside you that others are not awake to. Don't wait for anyone to tell you what is beautiful. Know that you are beautiful because you choose to be. Know that you always were and always can be. Treasure it and let it light the way in everything you do.