

The Mountain Beyond Reach Tine's Tale



*“I completely let go of [fear](#). Fear of norms and fear of [society](#).
I was neither afraid of failure, nor dying. I believed in my own strengths and nurtured my
natural talent. I improved my weaknesses. And above all, I always followed my [heart](#)” —
Tine Mena, mountaineer*





Today is a big day for Tine Mena.

At the [age](#) of 25, she has become the first [woman](#) from Northeast India to climb Everest. At 8,848 metres, Everest is the highest mountain in the world. It's as high as five thousand men (who are six feet [tall](#)) standing on top of each other!

This is the [story](#) of Tine's [journey](#), a girl who [loves](#) to climb mountains.

Whooshoo! Whooshoo!

In the Mishmi [hills](#) of Arunachal Pradesh, Tine heard a wondrous [call](#) from the distant mountains. She was drawn to it, a sound only she could hear.

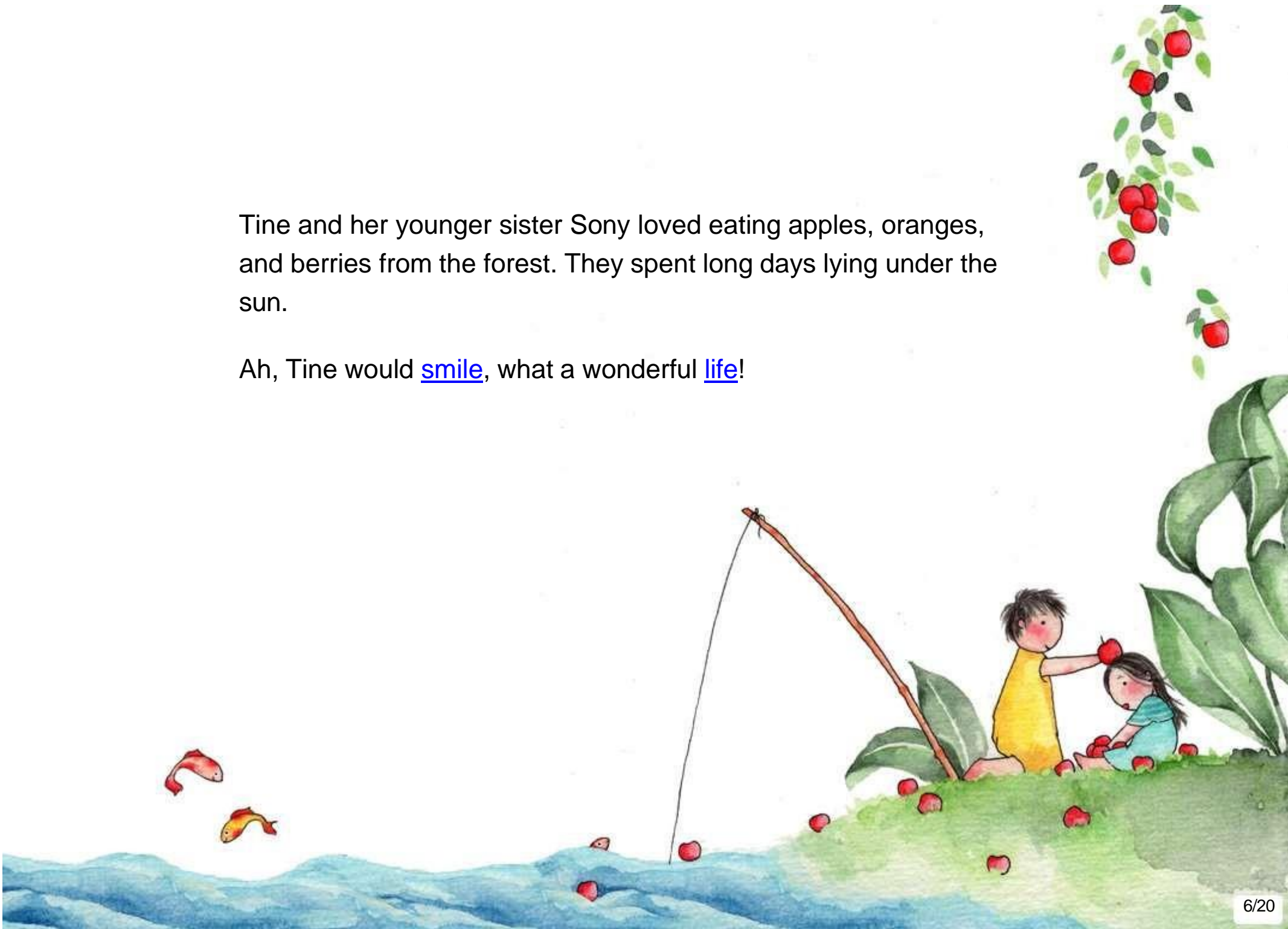


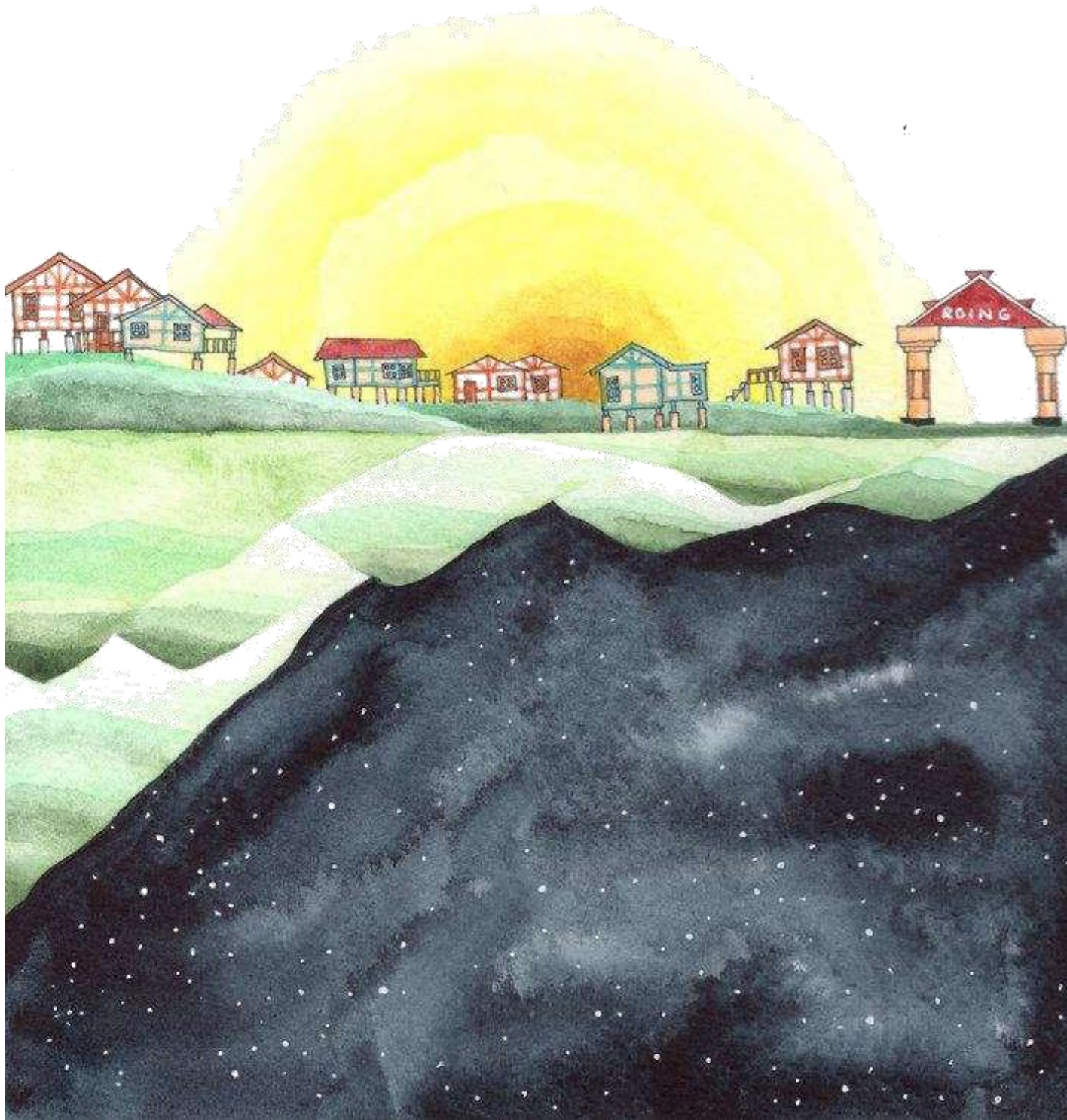
Tine loved to climb. She climbed [trees](#), ran through the jungle and went [fishing](#) in the river. She was as fearless and strong as Naaya, her grandmother. If Tine fell down, Naaba, her father, would tell her to get up and carry on.



Tine and her younger sister Sony loved eating apples, oranges, and berries from the forest. They spent long days lying under the sun.

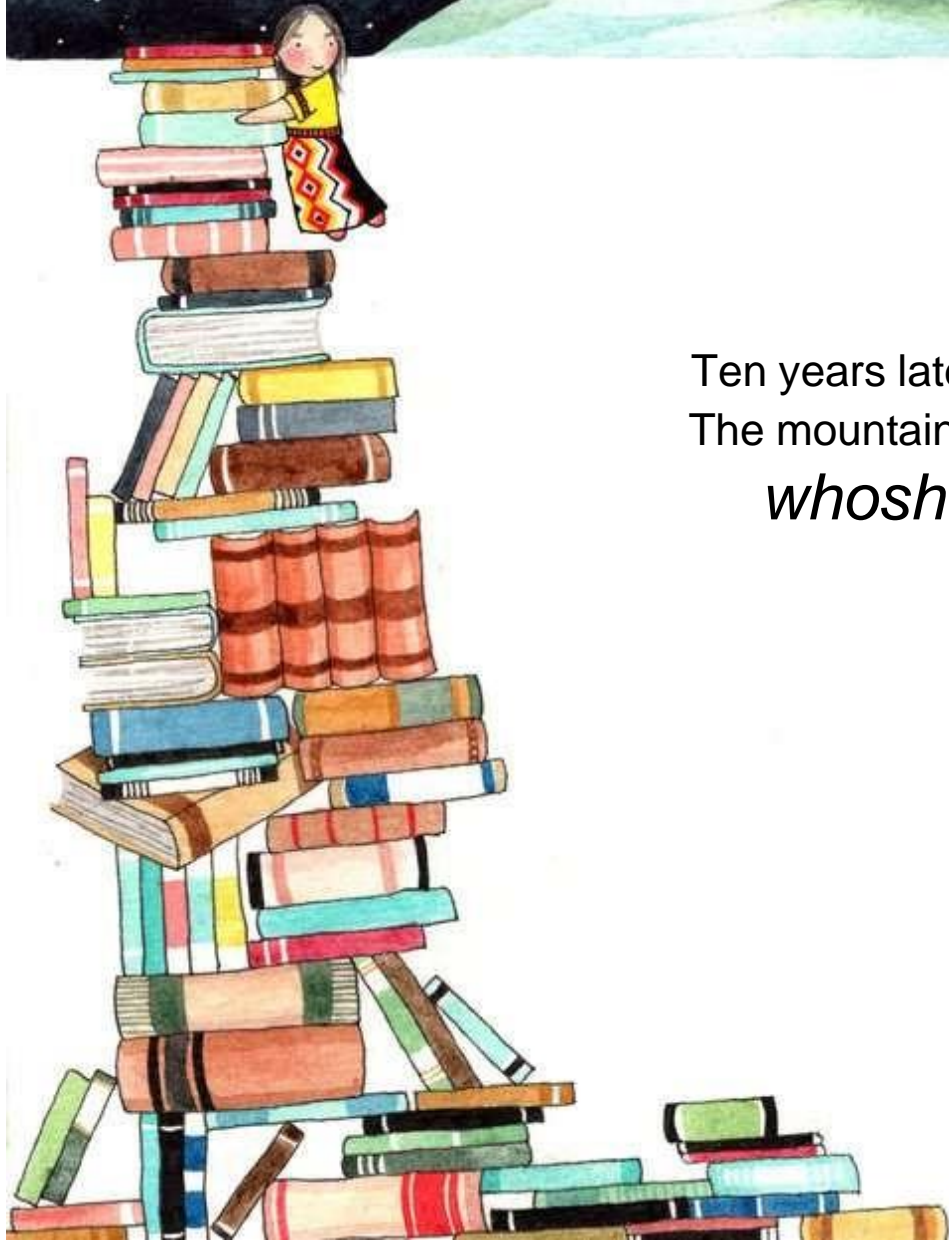
Ah, Tine would [smile](#), what a wonderful [life](#)!





But one day, Tine's world turned upside down. There was no [school](#) in Echali, so her [family](#) moved to the closest big town, Roing.

There, the 'Whooshoo' became a faint whisper. All she wanted was to be in the mountains.



Ten years later, Tine finished [school](#).
The mountain call was strong again -
whoshooo, whoshooo.

To be close to her mountains, Tine applied to be a porter for an [army](#) expedition. She could carry heavy loads and march for days, [shoulder](#) to shoulder with others. But there was one small problem—women were not allowed to be porters.

But did that stop her? Of course it didn't! Tine dressed as a boy and began working. She'd carry nearly 25 kilos every day. It took a week for everyone to realise that she was a [girl](#) disguised as a boy!





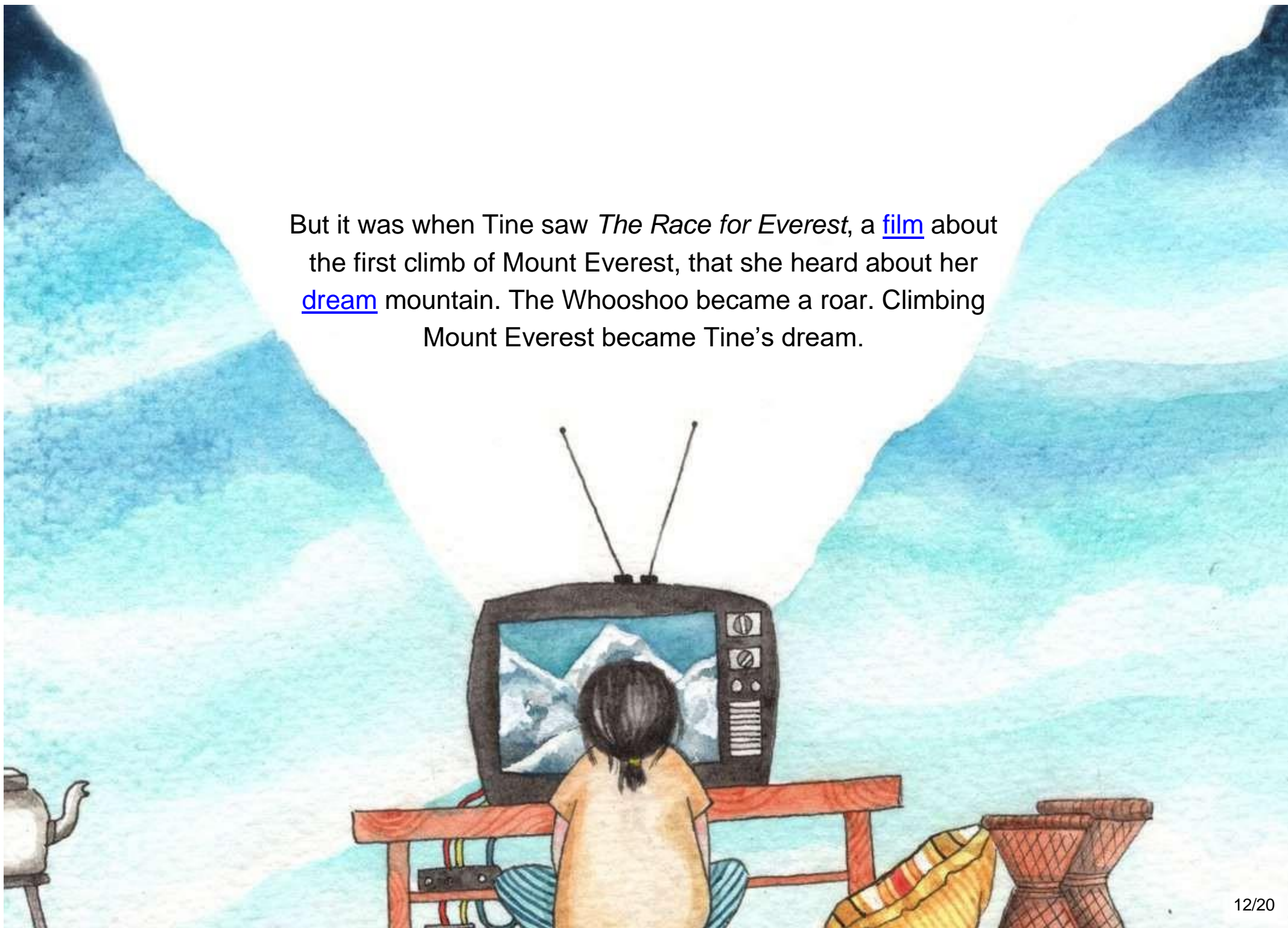
Tine was scolded for breaking the rules. But she could work as much as the boys and knew the route better than anyone. So the [officers](#) agreed to let her continue working. Her act would later help lift the ban on [female](#) porters.



Tine worked hard and became a coordinator, someone who [plans](#) mountain [trips](#). That's when she met Dr. Romeo Meitei, the leader of an expedition. "I must say that you have all the [makings](#) of a naturally gifted climber," he said. "You have the build, the [strength](#), and the determination. Now all you need, is [technique](#)."

Dr. Meitei became her mentor and Tine began her [training](#).

But it was when Tine saw *The Race for Everest*, a [film](#) about the first climb of Mount Everest, that she heard about her [dream](#) mountain. The Whooshoo became a roar. Climbing Mount Everest became Tine's dream.

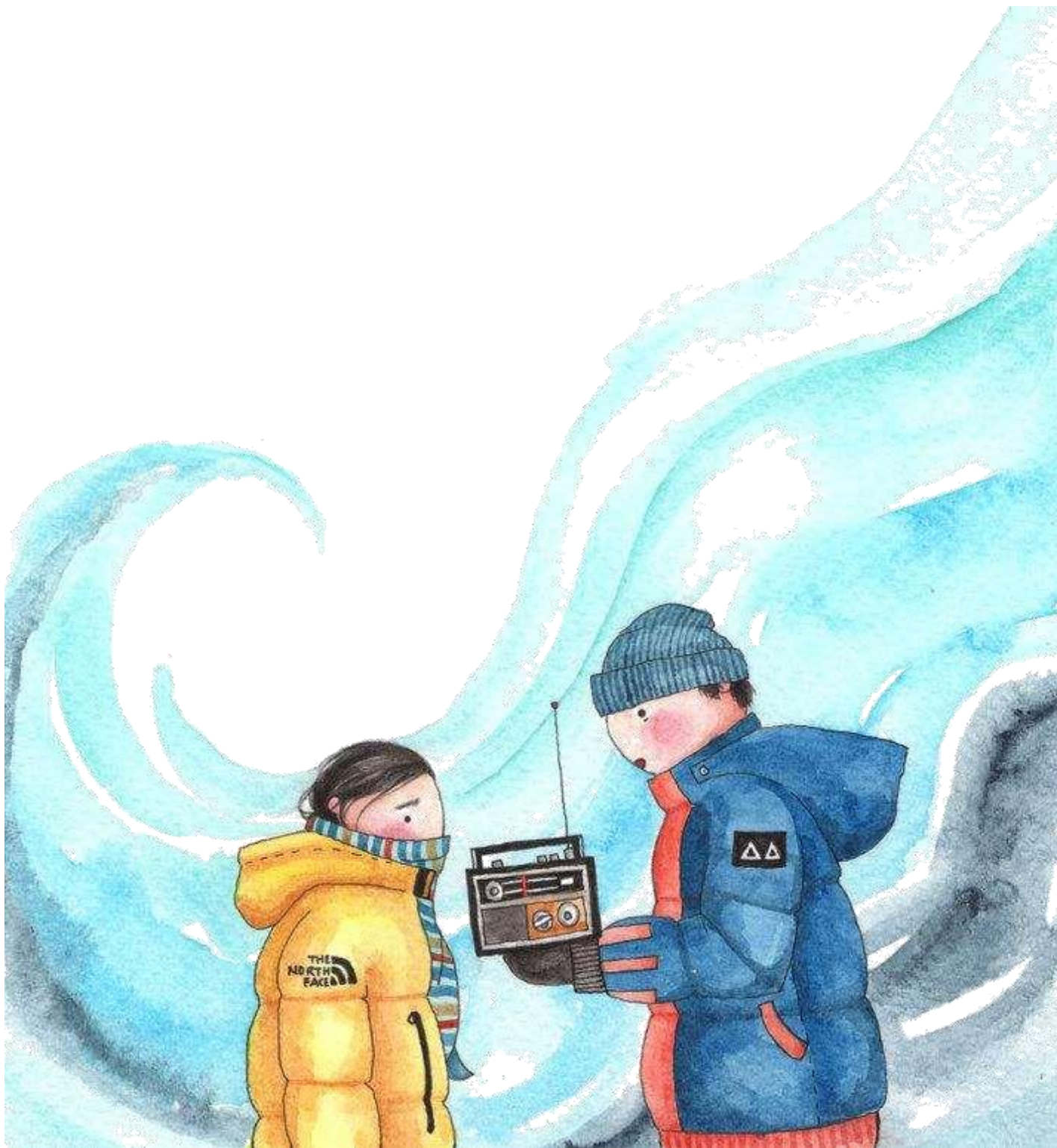


Finally, Tine left for Nepal. She was [anxious](#), but determined. At the Everest base [camp](#), it was cold and the air, thin. After her [training](#), Tine began her climb with Cherring Sherpa*.

The climb was divided into four sections so climbers could rest at different camping points and continue to the top over a few days. By the time Tine and Cherring Sherpa reached the second camp, the [weather](#) had worsened.

**Sherpas are a Tibetan ethnic group living in high Himalayan regions who are known for their climbing [skills](#).*





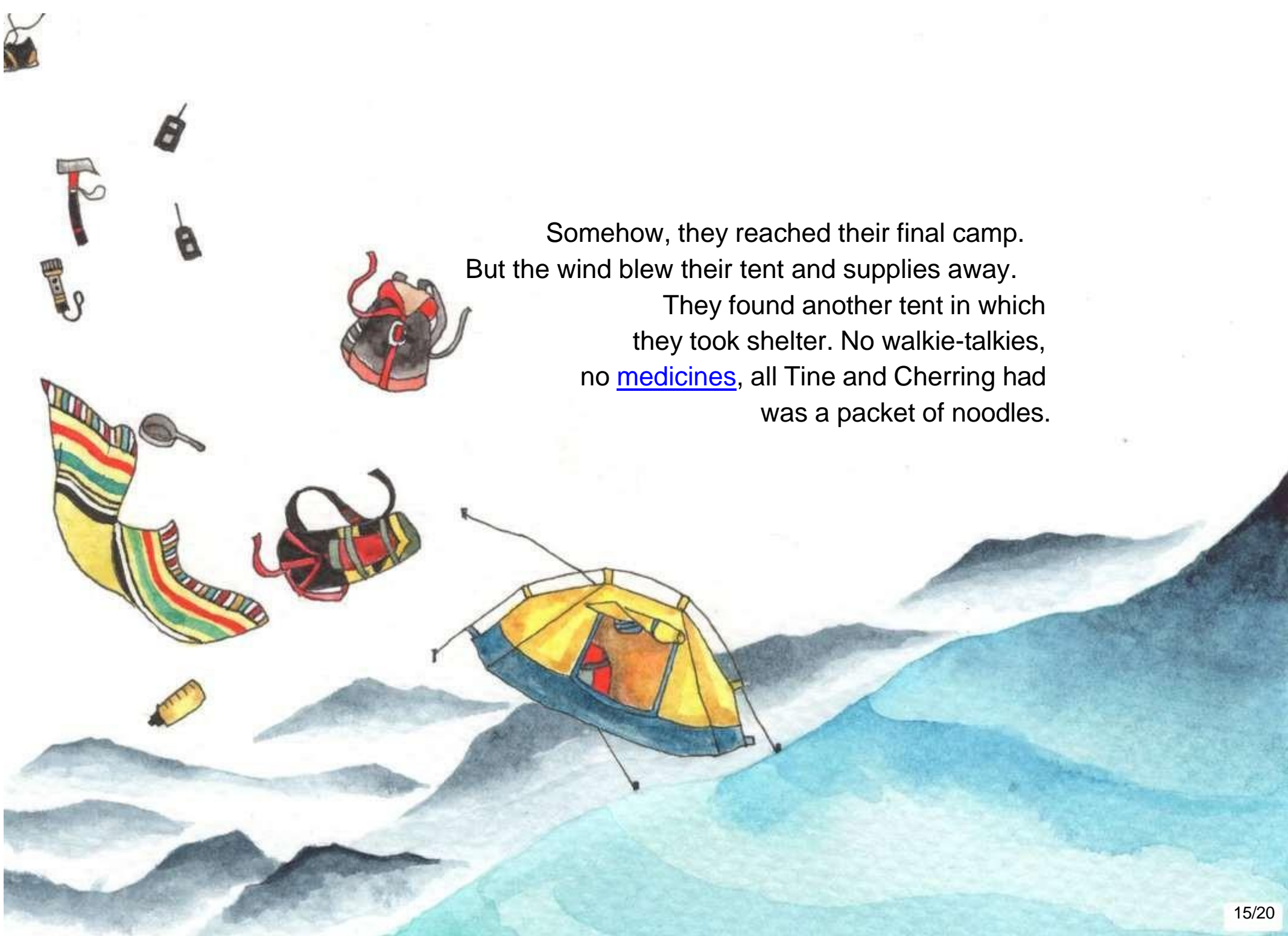
But the musical
Whooooshooing was also
growing louder and
[hypnotic!](#)

“Do you want to go ahead?”
Cherring asked.

“I don’t think I will get
another chance to do this,”
Tine said.

Somehow, they reached their final camp.
But the wind blew their tent and supplies away.

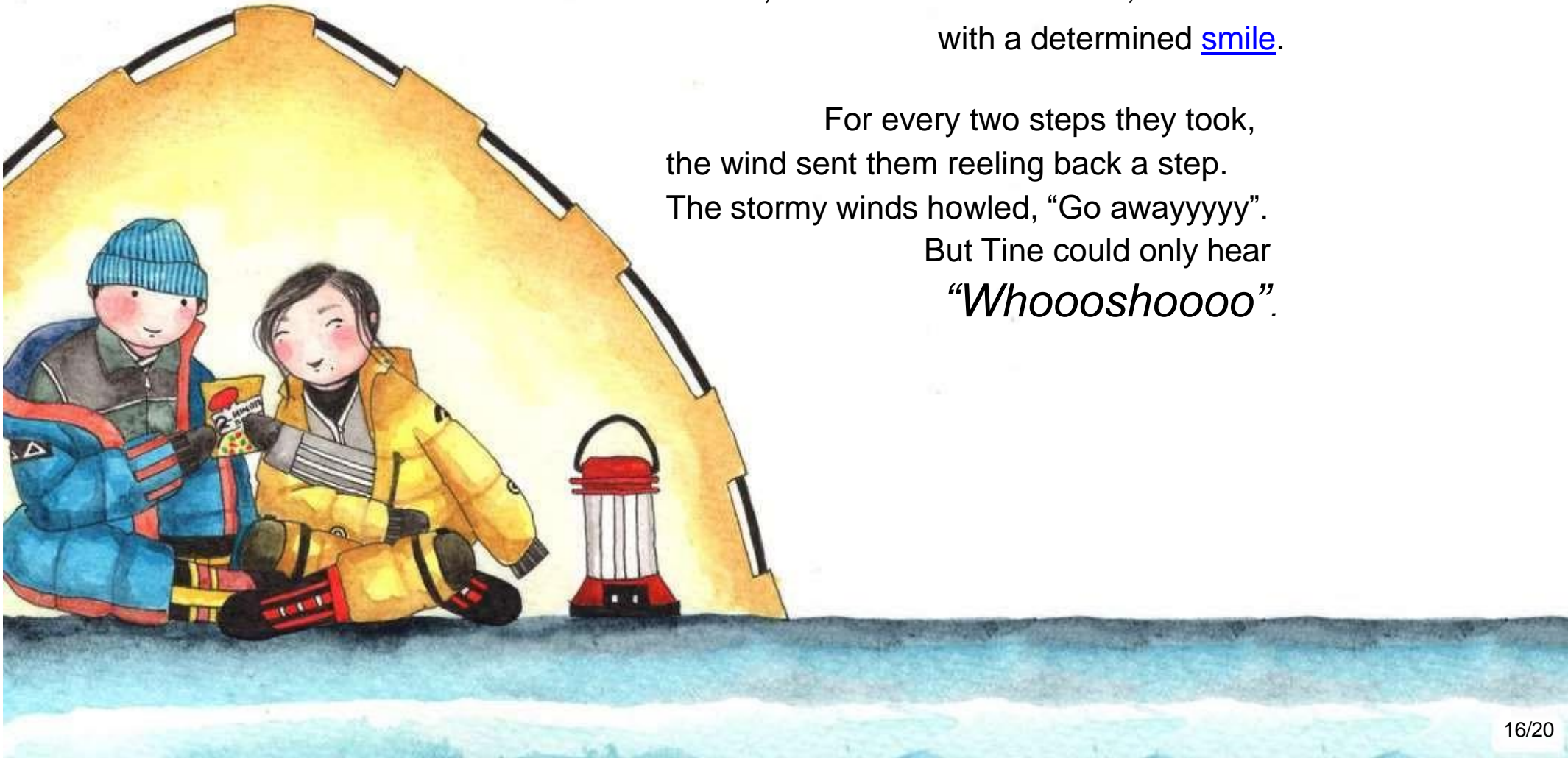
They found another tent in which
they took shelter. No walkie-talkies,
no [medicines](#), all Tine and Cherring had
was a packet of noodles.

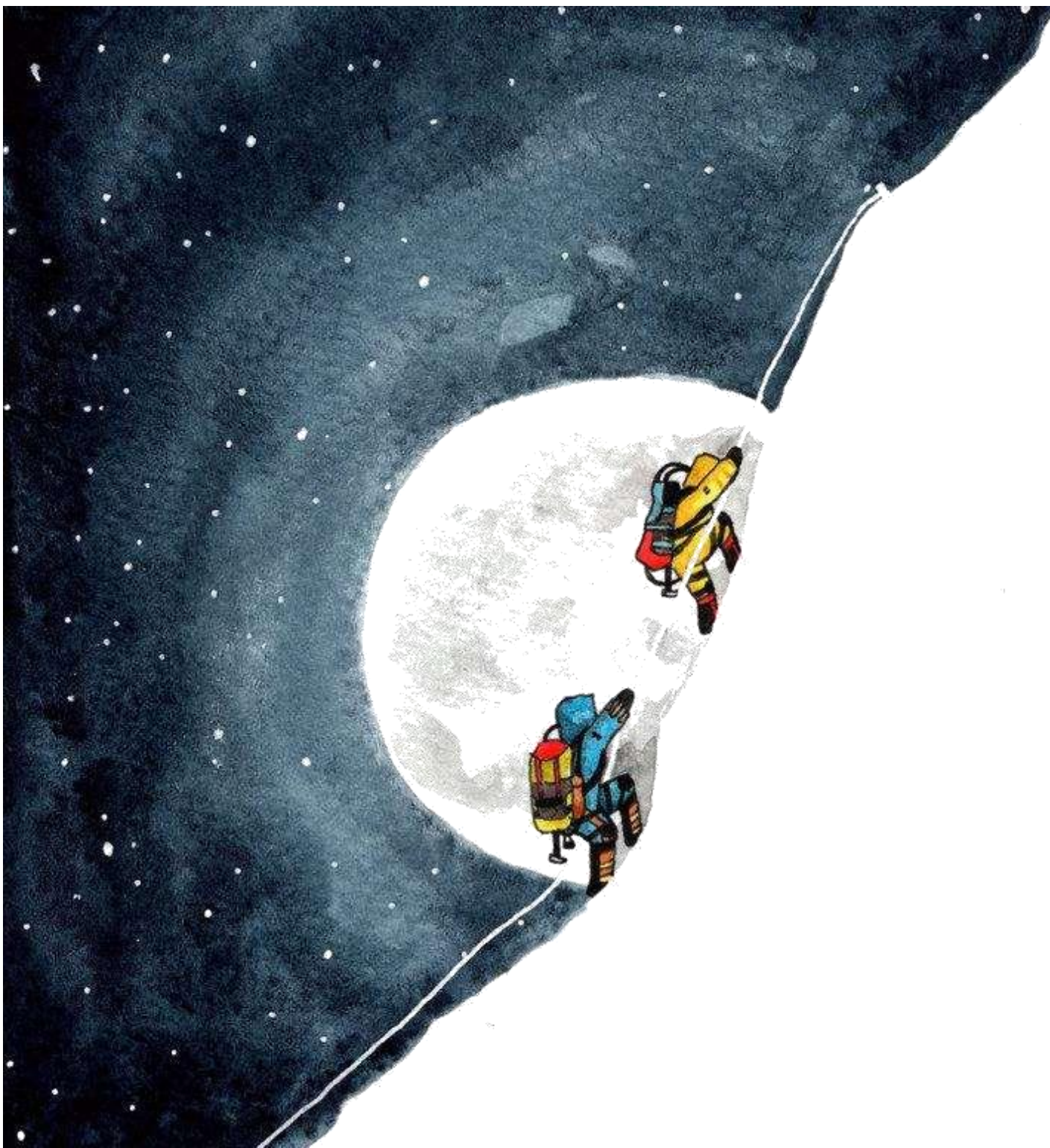


“Let’s share half of it,” Cherring suggested.

“If we make it alive, we will eat the other half,” Tine said
with a determined [smile](#).

For every two steps they took,
the wind sent them reeling back a step.
The stormy winds howled, “Go awayyyyyy”.
But Tine could only hear
“*Whooshooooo*”.

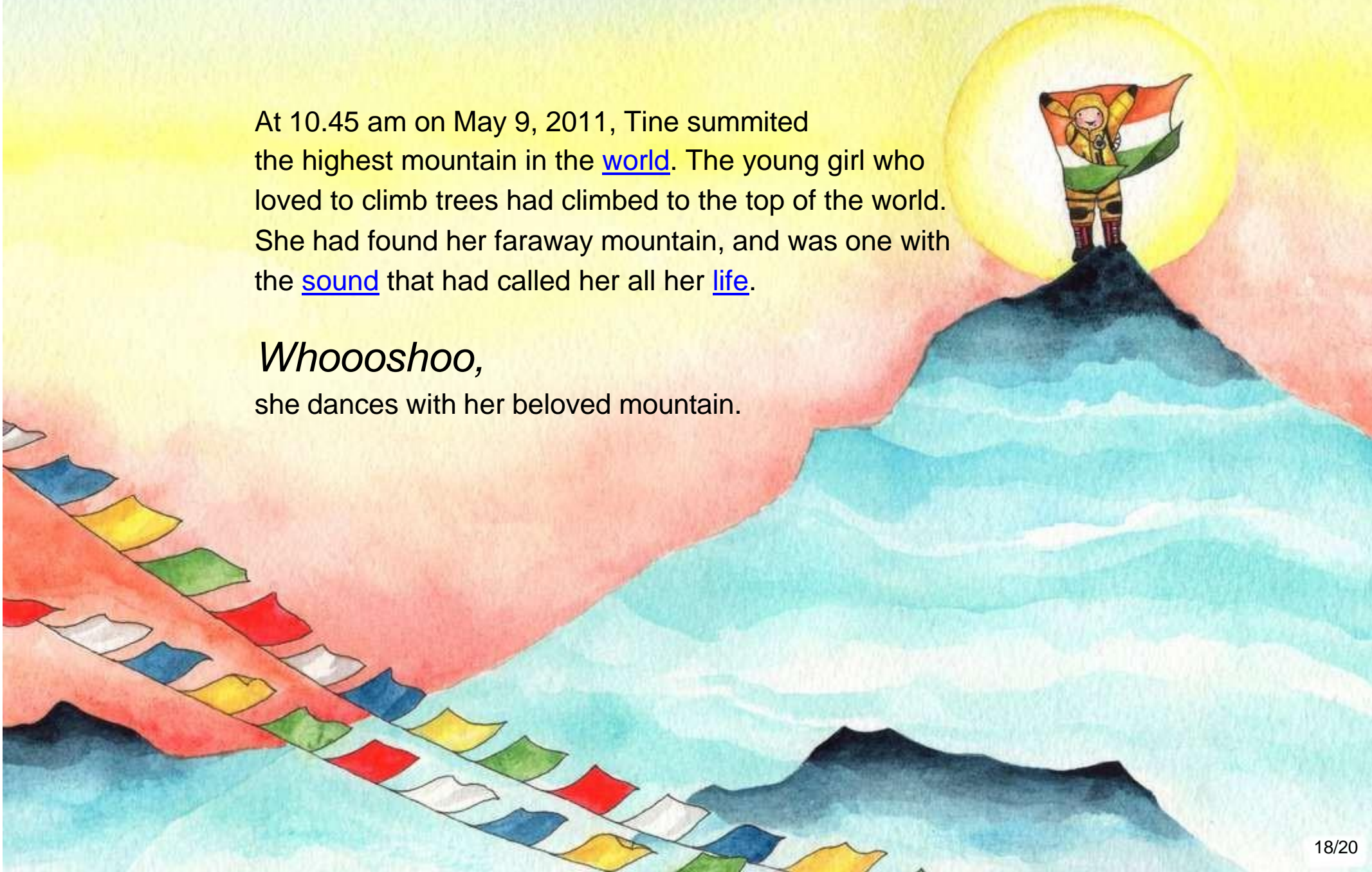




With new resolve, they
fearlessly began the last
push to reach the top.

At 10.45 am on May 9, 2011, Tine summited the highest mountain in the [world](#). The young girl who loved to climb trees had climbed to the top of the world. She had found her faraway mountain, and was one with the [sound](#) that had called her all her [life](#).

Whooshoo,
she dances with her beloved mountain.

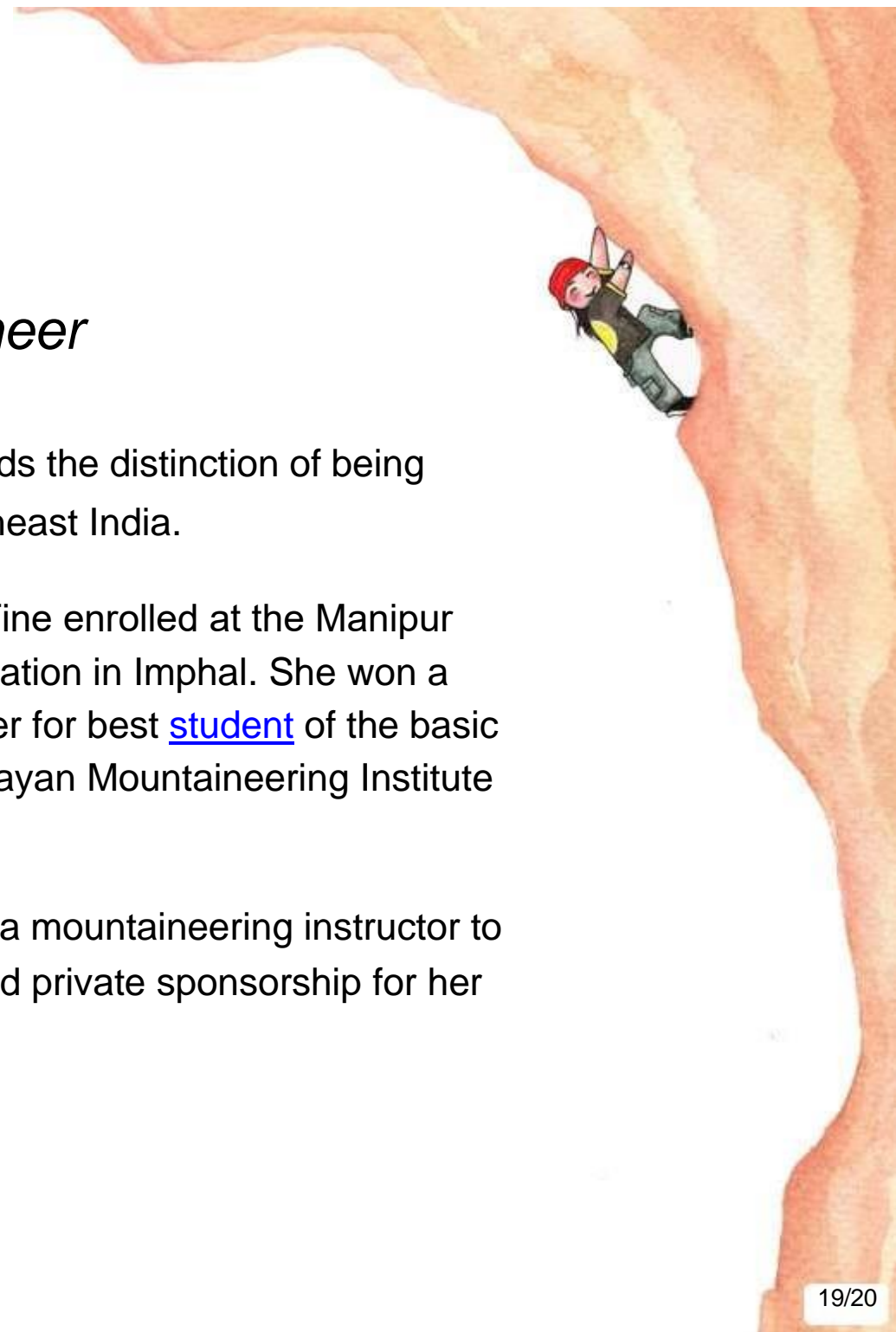


Tine Mena, the mountaineer

Tine Mena is an adventurer who holds the distinction of being the first [female](#) Everest from Northeast India.

At Dr. Romeo Meitei's suggestion, Tine enrolled at the Manipur Mountaineering and Training Association in Imphal. She won a gold medal at the [course](#) and another for best [student](#) of the basic mountaineering course at the Himalayan Mountaineering Institute in Darjeeling.

Tine turned down a well-paid [job](#) as a mountaineering instructor to chase her Everest [dream](#). She raised private sponsorship for her expedition.



Tine has inspired many youngsters in the northeast, starting with her cousin Ruby Lombo, a [cycling](#) athlete. Tine continues to be a role model for adventurous [children](#).



