

Sulwe was born the color of midnight.



She looked nothing like her family.  
Not even a little, not even at all.

Mama was the  
color of dawn,

Baba the  
color of dusk,

and Mich, her sister, was  
the color of high noon.

Hardly anyone at school looked like  
Sulwe either.

People gave Sulwe names like "Blackie" and  
"Darky" and "Night." Sulwe felt hurt every time.

People gave her sister, Mich, pet names  
like "Sunshine" and "Ray" and "Beauty."

So she hid away while her  
sister made lots of friends.



Sulwe dreamed of being the same color as her sister.

She wanted real friends too.



So she got the biggest eraser she could find and tried to rub off a layer or two of her darkness.

That hurt!



She crept into Mama's room

and helped herself to her makeup.

Oh no! She would hear about this from Mama.

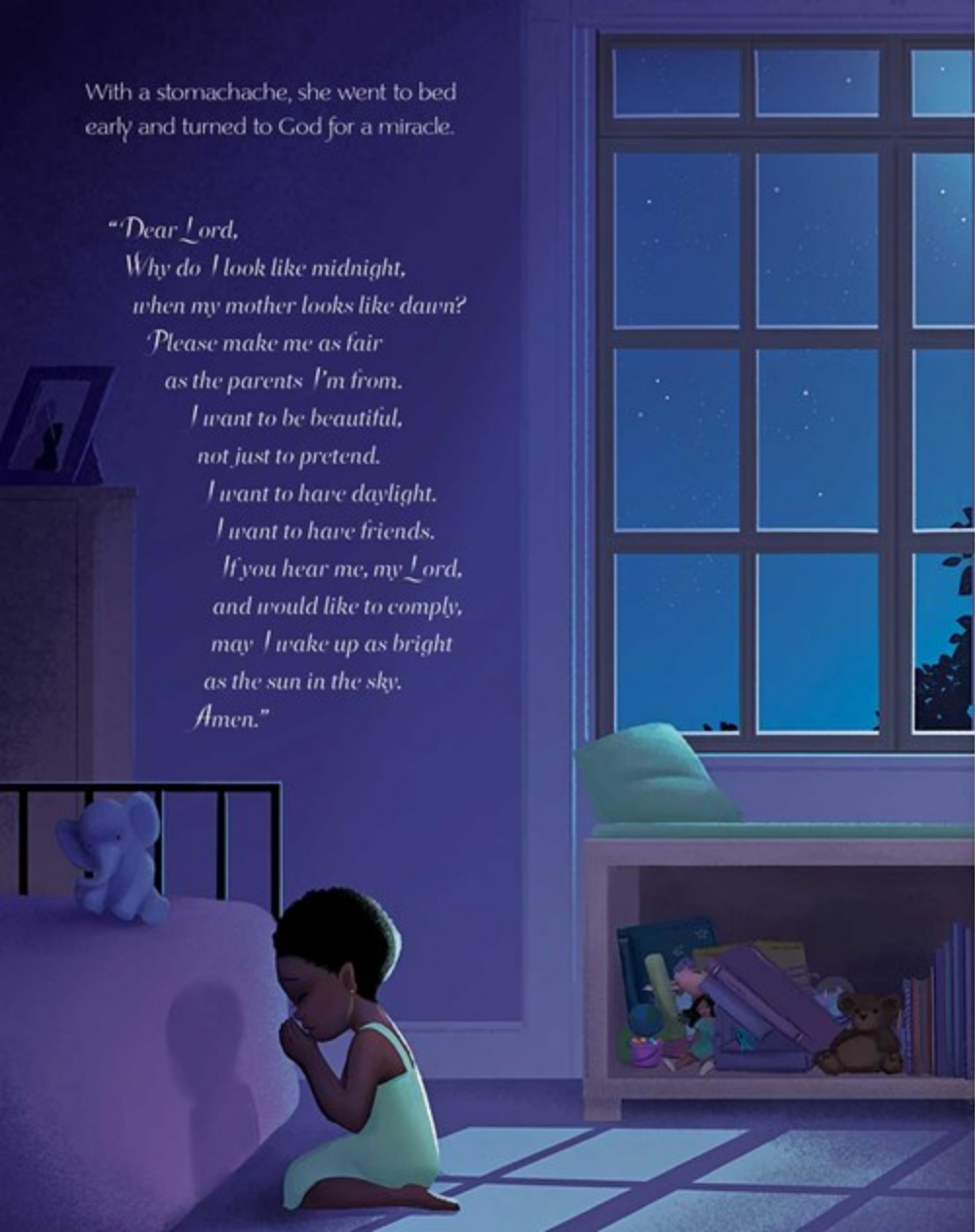


Solve decided to work from the inside out and ate only the lightest, brightest foods.



With a stomachache, she went to bed early 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.