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The Tree of Courage

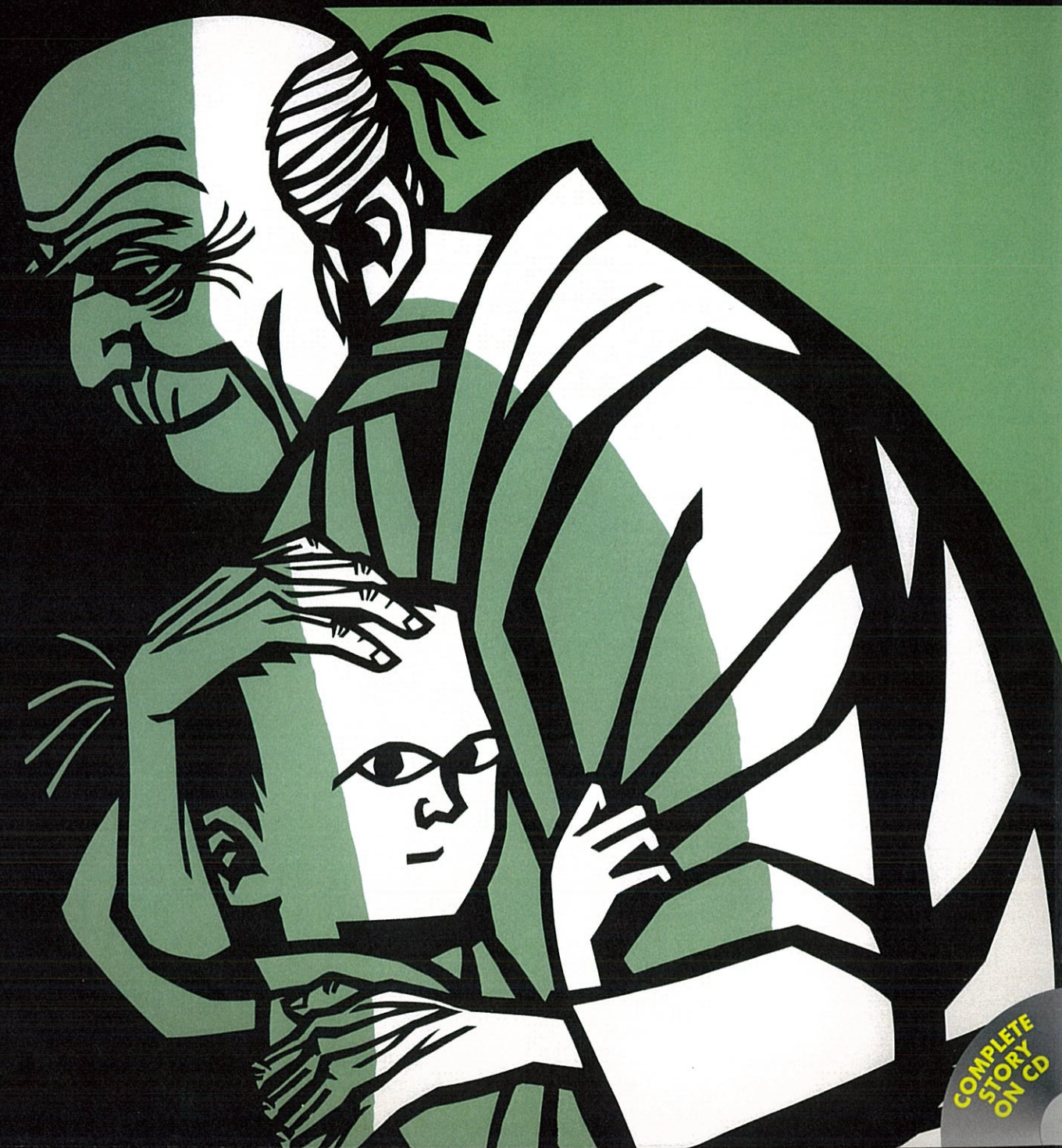
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Written by Ryusuke Saito Illustrated by Jiro Takidaira



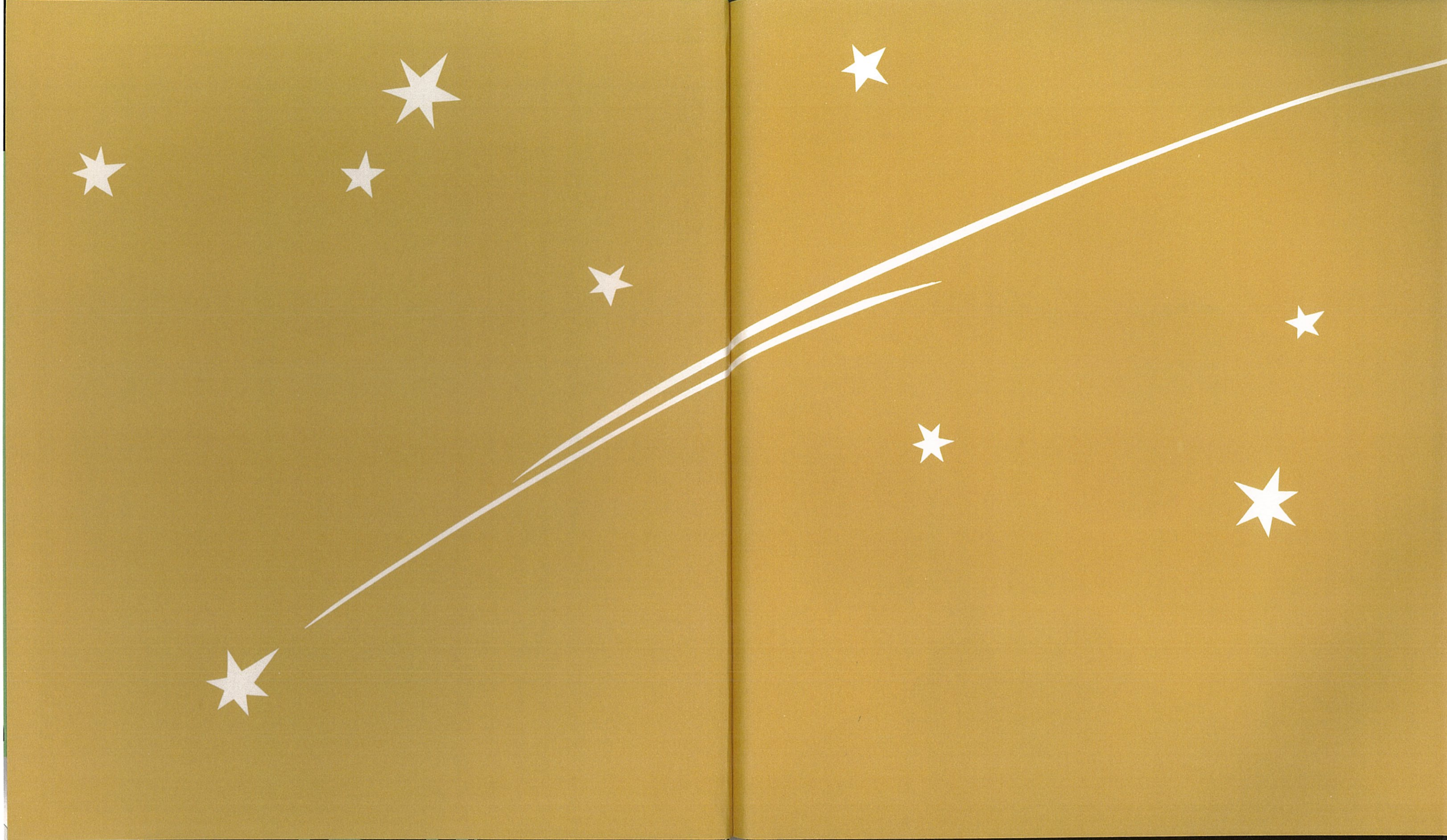
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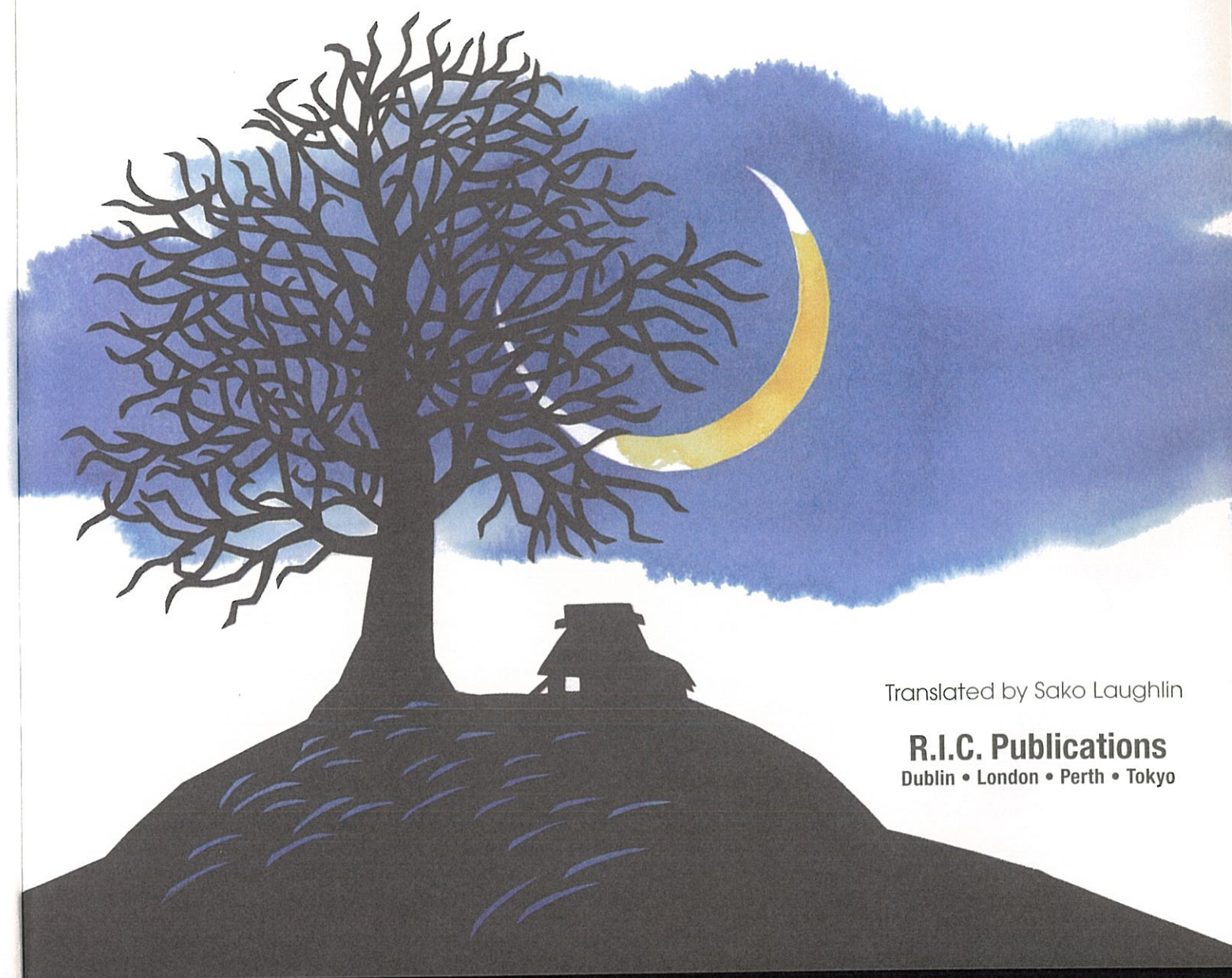


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Written by Ryusuke Saito Illustrated by Jiro Takidaira



Translated by Sako Laughlin

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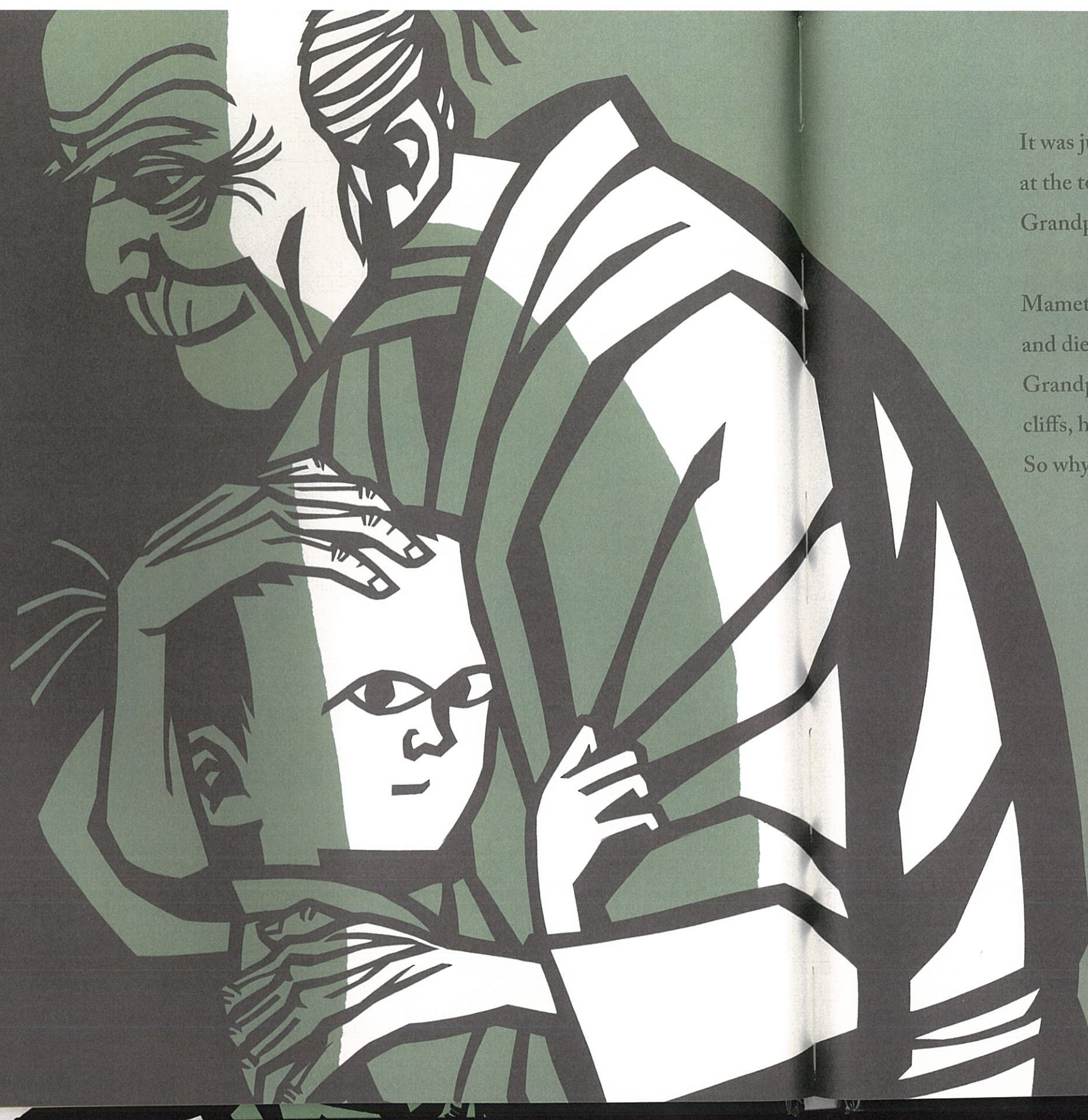
Mameta was hopeless. Timid as a mouse.

At five years old, he couldn't even go to the outhouse alone.

Well ... at least not at night. For outside, stood a huge horse chestnut tree. Towering high, its wild hair filled the sky, its huge arms stretched out in a threat.

No. Mameta couldn't possibly go out alone after dark.

Every night he'd whisper, "Grandpa?" and Grandpa would answer, "Gotta go?", all ready to take him out, even in the middle of the night. They had to share a futon sleeping mat, and Grandpa certainly didn't want to wake up soaked.



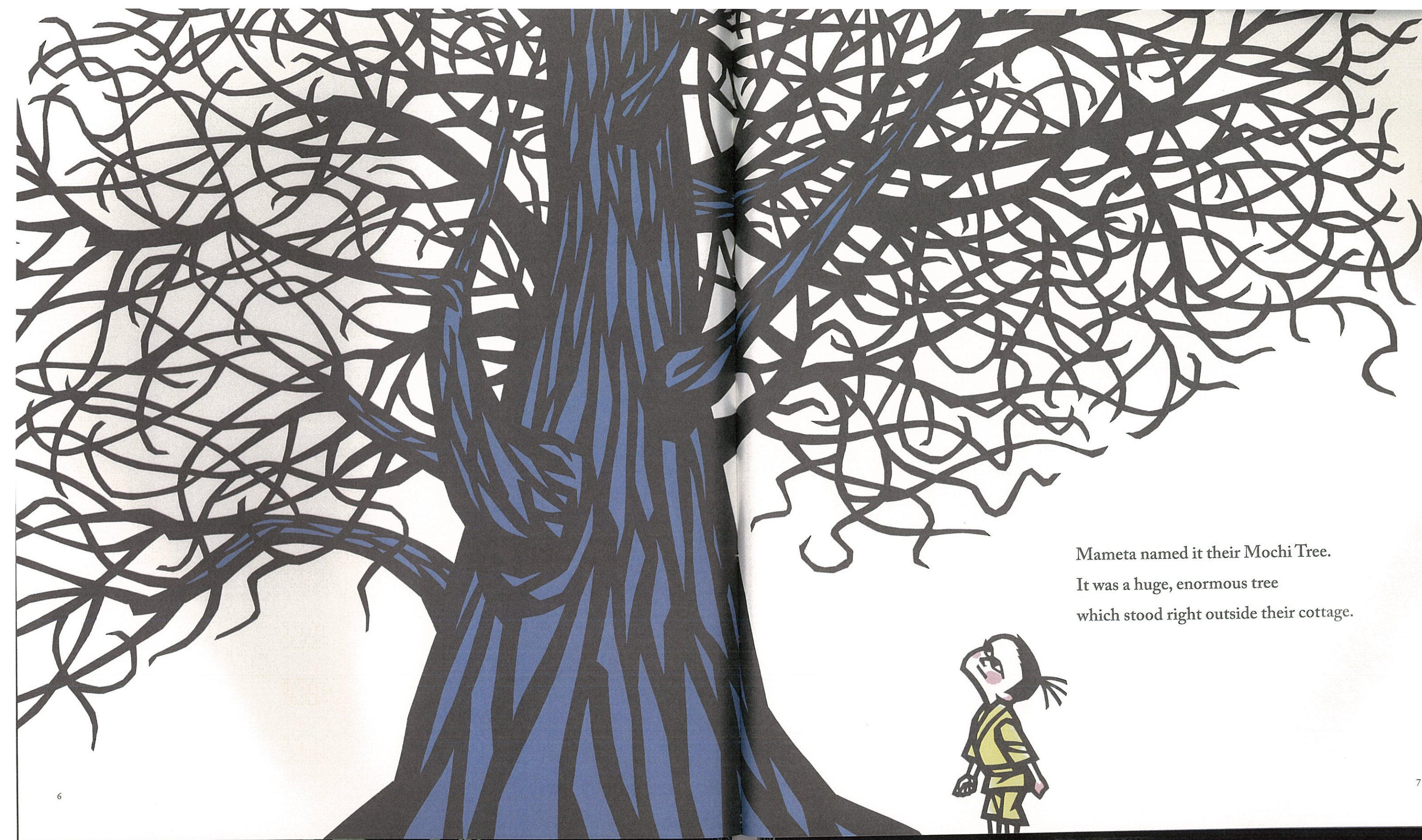
It was just the two of them, alone in a hunting cottage,
at the top of solitary mountain pass.

Grandpa loved Mameta dearly, and felt sorry for the orphan.

Mameta's father had been fearless,
and died bravely, fighting off a fierce bear.

Grandpa, at sixty-four, still loped daringly over blood-chilling
cliffs, hunting the blue serow.

So why was Mameta such a pale, faint-hearted child?



Mameta named it their Mochi Tree.
It was a huge, enormous tree
which stood right outside their cottage.

Every autumn, the tree let fall lots and lots of shiny brown nuts.
Grandpa pounded the nuts into coarse meal in the wooden mortar.
Then he'd grind the meal into a fine flour with the stone mortar.
Finally he'd roll the flour into little mochi balls and steam them.
They were so delicious, so absolutely scrumptious!

