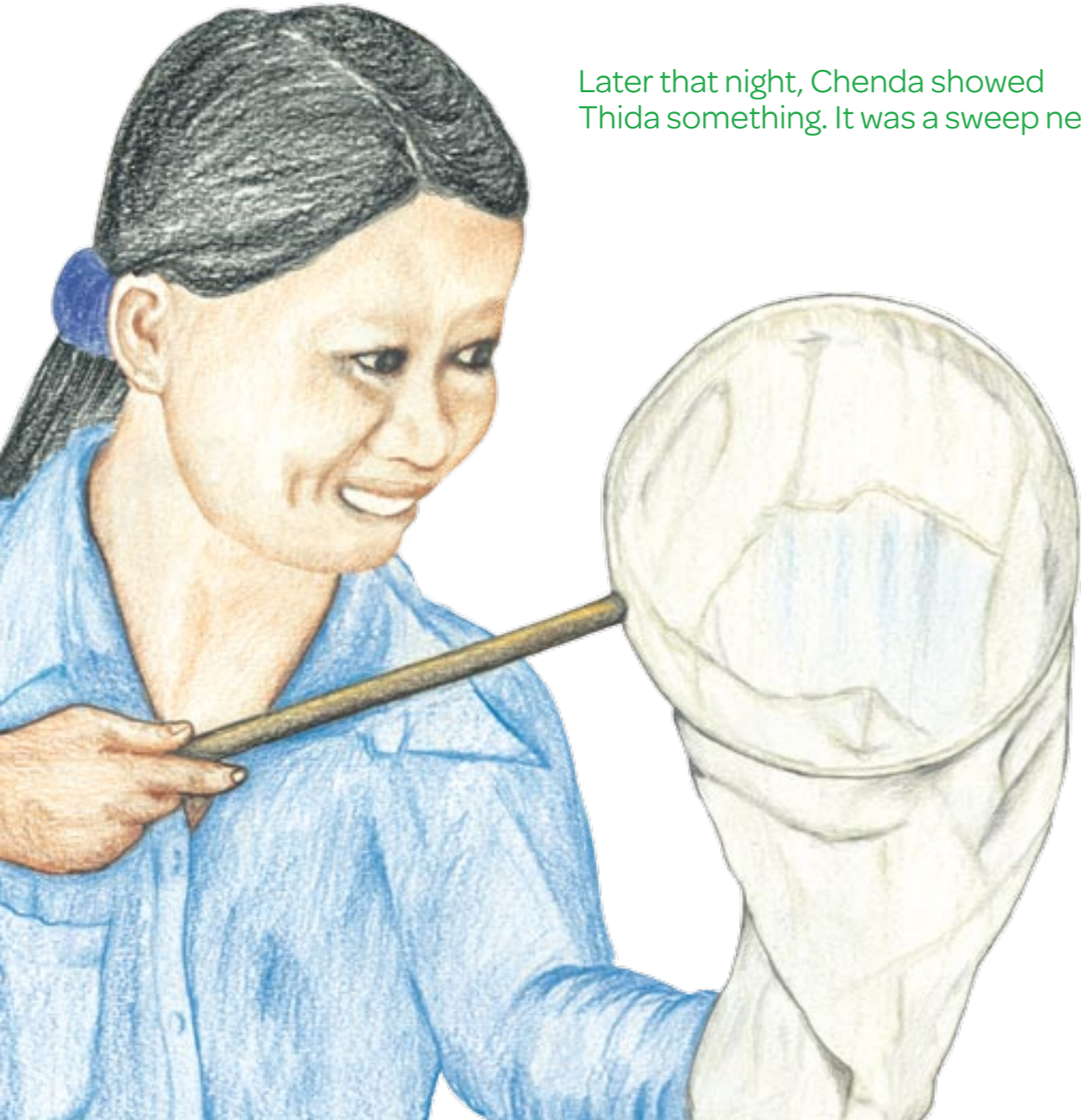


Later that night, Chenda showed Thida something. It was a sweep net.



'I got this for you, Thida. I know you want to find out which bugs are ruining the soybean pods. Perhaps you can catch them with this net,' Chenda said.



As soon as Thida woke up, she grabbed the sweep net and headed for the fields. She walked up and down the rows of plants, sweeping the net from side to side. It was hard work. Thida grew tired and hot.



When she got home, she looked at what she had caught. Some very strange bugs were living in those fields—bugs she had never seen before. Some looked like ants and some looked like flies. Others looked like beetles and there were many that were just tiny specks.

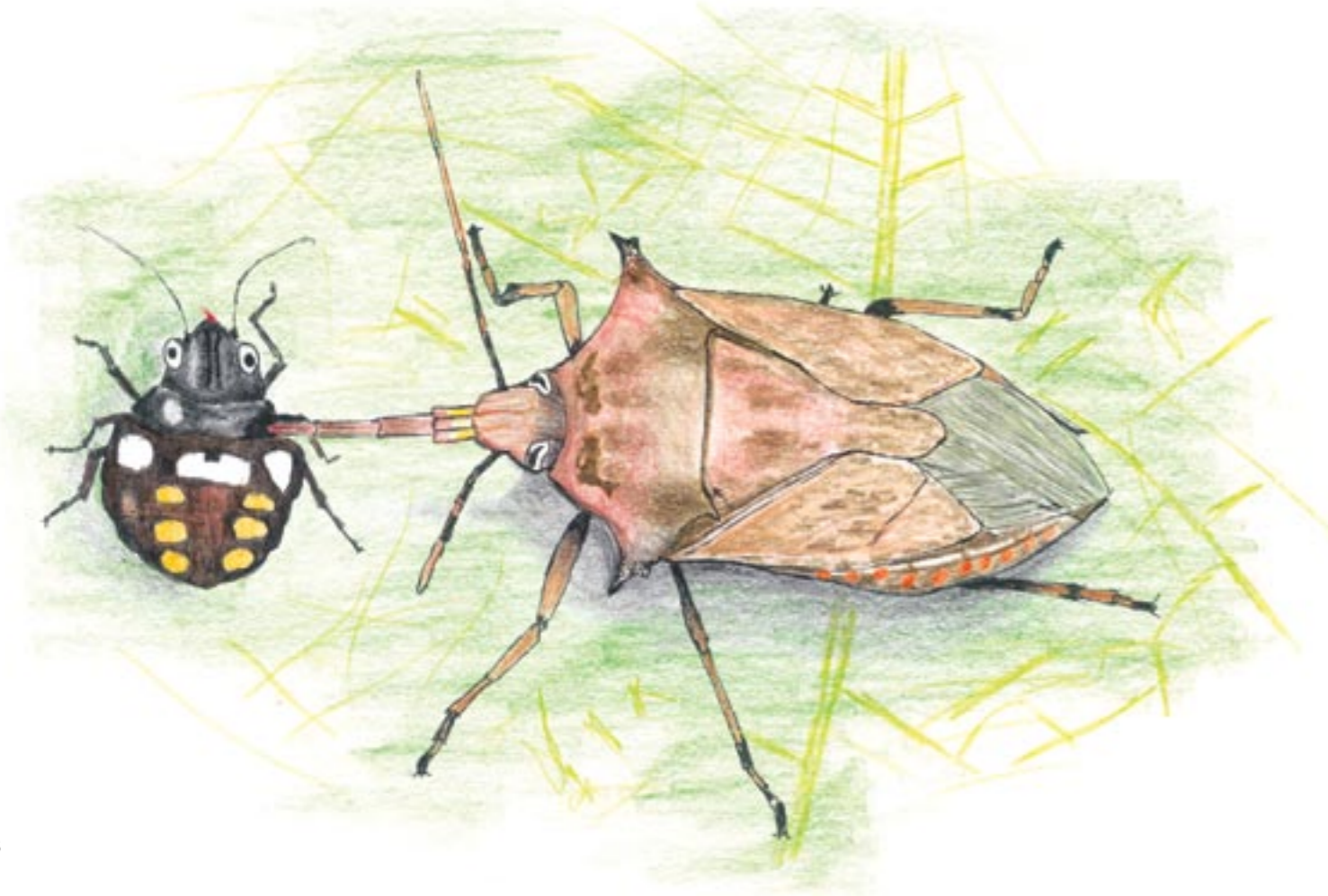


'Which ones do you think are ruining the pods, Mum?'

'I'm not sure, Thida. Let's use the sweep net again in two more weeks. The pods will be bigger then.'



It was a long wait. Thida spent time every day looking at the bugs. One morning, while she sat still and quiet in amongst the plants, she saw something.

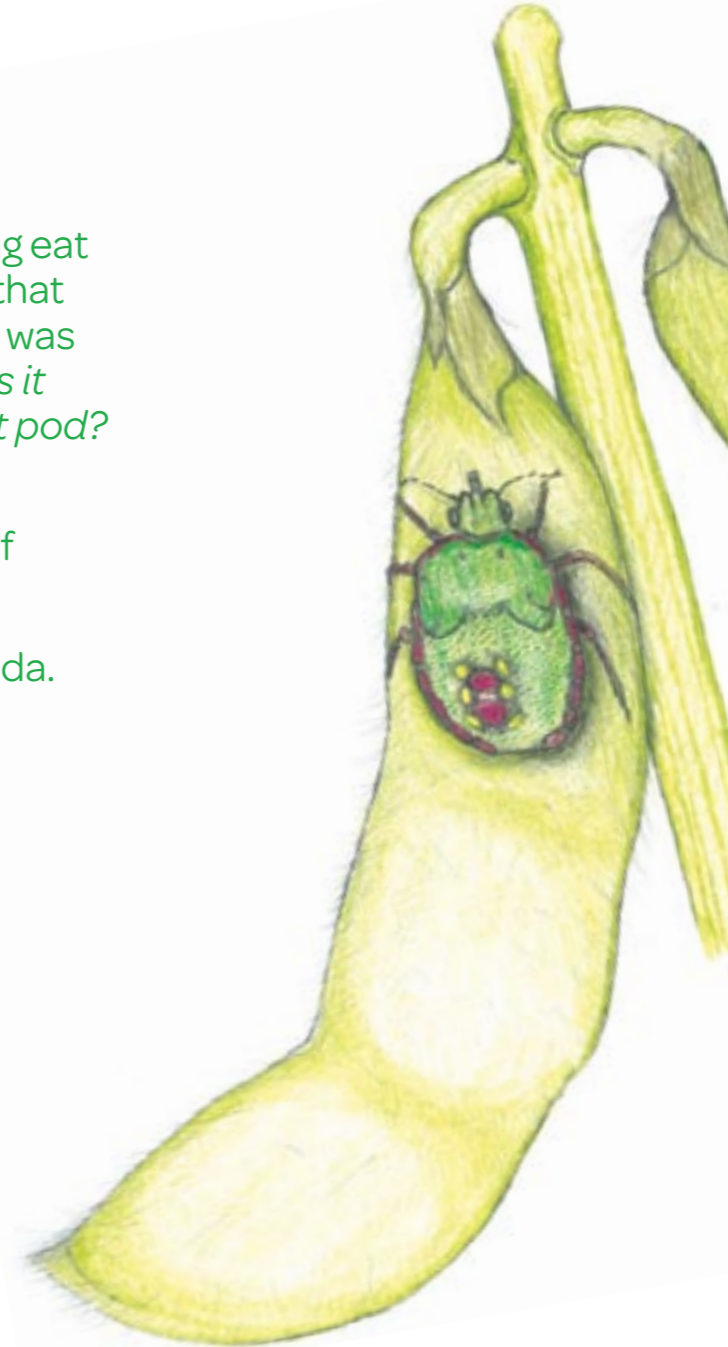


Right in front of her, Thida saw one bug eat another bug! She felt sad for the bug that became lunch but she realised that it was sitting on a growing soybean pod. *Was it just about to suck the juice out of that pod?* she wondered.

She looked around. It was true. Lots of those bugs were sitting on the pods.

'So you're the culprits,' whispered Thida.

She couldn't wait to tell her mum.

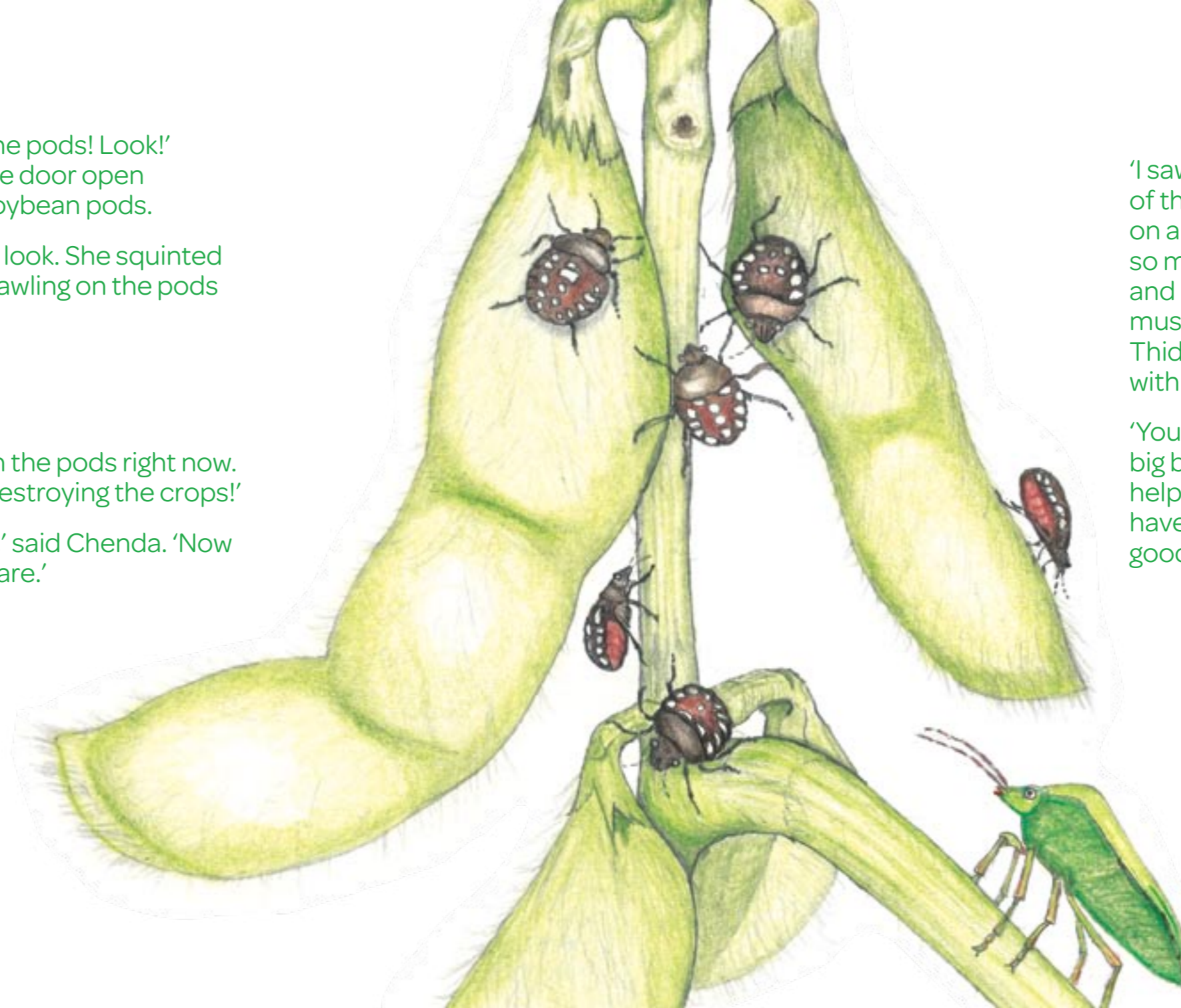


'Mum! I know what's damaging the pods! Look!' shouted Thida as she pushed the door open and held up a bunch of plump soybean pods.

Chenda stood up to get a better look. She squinted and saw a bunch of little bugs crawling on the pods in Thida's hand.

'These bugs are sitting on the pods right now. They must be the ones destroying the crops!'

'Well done, my clever girl,' said Chenda. 'Now we know who the villains are.'



'I saw a big bug bite one of these while it was sitting on a pod, and there were so many different bugs and I think the big ones must eat these ones!' said Thida, talking way too fast with excitement.

'You are right, Thida. These big bugs seem to be our helpers. Our spray must have been killing all the good bugs too.'



Thida and Chenda were very curious about their find. They had heard about a farmer field school being held in Samlaut so they decided to go along to find out more information.

Just as they suspected, they were told that the little bugs that Thida found suck the juices from the soybean pods.



They have enemies though. There are parasites that harm or kill green vegetable bugs and there are predators that eat them.

Farmers need to check what insects are living in their crop before they decide to spray because they could be killing these predators and parasites along with the green vegetable bugs.

If this happens, any bad bugs that escape the spray can return to the crop and increase in numbers quickly because there are no longer any predators or parasites close by.

Thida and Chenda tended their fields regularly, weeding it and checking what insects were living there. Their soybean pods grew fat and the seeds inside became round, smooth and creamy-coloured. This was going to be their best harvest yet.



*Our fields are being cared for after all, thought Thida.*



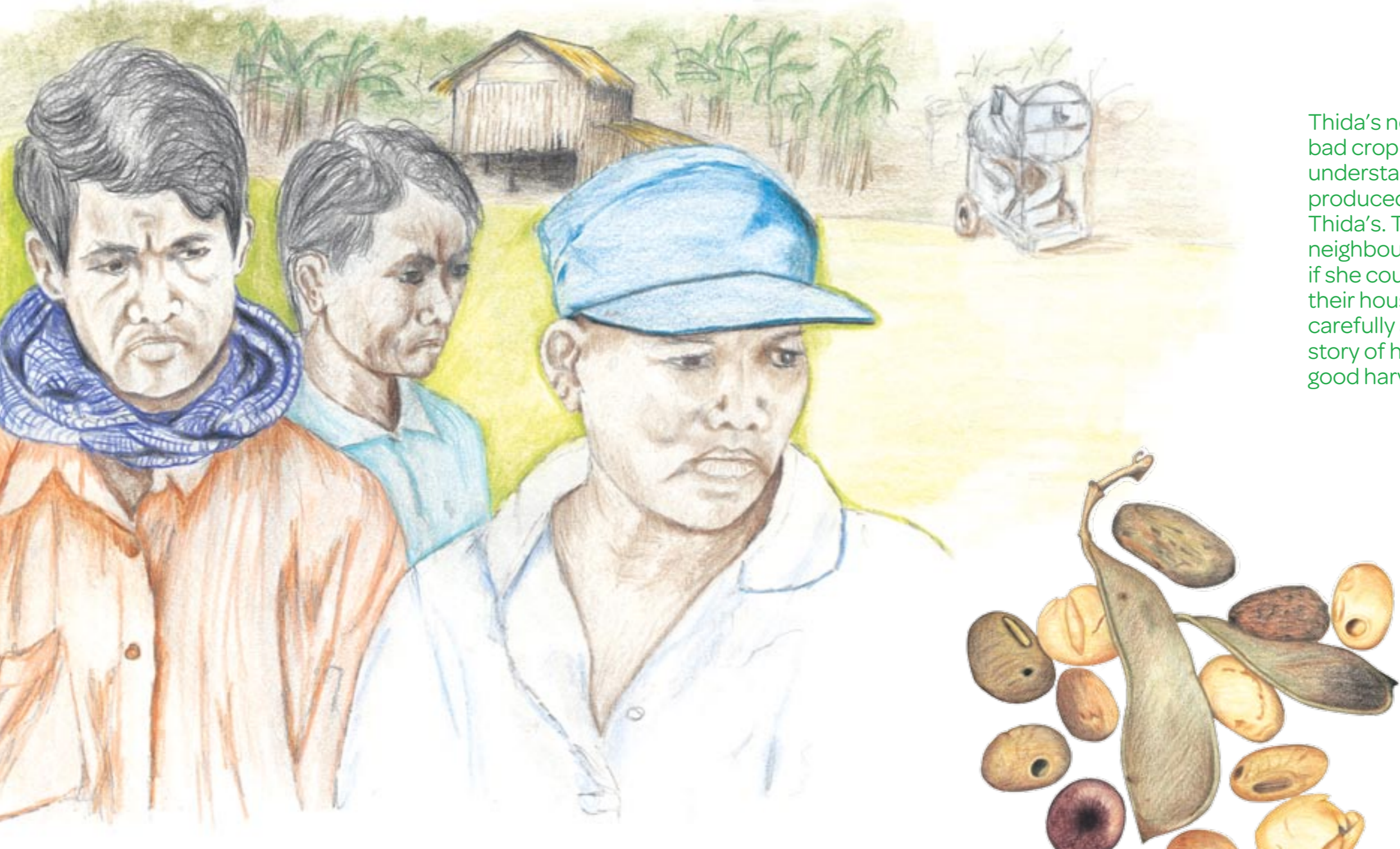
At last the soybeans were ripe. Chenda asked her friends and family to help her harvest the crop.

On harvest day, everyone was up bright and early, laughing and joking. It was a very happy day.



People were amazed at how large the yield was. But Thida and Chenda knew it was because they had carefully looked after their crop and let the good bugs live in the fields and eat the bad bugs.

Not everyone was happy, though.



Thida's neighbours had another bad crop that year. They couldn't understand why their fields hadn't produced as well as Chenda and Thida's. Thida wanted to help her neighbours so she asked her mum if she could invite them over to their house. They all listened very carefully as Thida told them the story of how they came to have a good harvest.