

LOUIS'S PRAISE GLASSES



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英智舎

Louis was a 9 year old boy who went to an elementary school in a small village. His parents died early, and so he lived together with the priest Andrea in the village church. Louis called Andrea “father,” and felt like the priest was his real father. From time to time, Louis’ father would warn the villagers against bickering with each other and also warned the local factory’s president, Mr. Salsa, that working conditions should be improved there. Although the villagers all thought the priest was odd and ridiculed him, saying: “God never does anything for us,” the priest loved the village all the same. The priest often taught Louis, “Look for the good that exists in others, not the evil.” But Louis, who was used to seeing the villagers complaining and bickering all the time, could not understand what his father was saying. After many years of hardship, the priest became ill. Louis blamed the villagers and resented them for it.





In the center of the village where Salsa Factory stood, angry voices could be heard daily.

“You need to speed it up!”

“Can’t you do anything right!?”

The factory workers got yelled at every day by the foreman.

The foreman got yelled at by the manager.

The manager got yelled at by the even more important director.

And the director got yelled at by the factory president: Mr. Salsa.

When the factory made a profit, everything went to Mr. Salsa. He controlled everything.

For the factory workers, there was nowhere to direct their anger, so they brought it home with them and yelled at their families, their neighbors, and even stray dogs on the street.

The parents of the twins - Miguel and Riguel - both worked at the factory, and they would scold the twins right after coming home from work.

Because of this, the village was filled with hateful language as everyone was trying to relieve their frustrations.

Then one day during dance class at the elementary school, Maria was sitting and watching as usual because of her bad leg. But when she heard the music this time, she decided she wanted to try to dance too and stood up to strike a pose.

Riguel and Miguel saw Maria's poor performance and made fun of her.

The teacher, Ms. Miranda, thought she had to do something because Maria was Mr. Salsa's daughter. She smacked the two bad boys on the head and said to Maria nicely, "Maria, you don't have to try to do things you can't do," as she sat her back down in her chair.

Louis looked at Maria and smiled. "She might be able to! Let's dance together," as he took her hand. But Maria turned bright red and looked away, which made Riguel and Miguel make fun of her even more.

"Why are you making fun of her, Riguel?" Louis demanded.

"Because it's funny, Louis!" he argued back.



Louis' heart darkened, and his anger made him kick the flowers and even the stray dog on the way home.

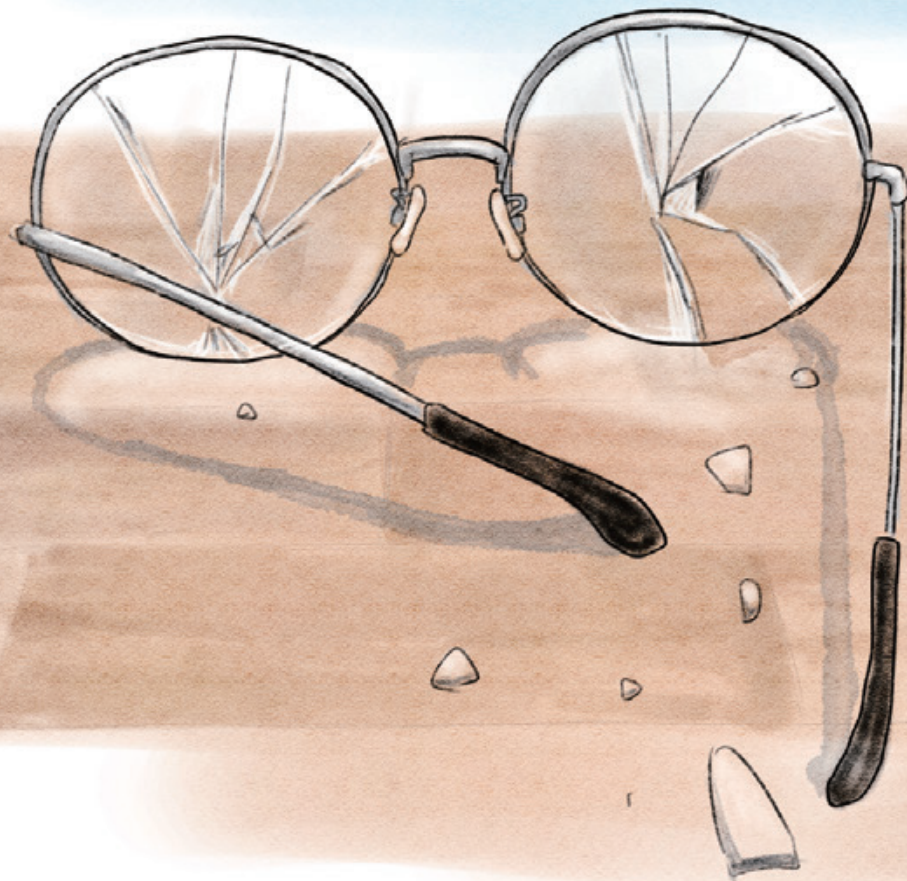
Even though Louis' father was lying sick in bed, Louis' anger caused him to yell at his father and then dash out of the house to play.

After going back inside, his father's condition had worsened.

Louis, with tears in his eyes, apologized to his father, and his father replied:

"I got a call from your teacher. Louis, your teacher was upset, but I told her that you are a fantastic boy. You said a very nice thing at school today. I'm proud of you. **I want you to be a servant of Love. So long as you do that, I'll be right beside you.**"





Andrea handed Louis the circle-frame glasses he wore.

“I want to give these to you – these are magical glasses that will make you happy.”

As he was giving Louis the glasses, the priest’s grip loosened, and he passed away. Right before Louis’ eyes, the glasses fell to the floor and broke with a crack.

The funeral passed, and despite Louis' sadness, he tried to go to school.

At that time, he suddenly became interested in the glasses.

Remembering his father's last words, he picked up the broken keepsake.

"I want you to be a servant of Love. So long as you do that, I'll be right beside you."

His father said, "these are magical glasses that will make you happy."

Magical glasses that praise and encourage you.

Louis decided to call them his "Magical Glasses."

He put on his now lensless glasses and set off.

As he was walking along, Riguel and Miguel came up to him.

"What's with the weird glasses?" they teased.

Louis, who was about to say one of his 100 different prepared comebacks, touched the rim of the glasses to begin.



As he did so, he heard his father's voice coming out of nowhere.

“Look for the good that exists in others, not the evil.”

Louis was surprised. The glasses really were magical!

Then he recalled his father's kind face.

Riguel and Miguel looked at Louis, who had suddenly become silent. Then they exchanged glances with one another.

Riguel suddenly took out his favorite toy: a propeller airplane.

“Hey, I got something for you. If you can get this airplane to fly, it's really cool.”

Louis was about to say “Yeah, right!” as he tried to throw the propeller toy to the ground, but he could not do so because Louis could see Riguel's kind side.

He could see Riguel was truly trying to encourage him to make the plane fly.

“Thanks Riguel and Miguel,” Louis said.

Without a word, Miguel put his hand on Louis' back and patted him.

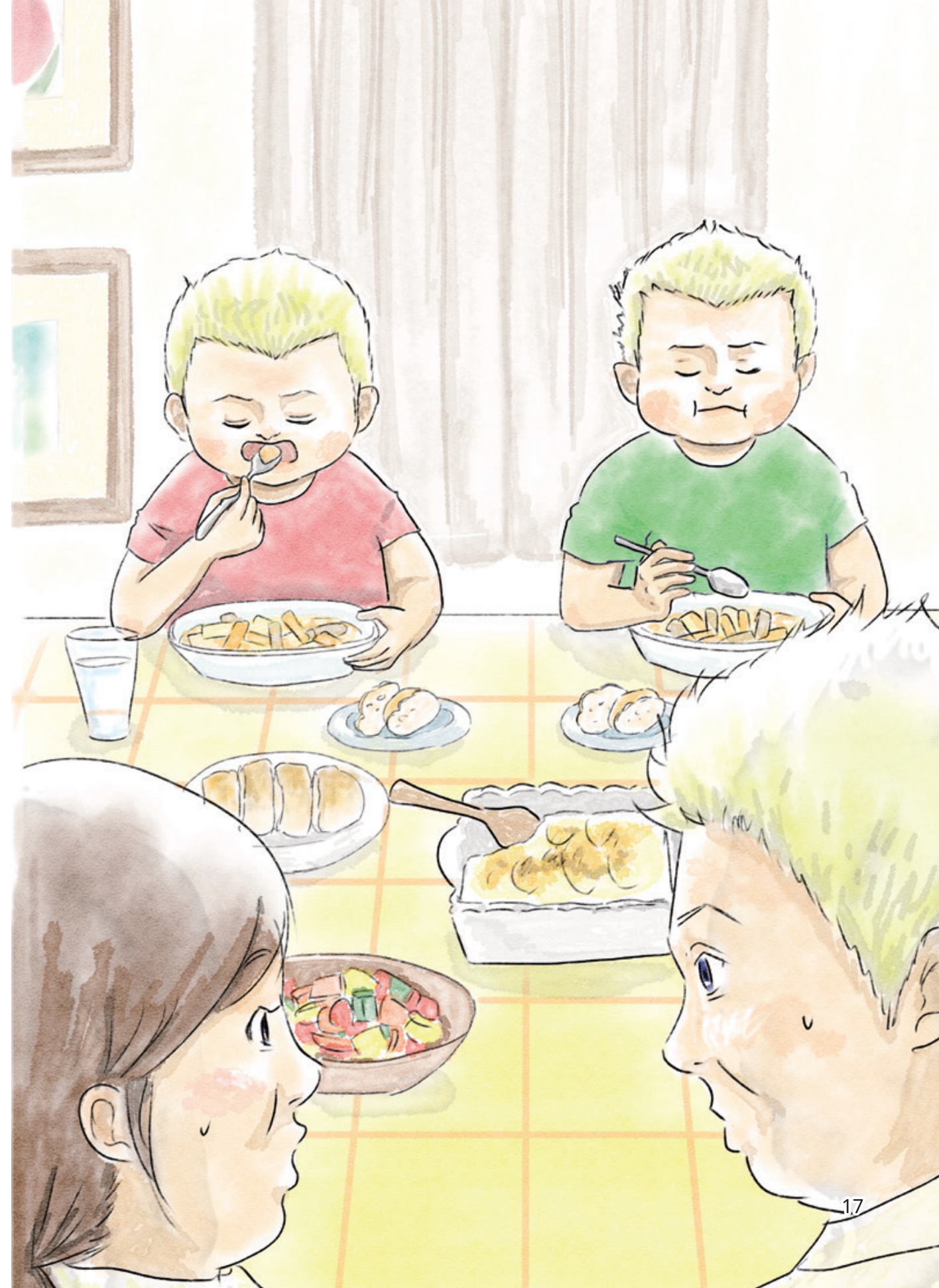
“Don't worry, Louis. We're here.”

The three of them walked to school, shoulder to shoulder.



At school, Maria came up offering Louis a flower, and muttered “thank you for the other day.” She then shuffled to her seat and quickly sat down, a tinge of embarrassment on her face.

The same day after going home from school, Riguel and Miguel sat at the dinner table politely. Riguel said, “The meal was delicious. Thank you.” His mother was surprised. When he was being scolded, Miguel murmured, “I’m happy I even have someone to get angry with me.” The twins’ parents looked at each other stunned and stopped being angry. In fact, the twins had always been jealous of Louis. The man Louis called “father” had been such a kind person. But after the priest passed away and they saw Louis now, they realized how fortunate and grateful they were to have parents who took care of them despite their bad behavior.





From that day on, whenever Louis wanted to talk back or say something mean, he heard his father's voice from the glasses.

"Why did you forget to bring your homework!?"

Louis began to understand that Ms. Miranda was saying that for his own good.

When he heard a villager say something in anger like, "I want to get out of this village as soon as possible," he knew that what they really wanted was to make the village better.

Louis was able to look at things in a new way.

To his teacher, he said, "thank you for thinking of me."

To the villager, he said, "thank you for always watering the flowers."

He started to express his gratitude every time.

And every time he did, the villagers would return a kind expression.

Louis began to like the things that caught his eye.

Whenever he lost his way, he could touch the glasses and hear his father's voice.

Whenever Louis ran into Mr. Salsa on a walk, he would greet him by saying: “thank you very much for everything you do.”

At first, Mr. Salsa was taken aback, but eventually began to mumble back his own greeting.

Mr. Salsa lived together with Maria.

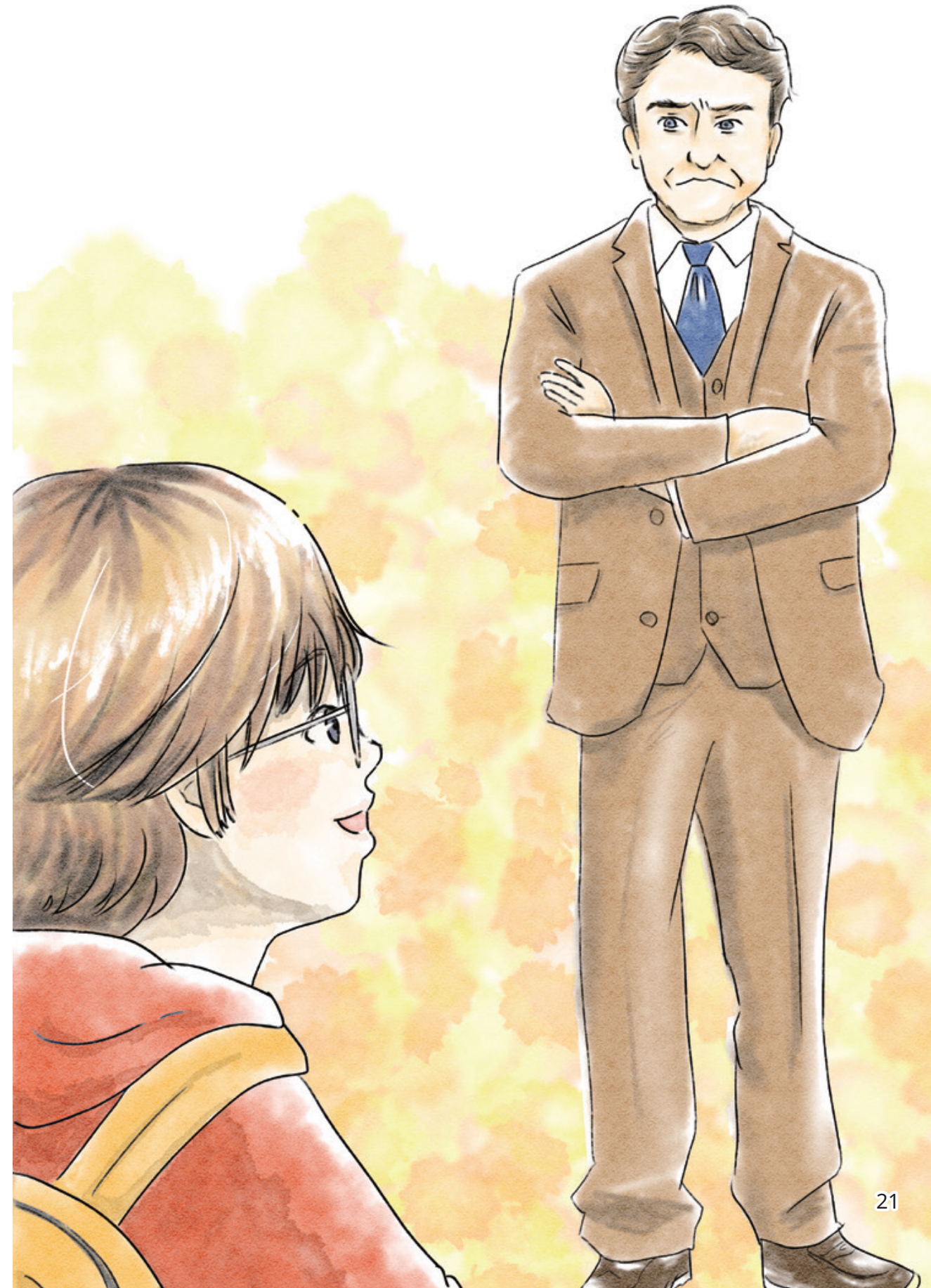
A long time ago, Mr. Salsa was very poor. At that time, an epidemic was spreading around, and because he didn’t have money to buy medicine, he lost his wife. He was left with the baby Maria whose leg became lame because of the disease.

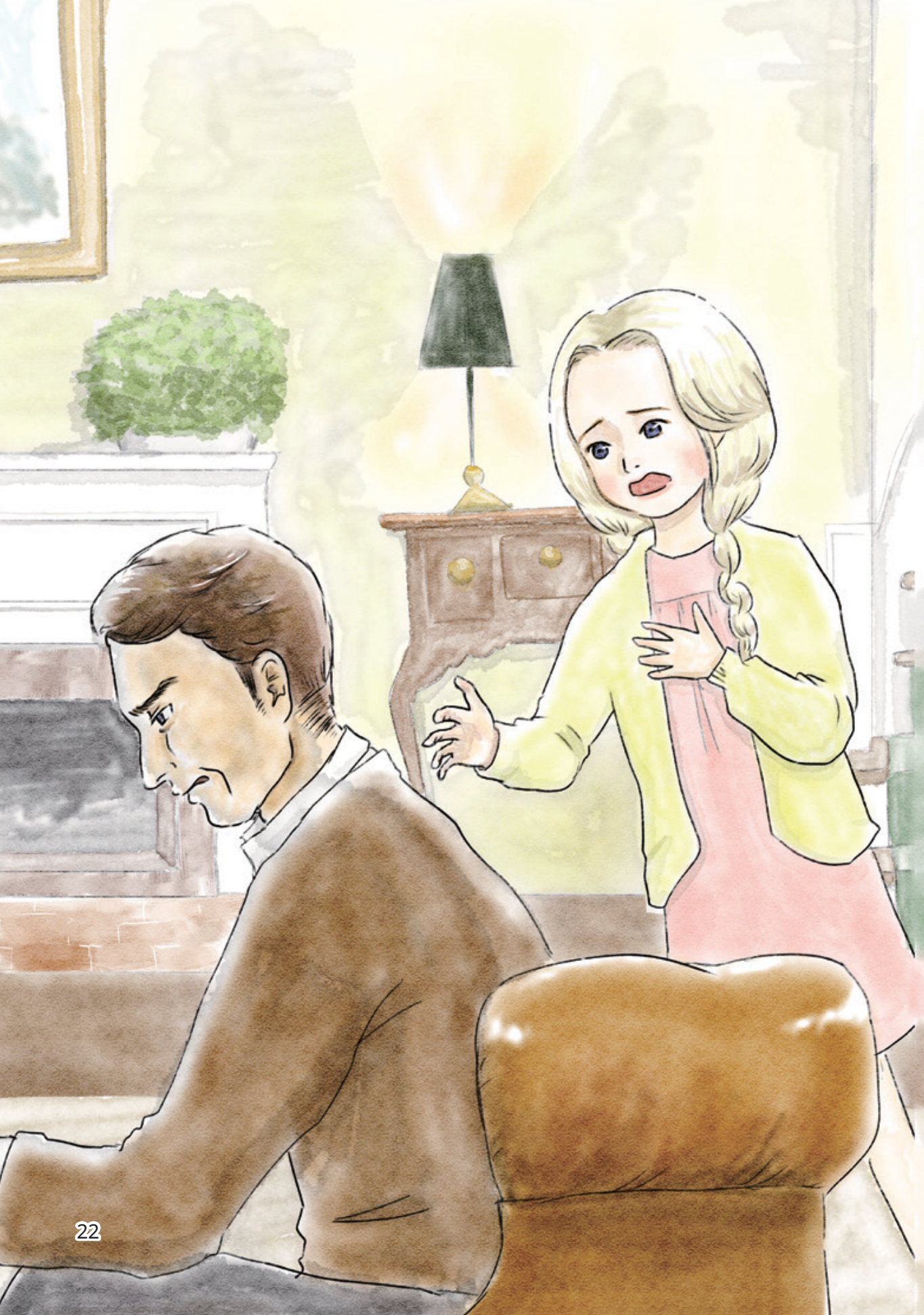
From that point on, Mr. Salsa vowed to become a rich man.

He overworked the villagers who didn’t support him in his time of need and increased his wealth.

Whenever Mr. Salsa went back home and looked at Maria, he would cry.

“It’s so terrible that your leg has gotten like this. It’s daddy’s fault. Please forgive me. I’ll drive you to and from school every day, and you can just rest during P.E. class. Even if you can’t do anything, daddy will be there for you.”





Then one day, Maria spoke to her father.

“I want to try to dance. Louis told me that I could do it!”

Mr. Salsa was shocked.

“Louis... isn’t he that kid from the church? What a jerk! He’s trying to make a fool out of you.”

“That’s not true. I want to try to dance.”

“Impossible! You’ll only be laughed at,” Mr. Salsa shouted.

After that, he closed himself in his room for a long while and seemed to be thinking about something.

On a certain Sunday, Mr. Salsa visited Louis' church and he threw down an envelope containing a lot of money.

The villagers who saw this looked at Mr. Salsa with astonished gazes.

Mr. Salsa began going to the church every Sunday and donating money.

The poor church suddenly became wealthy, so it was able to give bread to the poor and presents to the children.

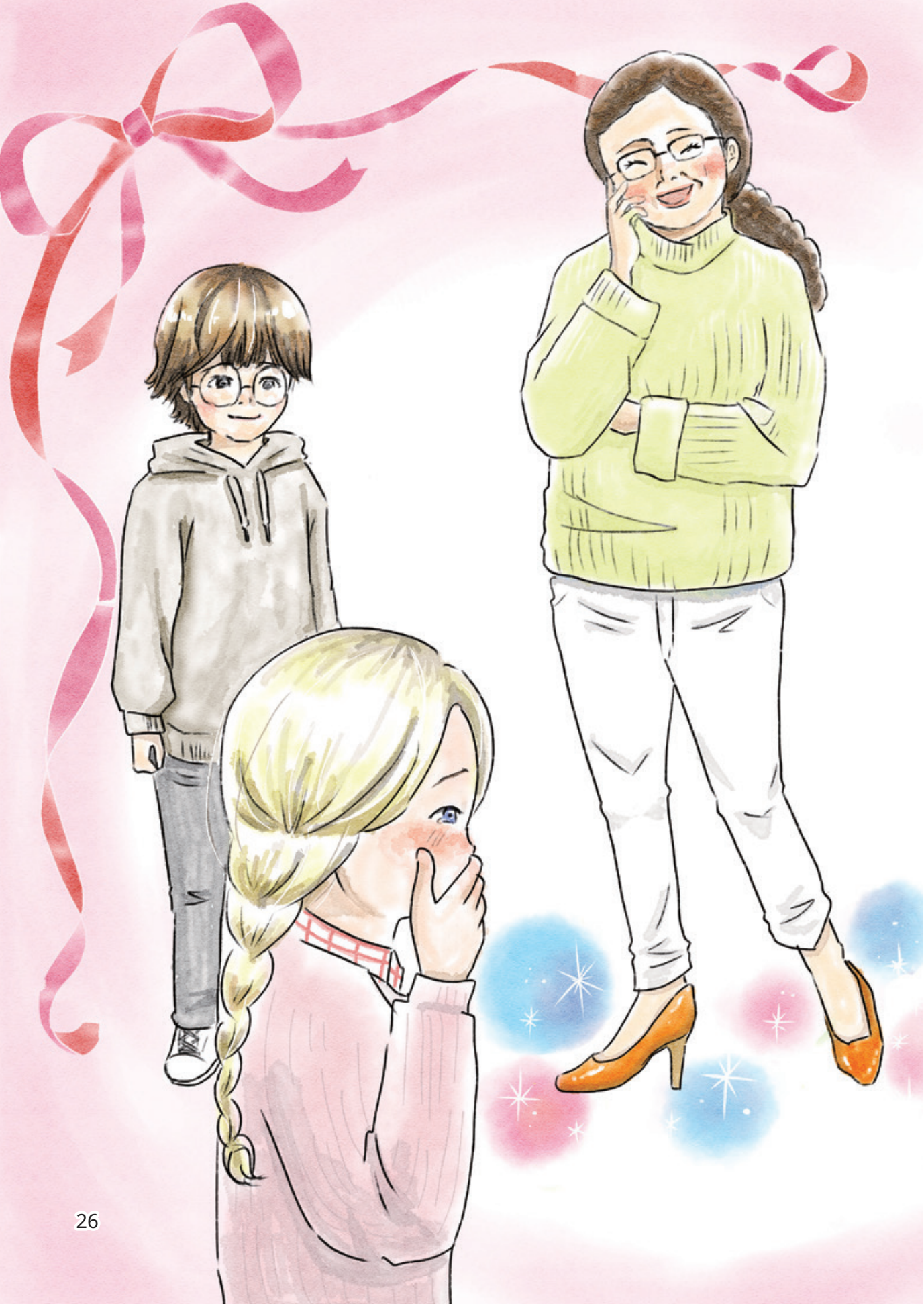
Mr. Salsa's yelling at the factory director decreased. As a result, the director's yelling at the manager, the manager's yelling at the foreman, and the foreman's yelling at the factory workers all decreased. Gradually, people began greeting Mr. Salsa and doing their jobs as hard as they could.

One day, without saying a word, Mr. Salsa raised everyone's wages.

The factory workers were surprised, and everyone expressed their gratitude.

"You don't have to thank me!" Mr. Salsa spat back, but in fact he was happy.





Ms. Miranda's husband was the best shoemaker at Salsa Factory, but he always got drunk and rarely came back home after work.

But on the day the wages were raised, Ms. Miranda's husband made a pair of beautiful, orange high-heels and brought them home for her.

Ms. Miranda was happy and wore them to school every day.

Maria was talking to Louis in the classroom, but when she saw Ms. Miranda's shoes, she gasped: "how beautiful those shoes are!"

"My husband is such a wonderful craftsman. Your father is a wonderful president to recognize him like that and give him a job," said Ms. Miranda, full of high spirits.

With tearful eyes, Maria bowed her head several times to Ms. Miranda. Maria was touched because she had been saddened by the fact that everyone had been speaking ill of her father behind her back.

On the other hand, the words that the priest used to say remained in Mr. Salsa's heart, even if he did not understand them: "Those who give shall be saved." The village became easier to live in, and slowly but surely everyone's dissatisfaction disappeared.

As the months and days passed by, Louis and Maria came of age.

One day, it was decided that Mr. Salsa's factory would be the site of the village festival, which had stopped being held since the epidemic spread.

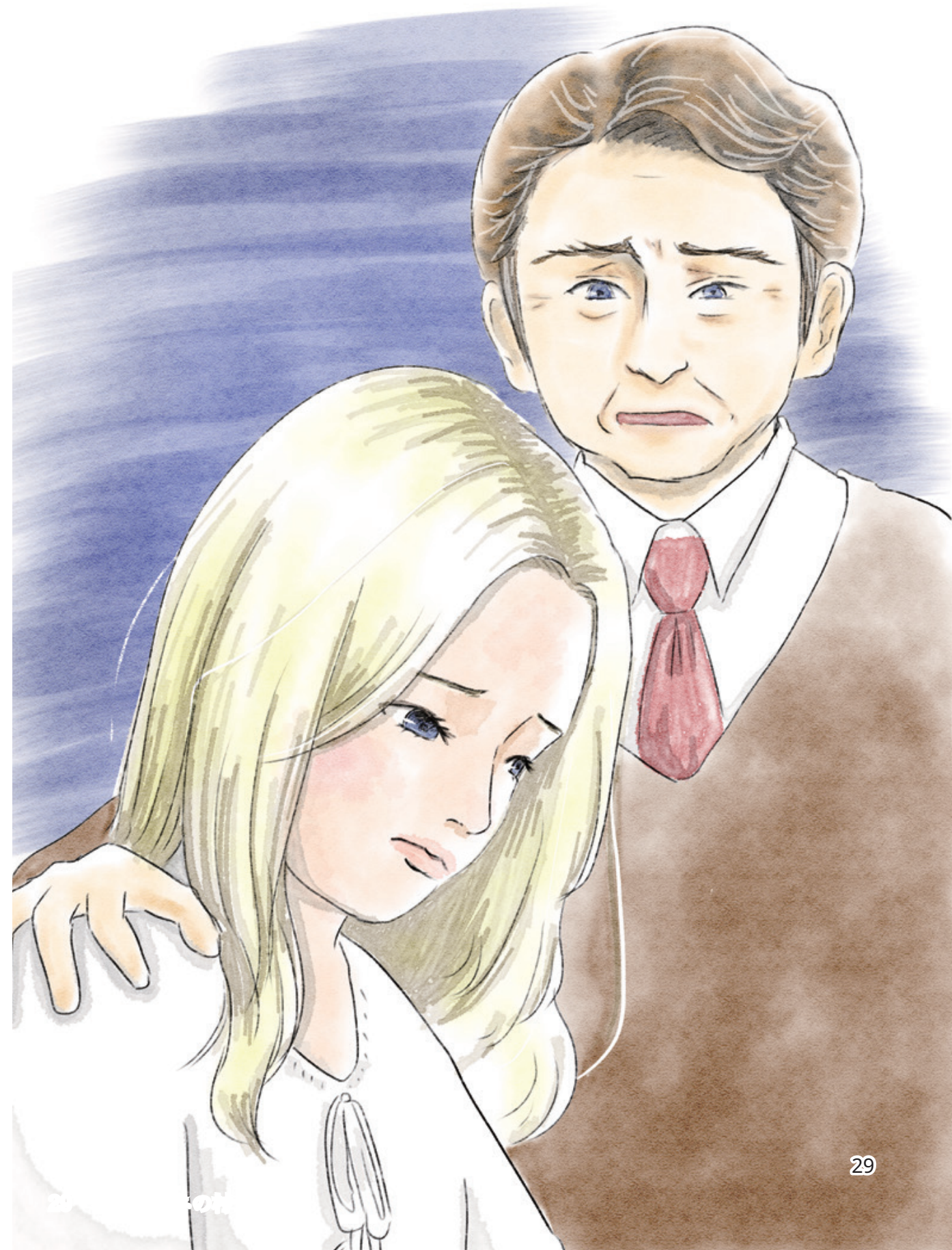
Mr. Salsa said to Maria, "So, you want to try to dance. Actually, your mother was a wonderful dancer."

Maria looked downward.

"But with this leg, I'll just be made fun of. I can't..."

Mr. Salsa appeared sad.

"Yeah, I suppose so. There's no point. Of course, there's no way..."





On the day of the village festival Maria gazed at the villagers dancing.

Louis invited Maria to dance, but Maria just looked away sadly and said, “There’s no way I can do it...”

Louis wracked his brains, and on a whim took off his treasured glasses.

“These are magical glasses, and they can do anything. If you put these on, you’ll be able to dance. I’ll let you borrow them for a bit.”

Maria took Louis’ glasses and carefully put them on.

Holding Louis’ hands, she began to dance.

“See? You can do it!”



The villagers gazed upon the two of them dancing.

“Hey, that’s Mr. Salsa’s daughter, Maria! What a beautiful girl she is.”

When Maria almost fell over, Riguel supported her weight while dancing nearby.
Riguel had also become a fine young man.
“You’re not bad at all!” he teased.

Maria smiled sheepishly.
“Of course! Who ever said I couldn’t do it?”

When the dance ended, Maria told Louis that she’d like to keep the glasses.
“If I have these, I can dance!”

Louis started to sweat. If he gave up the magical glasses that had helped him so many times before, how could he go on?

Louis started to feel scared, took the glasses back, and dashed away from Maria. He could never give up the glasses for anyone. Louis put them on and heard a voice.

“I want you to be a servant of Love. So long as you do that, I’ll be right beside you.”

Louis went back to where Maria was and calmly gave her the glasses.

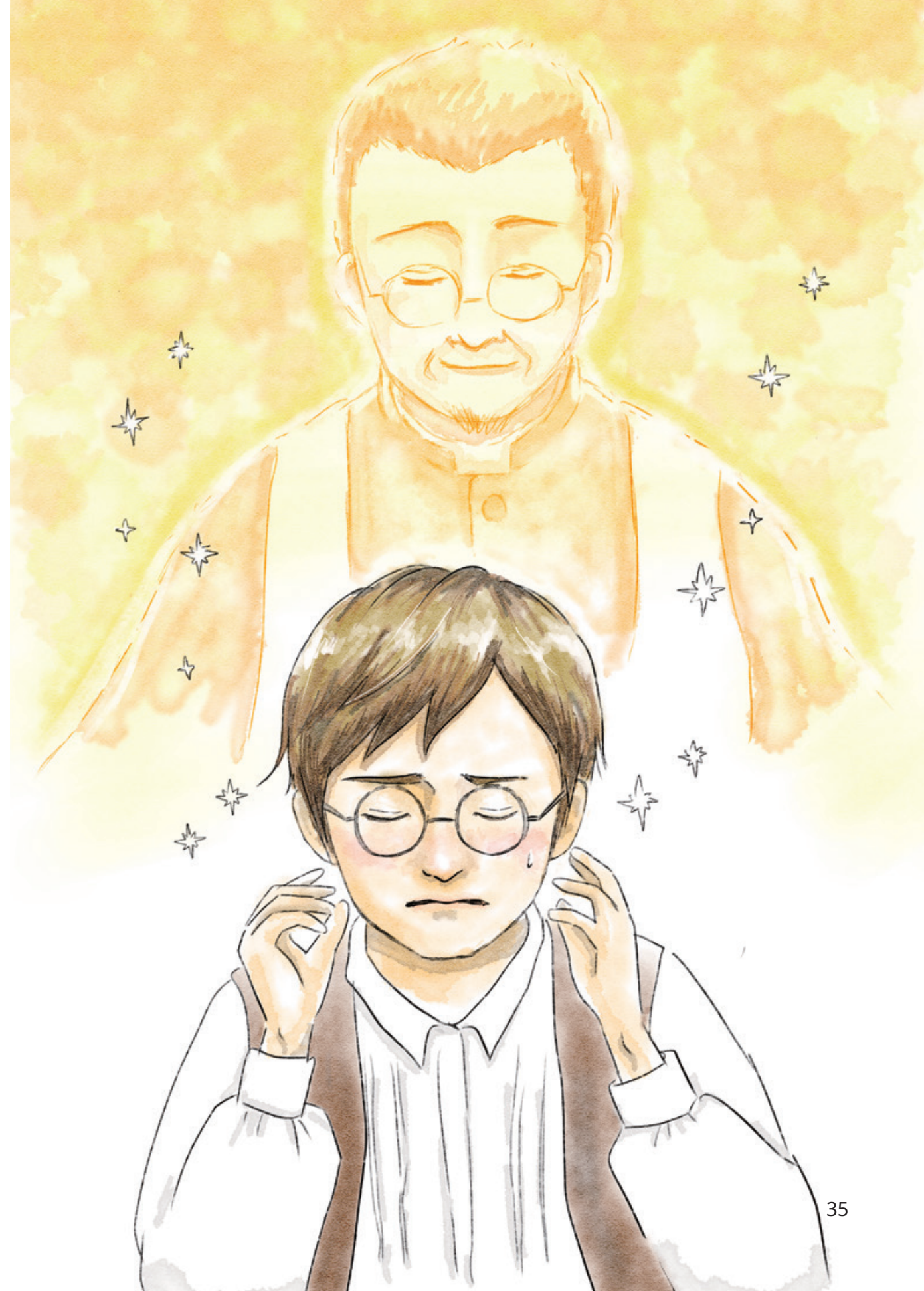
“Here. Take them. It makes me happier to see you happy.”

Maria’s face turned red, but she took Louis’ hand once again and began to dance.

Staring at the scene in front of him, Mr. Salsa began to cry.

Mr. Salsa took the festival stage and asked for everyone’s attention.

The villagers turned toward Mr. Salsa and listened intently.





“Many years ago when the epidemic spread around the village, I didn’t have enough money to buy medicine and lost my wife. My daughter Maria’s leg became lame. ‘If only I had money,’ I thought. I held a grudge against all of the villagers who wouldn’t lend me money in my time of need.”

All of the villagers looked down ashamedly. They remembered the time of the epidemic.

“One day, someone put together all of the money in his house and brought it over to me. That person was the priest, Andrea. Even so, it wasn’t enough to keep buying the medicine.”

The villagers looked at Louis.

“I lost a good friend. Now, I think of Louis as if he were my own son, and the church my own home. I’ve put hatred behind me now. On the contrary, I noticed a certain feeling within me. I pretended not to notice it, but it grew within me all the same; a warm, positive feeling of love.”

“Uhm, what did I want to come up here and say again? Oh, right. ‘Thank you.’ That’s what I wanted to say.



Everyone fell silent.

Then someone in the crowd shouted, “thank you!”

Other voices started to chime in:

“Thank you, Mr. Salsa.”

“Thank you.”

Louis looked at Maria and the scene before him.

Even without his magical glasses, it was the most beautiful sight he had ever seen.

Maria took off the glasses and handed them to Louis.

“The magic has already taken hold. I’ll be fine without the glasses now.”

Then, ignoring her leg, she walked up to her father at full speed.



To all who were once children,

All people are born to be praised and exist to praise each other. Of course, that goes for children and you as well!

Louis listened to the voice of the magical glasses and discovered a new way of looking at things. Mr. Salsa's heart was warmed by seeing Maria dancing with the glasses, and the whole of the village was enveloped in kindness.

What I wanted to convey in this book most was the wonderfulness of seeing the goodness in others. By focusing on the positives, our lives become enriched and it gives us a certain "power" to overcome life's many obstacles.

Life is long and has ups and downs.

When my beloved father suddenly lost his life, it made me realize how tragic life can be.

Up until that point, I lived life thinking that fun was all there was. My father's death taught me to be perceptive of others' feelings.

You only live once. It seemed like my own children's childhood would go on forever, but thinking back, I realized that time flew. Just like that, time passes by a lot faster than any of us can imagine.

That's why it is so important that we think about how we want to spend each and every day. None of us are perfect, but instead of focusing on each others' shortcomings, I want us to focus on others' good points and use that to praise each other.

If praising each other became a part of culture, the world would be a much better place.

I fervently believe that.

I am deeply grateful to everyone who reads this book themselves or reads it with children.

I hope to see you again soon.

Kunio Hara

Representative Director of the Ho-Me-I-Ku Foundation

About the Author

Representative Director of the Ho-Me-I-Ku Foundation

Private Expert on the Committee for the Promotion and Establishment of an Education Oriented Nation

Kunio Hara

Born in 1973 in Ashiya city, Hyogo Prefecture, Kunio Hara is the father of two children.

He developed his Japanese educational method "Ho-Me-I-Ku," and it has spread to more than 1 million people across 18 nations. From the time he was still in his mother's womb, he was consistently praised by his parents, but had a number of wake-up calls once he entered the real world. Currently, he lives a life full of overwhelming curiosity and confidence.

However, when he was 32, he experienced a half-year of social isolation due to poor relationships with others.

As a student, he went to Los Angeles in the United States where he first encountered the ideas of openness, developing strengths, and point-based thinking. Even now, he takes time to visit America. He was taught by many people that life is a process of learning from failures. He confronted the truth that "every individual has unique strengths and a role to play," and that "people are born to be praised."

He switched careers from a large consulting firm to the restaurant business where he started out as a dishwasher and eventually became a store manager after four years. Later during a visit to a Cambodian orphanage, he had the chance to speak with children there being treated for serious illnesses. He realized the shocking reality that "there are children in this world who pass away without having once been given praise."

After learning this fact, he resolved to spread the importance of praising others in the world by creating his "Ho-Me-I-Ku" educational method, which combines brain science and psychology with practical education used in the field.

Now, the method has been introduced in more than 420 businesses as well as educational institutions including early childhood education. Moreover, he provides support for entrepreneurs and holds the online "Ho-Me-I-Ku Salon" to facilitate any kind of human relationships.

The Ho-Me-I-Ku method has been used not only in Japan, but also America, China, India, Singapore, and Thailand while he has published 23 related texts (also translated into English, Spanish, Chinese, and Korean.) He has appeared on TV Asahi and NHK as well as being covered by The Japan Times in addition to numerous radio stations and magazines. He is the only Asian person to have given two TEDx talks, with his speech earning the highest number of views in the world for January 2022. He established his own foundation, supports education in Cambodia and India, and makes contributions to domestic orphanages. His hobbies are triathlons and piano, and his motto is: "where there's a will, there's a way."

Appeared in TEDx twice
(won the top number of views on January in 2022).



Got interviewed for NHK world and The Japan Times.





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