

The Mirrors

of Hotel
Krasnapolsky



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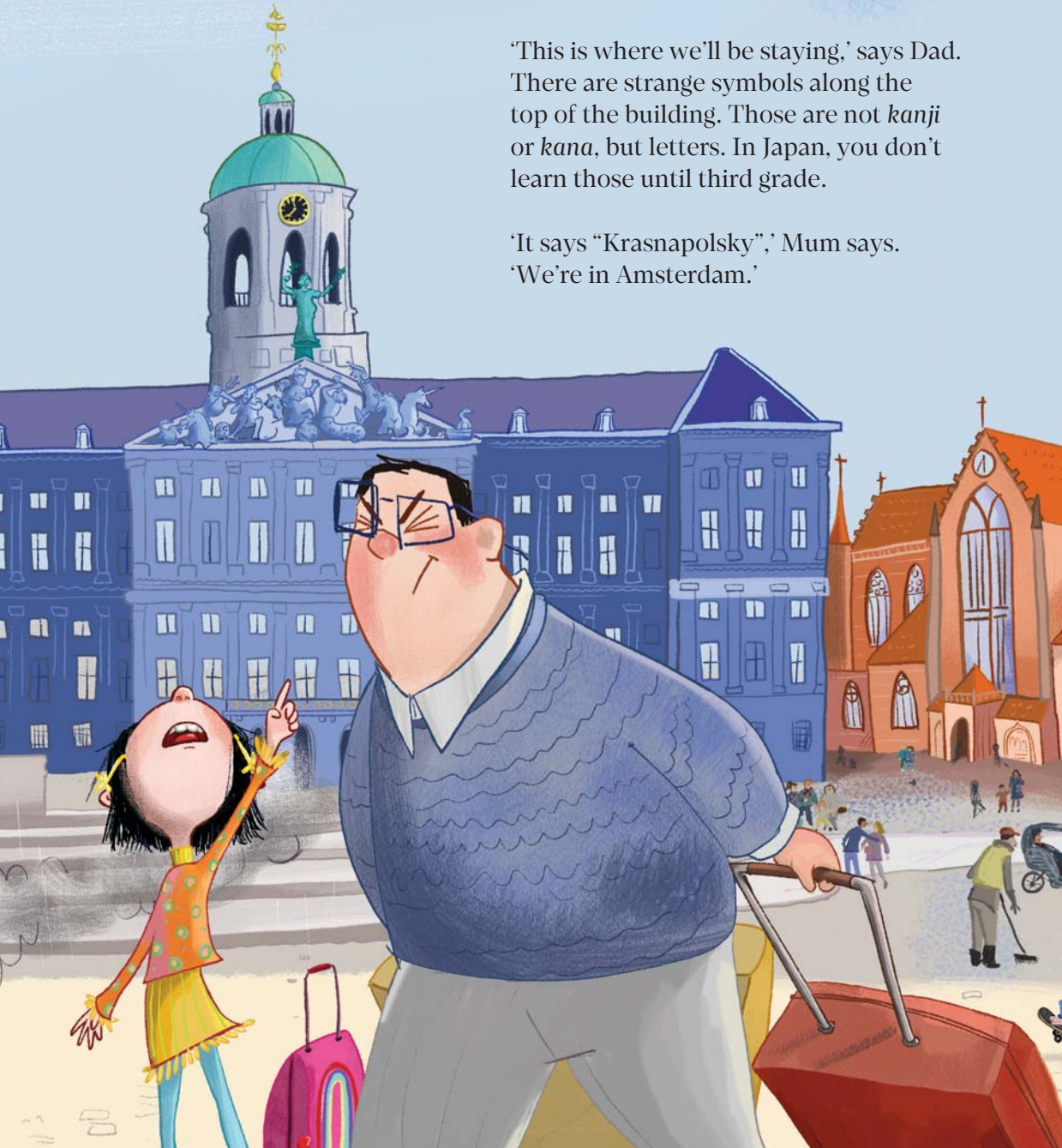
'We're here!' Mum says.

Minako wakes up. The taxi has stopped on a large square. All around it are massive buildings, and a tall white statue stands in the middle.



'This is where we'll be staying,' says Dad. There are strange symbols along the top of the building. Those are not *kanji* or *kana*, but letters. In Japan, you don't learn those until third grade.

'It says "Krasnapolsky",' Mum says. 'We're in Amsterdam.'







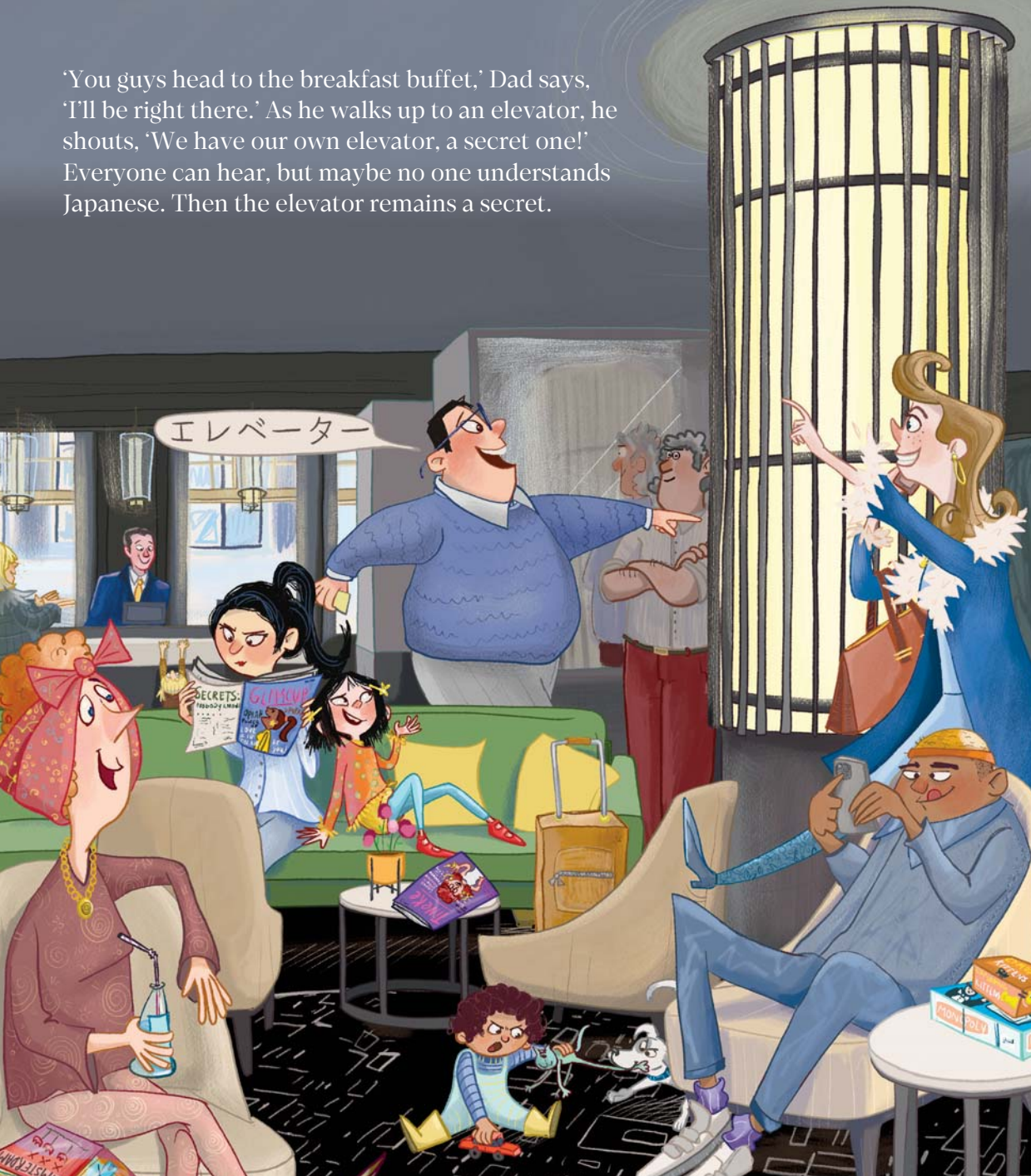
KRASNAPOLSKY HOTEL



Dad goes to get the key to their room. Mum sits down, and Minako puts her head on Mum's lap. She's still sleepy, but... there's so much to see! All those people!
People in uniform,
people all dressed up,
people wearing shorts.

Minako doesn't understand a word anyone is saying; none of them are speaking Japanese.

'You guys head to the breakfast buffet,' Dad says, 'I'll be right there.' As he walks up to an elevator, he shouts, 'We have our own elevator, a secret one!' Everyone can hear, but maybe no one understands Japanese. Then the elevator remains a secret.



Minako sees something tall and funny-looking. Is it a vase? Is it art? It's mirrored, in any case. Minako can see a lot of Minakos. All the Minakos look tired, but all of them are also starving.



'This is called the Wintergarden,'
Mum tells her.

Winter garden? thinks Minako.
It looks more like a *spring garden*.
There are small trees everywhere,
and the skylights let in a soft light.

The floor looks like a chessboard.
And it's so nice and warm inside that
it feels like those trees might just
burst into bloom: pop, pop, popping
into blossom. Winter garden? Spring
garden? More like a fairy-tale garden.

