

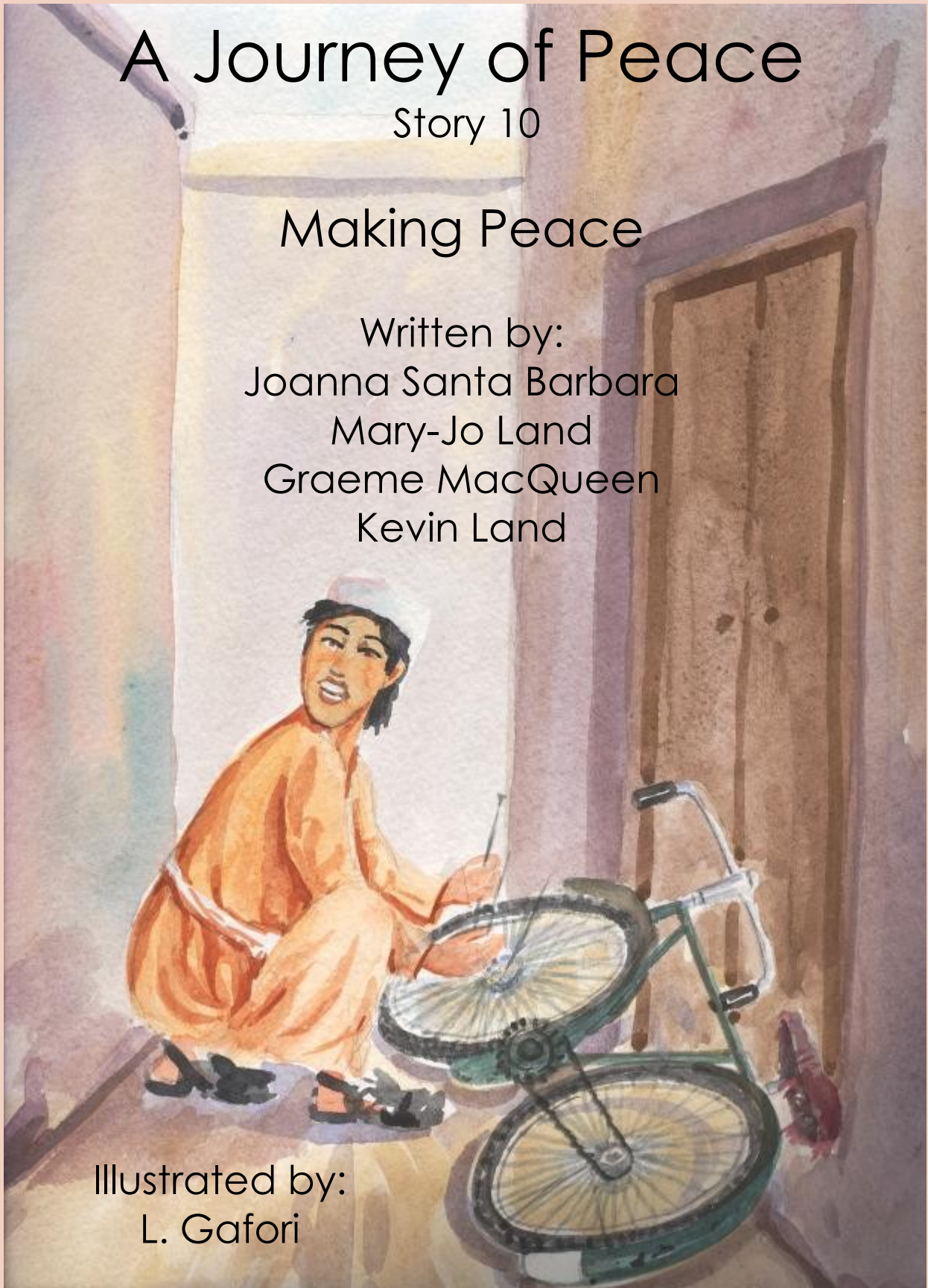
A Journey of Peace

Story 10

Making Peace

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Story 10

Making Peace

Second Edition

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Story Characters:

Jameela: a ten-year-old girl who lives with her family in a rural area of Afghanistan.

Ahmed: Jameela's five-year-old brother.

Abdullah: Jameela's fifteen-year-old brother.

Haleema: The children's mother.

Merza: The children's father.

Bibi Jan: The paternal grandmother.

Kaka Ghulam: The paternal grandfather.

Yunus: The children's uncle who was killed by a landmine at age 20, youngest son of Bibi Jan and Kaka Ghulam.

Fatima: The children's aunt, young widow of Uncle Yunus.

Aly: The children's uncle, who lives in the city

Aisha: The children's aunt, Aly's wife, who lives in the city.

Story Synopsis:

Jameela lives with her family in a village in Afghanistan. They were already experiencing a great deal of difficulty during the domestic struggles of their homeland when tragedy struck. After coming in contact with a landmine while working in the field, Uncle Yunus was killed and her father Merza lost his leg.

In “**Jameela's Garden**”, Jameela and her younger brother Ahmed try to understand the anger and estrangement demonstrated by their older brother Abdullah. With the guidance of their grandmother, Bibi Jan, they learn how they might help him get over the loss of his Uncle Yunus, with whom he was very close.

“The Wisdom of Bibi Jan” further demonstrates the grandmother’s role as comforter and adviser. Abdullah’s concern over the change in personality of a school friend due to the trauma of the war triggers Jameela’s revelation that she is having nightmares, and Bibi Jan provides her with a special cure for her fears.

Much more of what is troubling Jameela is presented in **“Making Cookies”**. Her fear of landmines is so strong that, much to Abdullah’s annoyance, she is frightened walking along a path that has already been cleared. Bibi Jan uses the opportunity of making cookies to help Jameela come to terms with her father’s injury, as well as finding for Fatima a positive means of expression of grief for Yunus.

Jameela is finding it very difficult to fathom the mysteries that are locked up inside **“Merza’s Heart”**. She mourns the loss of the cheerful man she knew before his injury, the one who was full of stories. Her innocent questions bring him to tears, but they also remind him of the man he used to be, and create the yearning in him to be that way again.

The sadness and grief of Fatima, young widow of Yunus, is felt by Jameela and Ahmed, who attempt to cheer her. Bibi Jan notices and suggests ways for the family to come together and celebrate good memories of Yunus, especially by singing **“Yunus’s Song”**.

When their village is shelled through the night, the family faces the grim truth that they must abandon what is most dear to them in **“Leaving Home”**. Each of them deals with this traumatic thought in his or her own way, but ultimately they know it is for the best and put on a brave front as they face the future.

In **“A New Friend”**, the family is staying with an old friend of Merza’s while they are on their journey to the safety of his brother’s place in the city. While there, Abdullah learns a valuable lesson about the nature of making judgments about people who are different in either the language that they speak or their beliefs.

As the family continues its journey to the city, Abdullah discovers that Jameela has brought her kitten from home and has kept it hidden the entire journey. In anger, he takes the kitten from her and throws it in the undergrowth on the side of the road. Jameela is angry with her brother and refuses to acknowledge his existence. It is up to Bibi Jan to find a way for there to be “**Reconciliation**”.

In “**Merza’s Anger**”, Merza’s loss of control over his temper frightens both Jameela and Ahmed. The emotional upheaval wreaks havoc on both children, and causes them to be short with each other. While hiding, Ahmed overhears his father talking to Bibi Jan about his own insecurity regarding the loss of his leg. When the child is discovered, it becomes an opportunity for bridges to be mended between father and son.

Bibi Jan’s diplomatic skills are once again put to the test in “**Making Peace**”. While looking for Merza’s brother Aly and his wife Aisha in the city, the family is staying at a camp for displaced persons located in an old schoolhouse. While in the cramped quarters where they must make their temporary home, Abdullah gets into a fight with a boy his own age over the intrusion of his bicycle in the others’ living space.

Healing Elements:

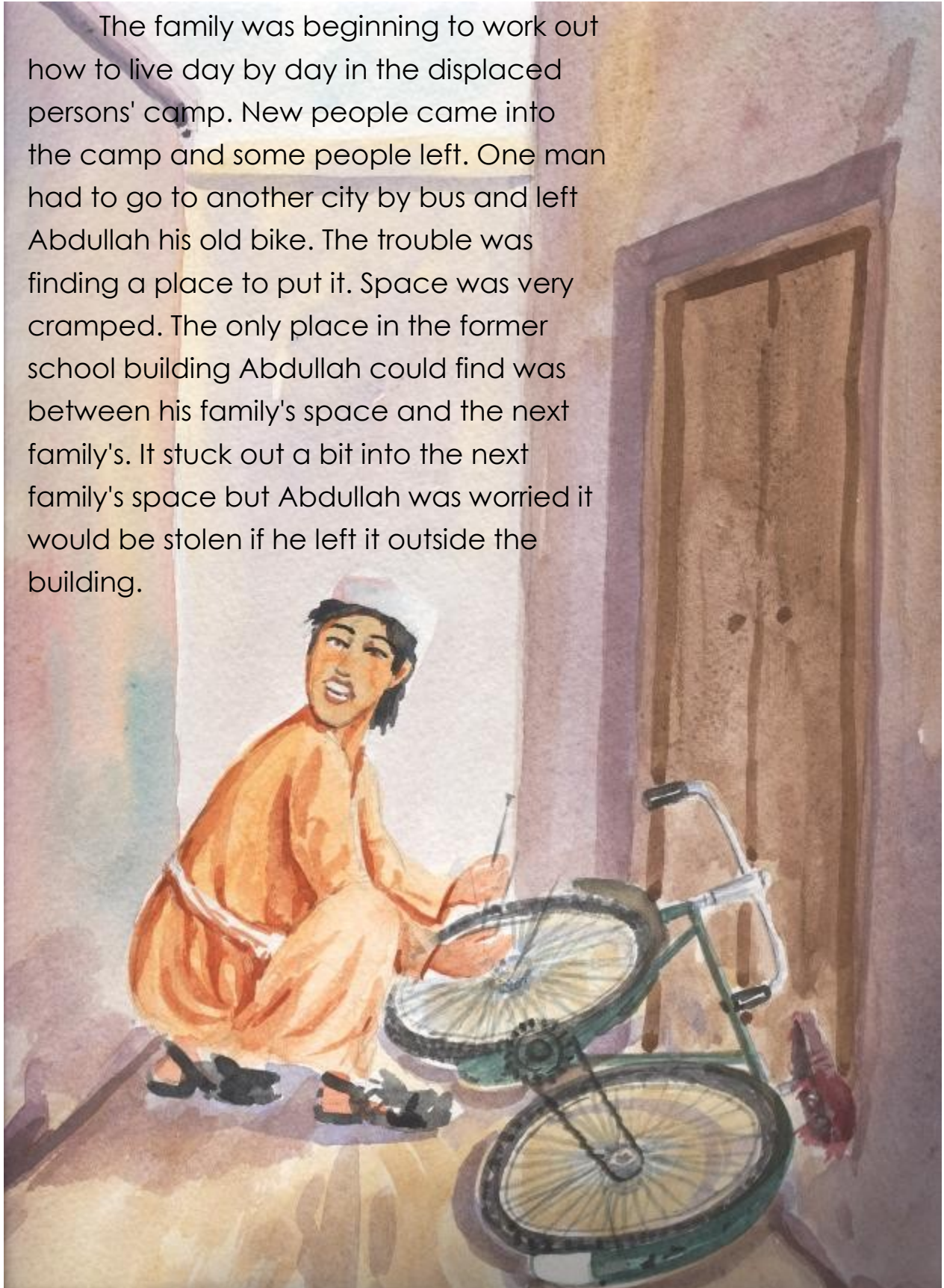
Healing images and symbols: cohesive community and restoration of harmony.

Modeling of peaceful and virtuous interactions: patience, understanding, willingness to delay resolution until everyone is more calm, peace making, empathy, listening, openness, creativity, humour, sharing, cooperation.

Problem Issues: conflict, anger, violence.

Healing Strategies: food and drink to ease a difficult interaction, the steps of conflict resolution.

The family was beginning to work out how to live day by day in the displaced persons' camp. New people came into the camp and some people left. One man had to go to another city by bus and left Abdullah his old bike. The trouble was finding a place to put it. Space was very cramped. The only place in the former school building Abdullah could find was between his family's space and the next family's. It stuck out a bit into the next family's space but Abdullah was worried it would be stolen if he left it outside the building.



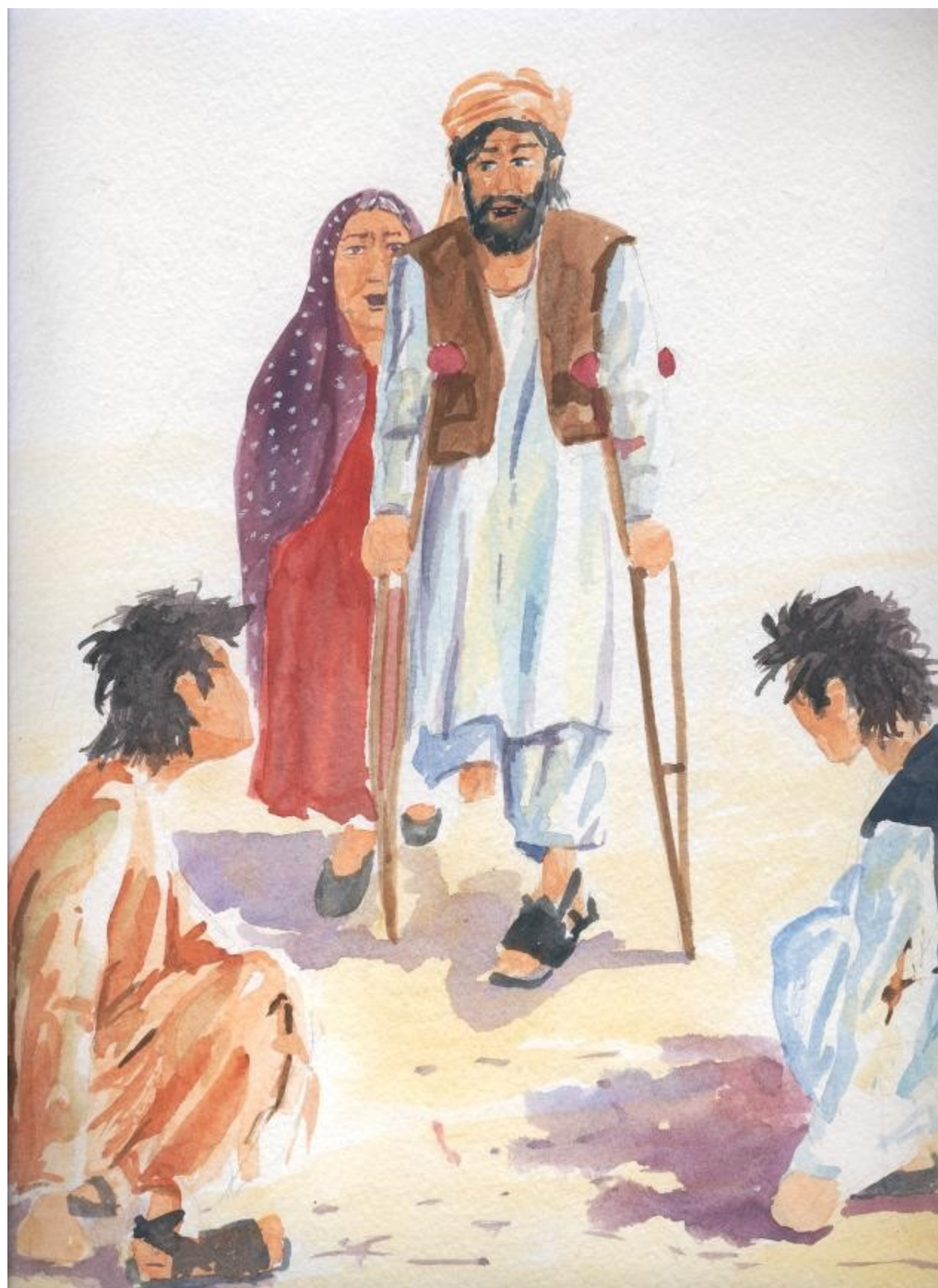
Omar, the boy who lived in the next space, was a few years older than Abdullah. Omar kept shoving the bike aside roughly when he needed to get through the narrow passage. One morning, Abdullah found that some spokes were bent and broken. He went and shouted at Omar.

"You clumsy idiot! You've broken my bike. Can't you take care of your own big feet?"

Omar stood up. "Who are you calling an idiot, boy? Your bike shouldn't be there in the first place. We don't need a old bike cluttering up this place. Get it out." Omar pulled the bike out of its corner.

"Don't you lay a finger on my bike." Abdullah shoved Omar away from the bike.

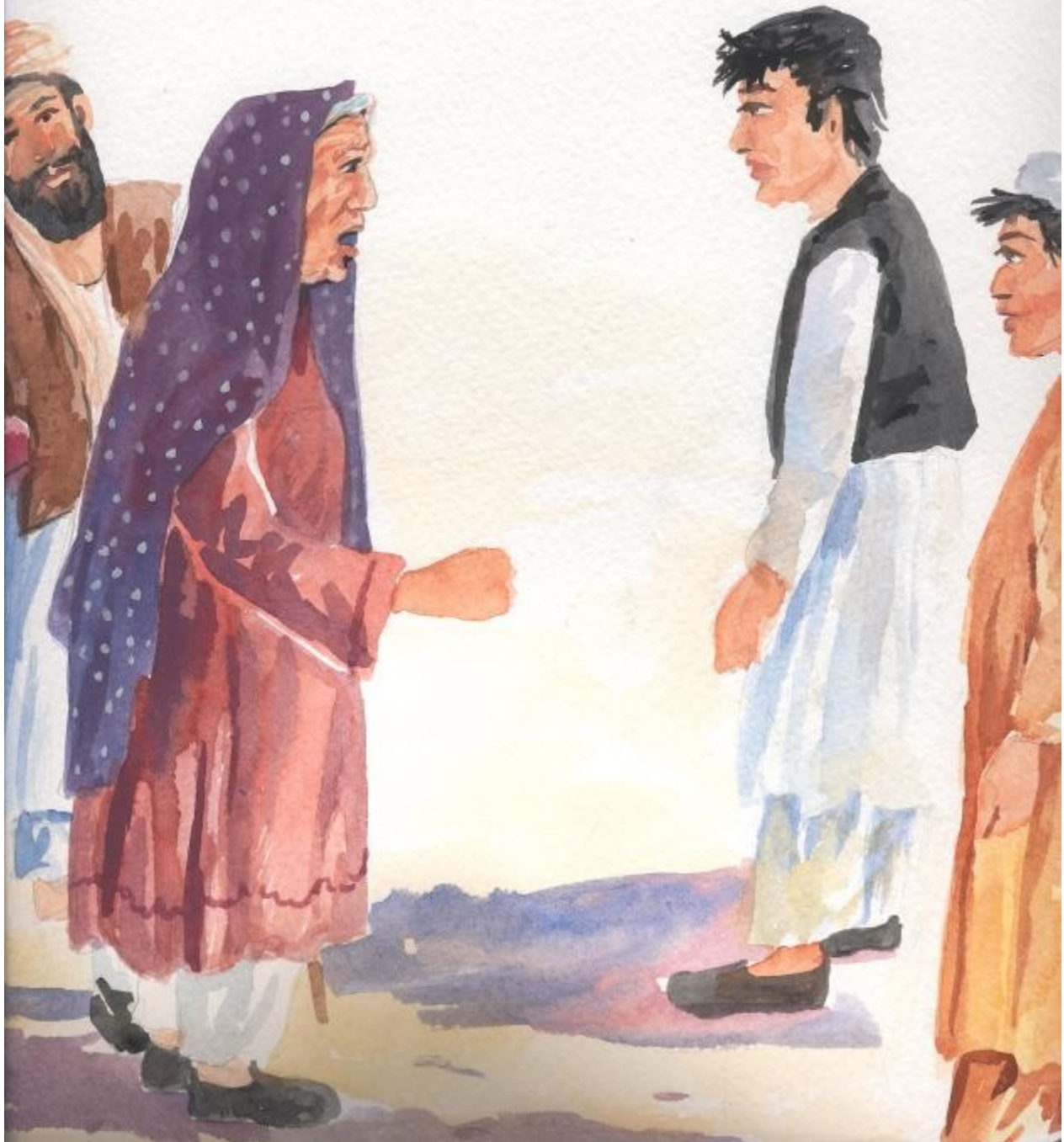


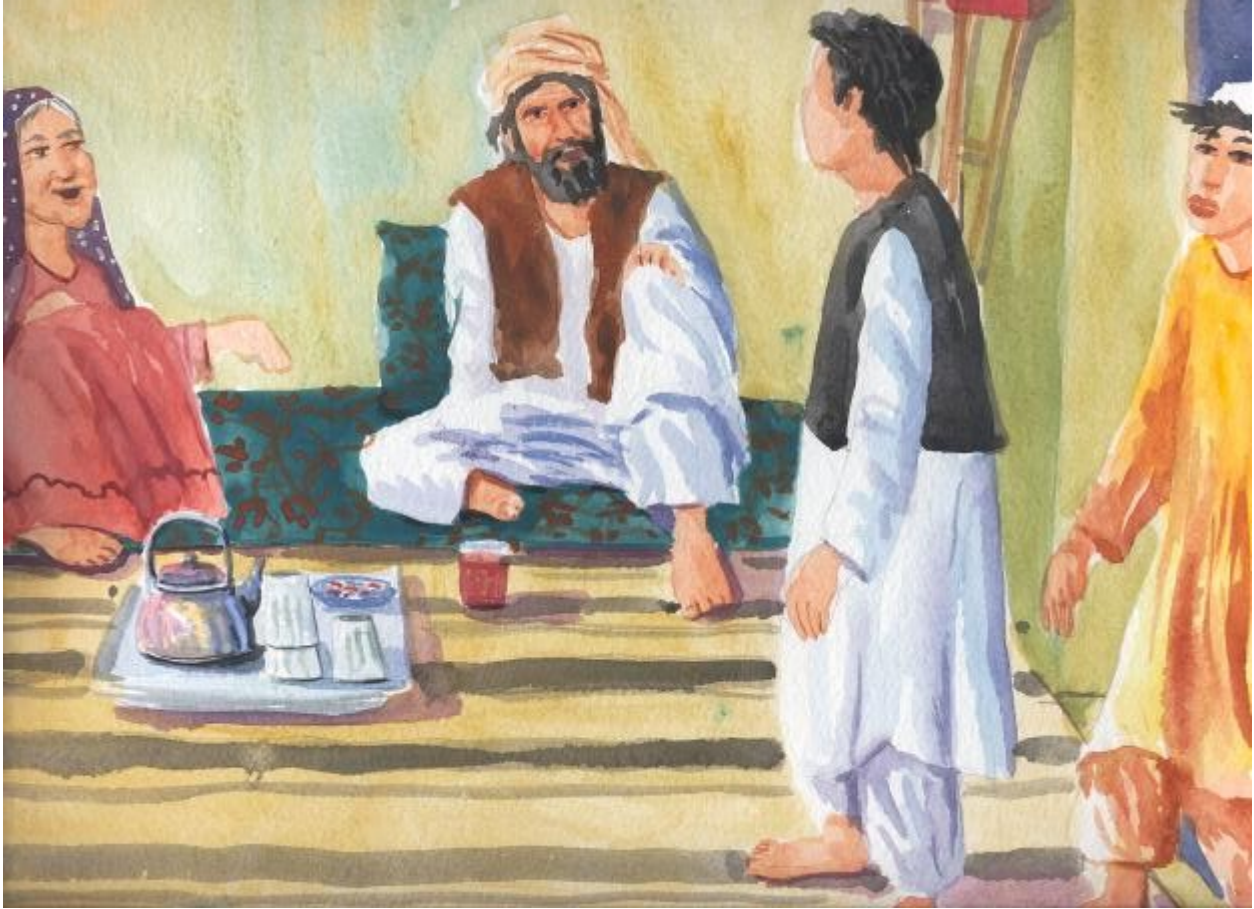


"Or what, little boy? I'm going to throw that bike out." Omar grabbed the bike again. Abdullah punched his shoulder. The two boys started fighting seriously, grappling and falling to the floor, knocking over boxes and bundles nearby. Merza and Bibi Jan approached the struggling boys. Merza, on his crutches, got between them.

"Stop this immediately, Abdullah and Omar. It's time for school. You're nearly late. Get going right now."

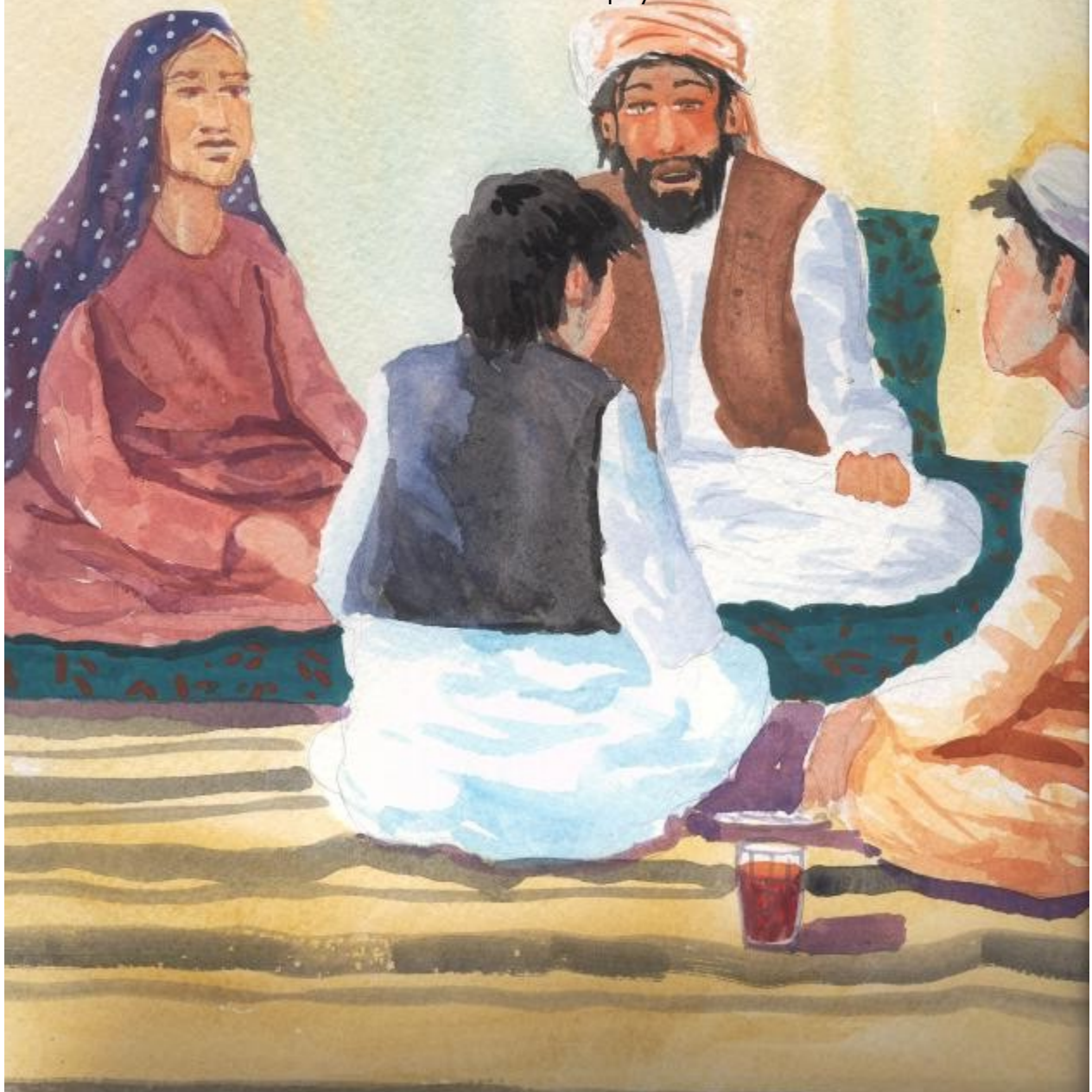
Bibi Jan said, "Abdullah and Omar, we don't want this to continue. We're living in each other's pockets. We have to find ways to do it in harmony. I want to see you both here after school to work this out. We'll have some tea and I might even find a few pieces of dried fruit."



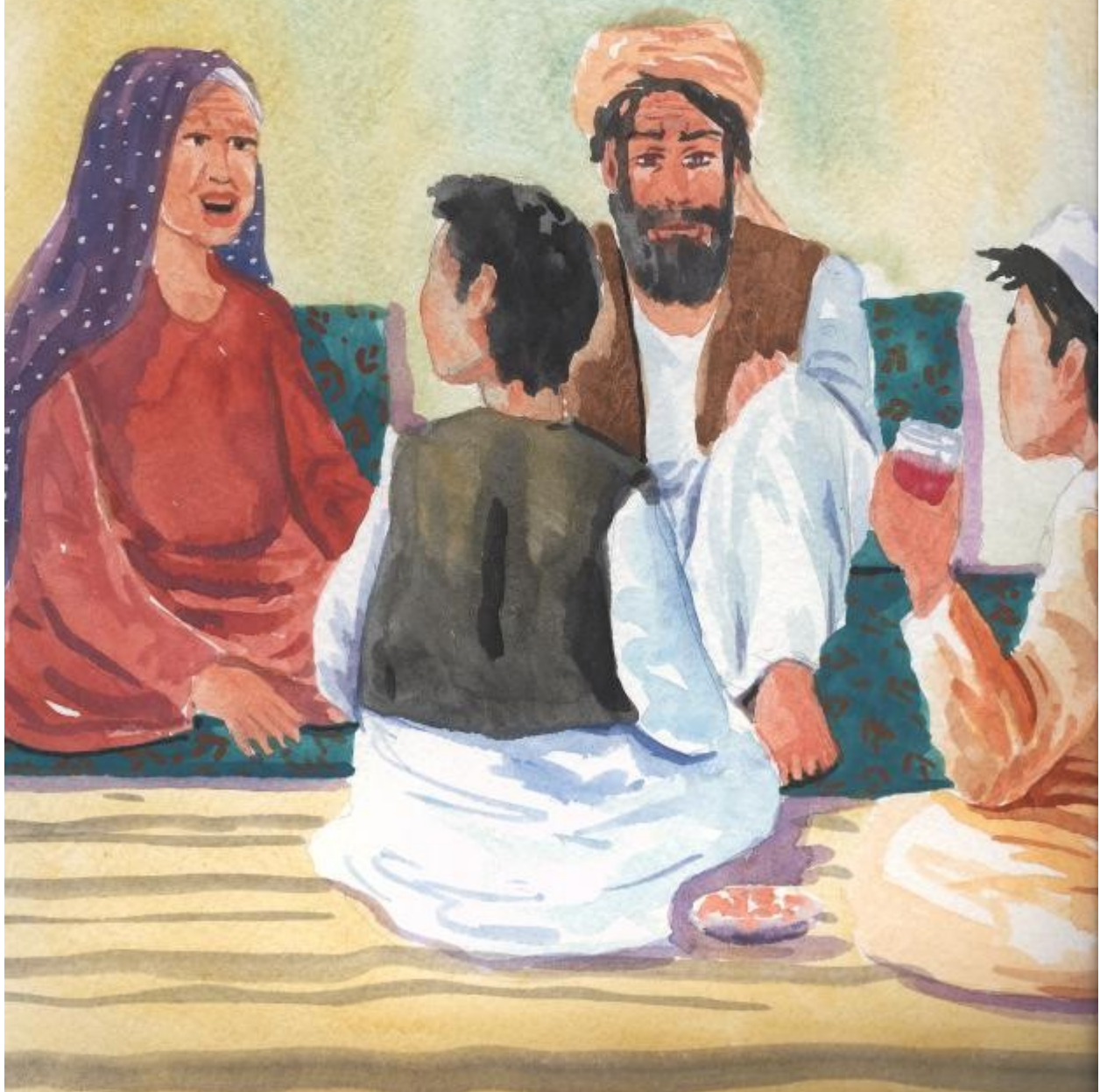


After school that day, Abdullah and Omar came to Bibi Jan, who already had the tea ready. Merza was sipping his cup. Bibi Jan offered them a little dish of the precious dried fruits she had brought from home. Abdullah's little sister and brother, Jameela and Ahmed were curious about what was happening and had squeezed themselves into a corner, hoping no one would notice them.

Merza spoke first. "Abdullah and Omar, there is too much violence - here in our camp, in our country and in the world. We must not add to it. Violence is a stupid way to solve problems. Abdullah, if you knock Omar to the ground, does it mean you're right in this conflict? Omar, if you make Abdullah give in, does it solve your problem? What foolishness! There are much better ways to solve conflicts. Bibi Jan and I will help you with this one."



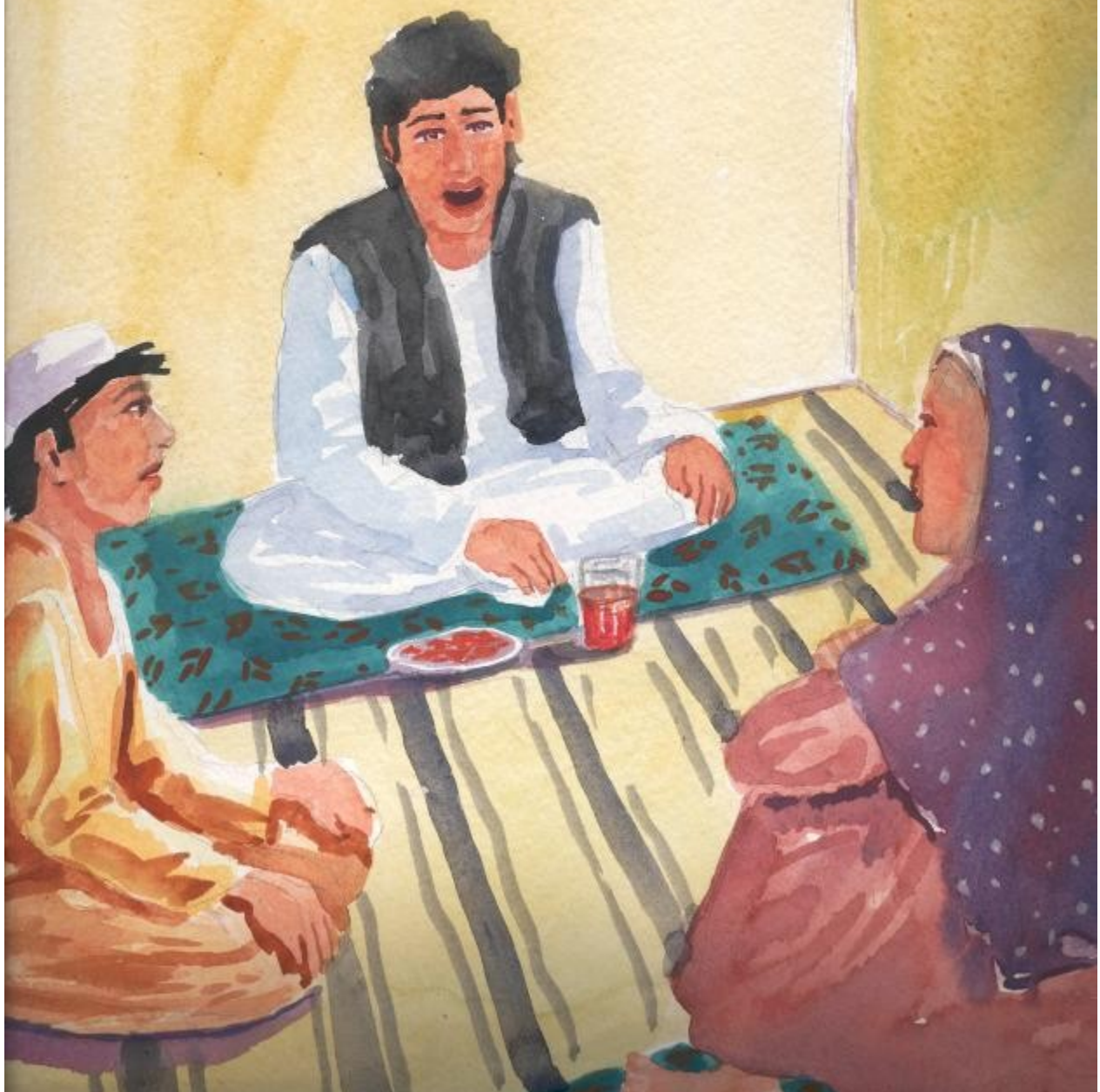
The boys sipped their tea quietly.
Bibi Jan began. "Now first of all, what is the problem?"
Both lads started together, each pointing their finger at the other.
"One at a time," said Bibi Jan. "Each of you will get a chance. Omar, you start."
Omar sat up and glared at Abdullah. "He..."



Bibi Jan interrupted. "Omar, can you start with saying 'I'? Tell us exactly what is the problem for you."

Omar hesitated and thought hard. He wasn't sure what Bibi Jan meant. "I...feel upset when I see that bike sticking out into our space. We have so little room. That bike gets in my way when I want to move around. Abdullah didn't even ask if he could put it there."

Abdullah said quickly, "I was going to ask..."



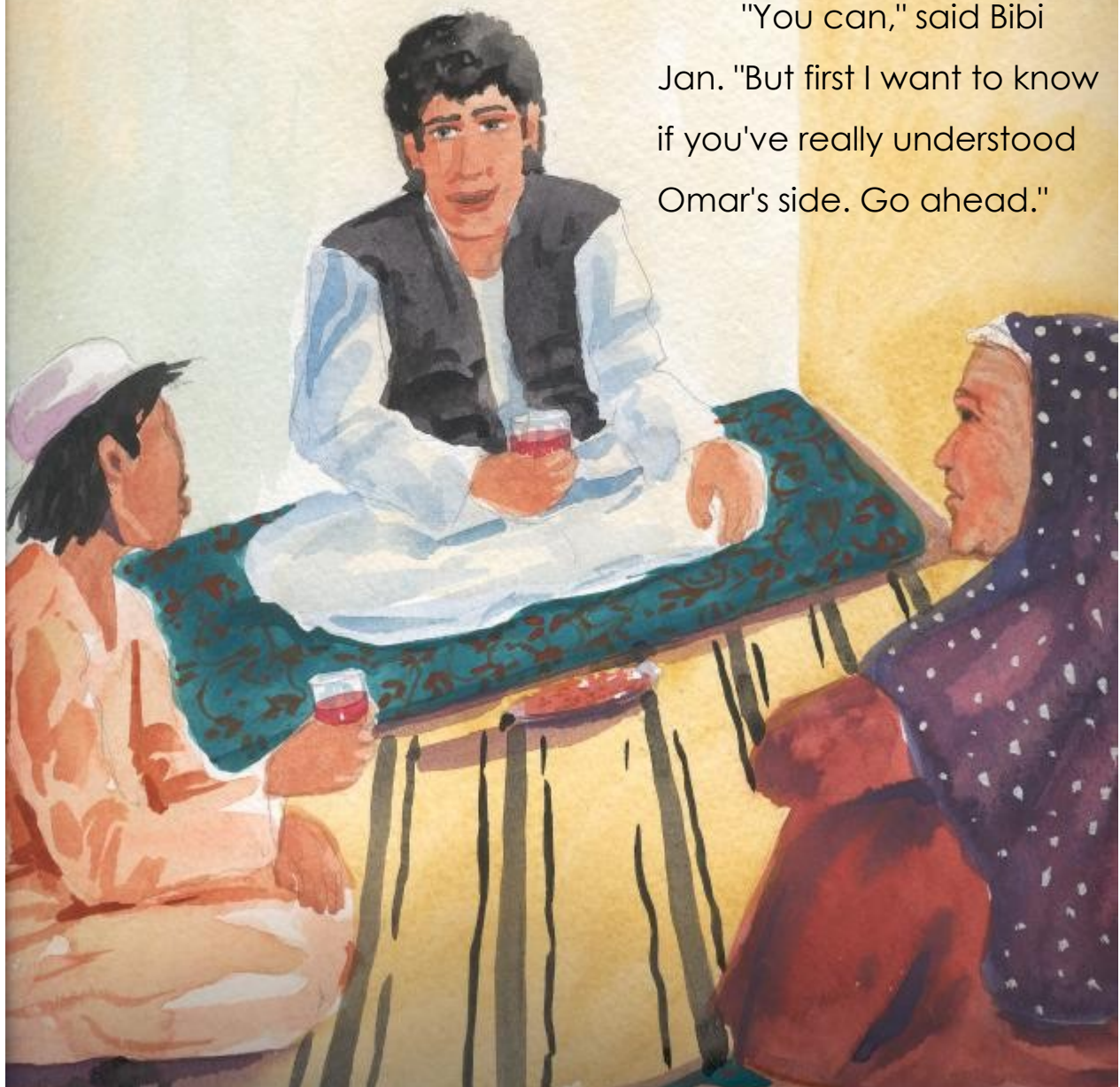
Bibi Jan said, "Abdullah, don't interrupt. You'll get your chance to say all you want to say." She turned to Omar. "And what do you want, Omar?"

"I want that bike out of the way."

Bibi Jan turned to Abdullah. "Now, Abdullah, tell me in your own words what is the problem for Omar."

Abdullah looked annoyed. "For Omar?" he said. "I thought you said I could tell my side of the story."

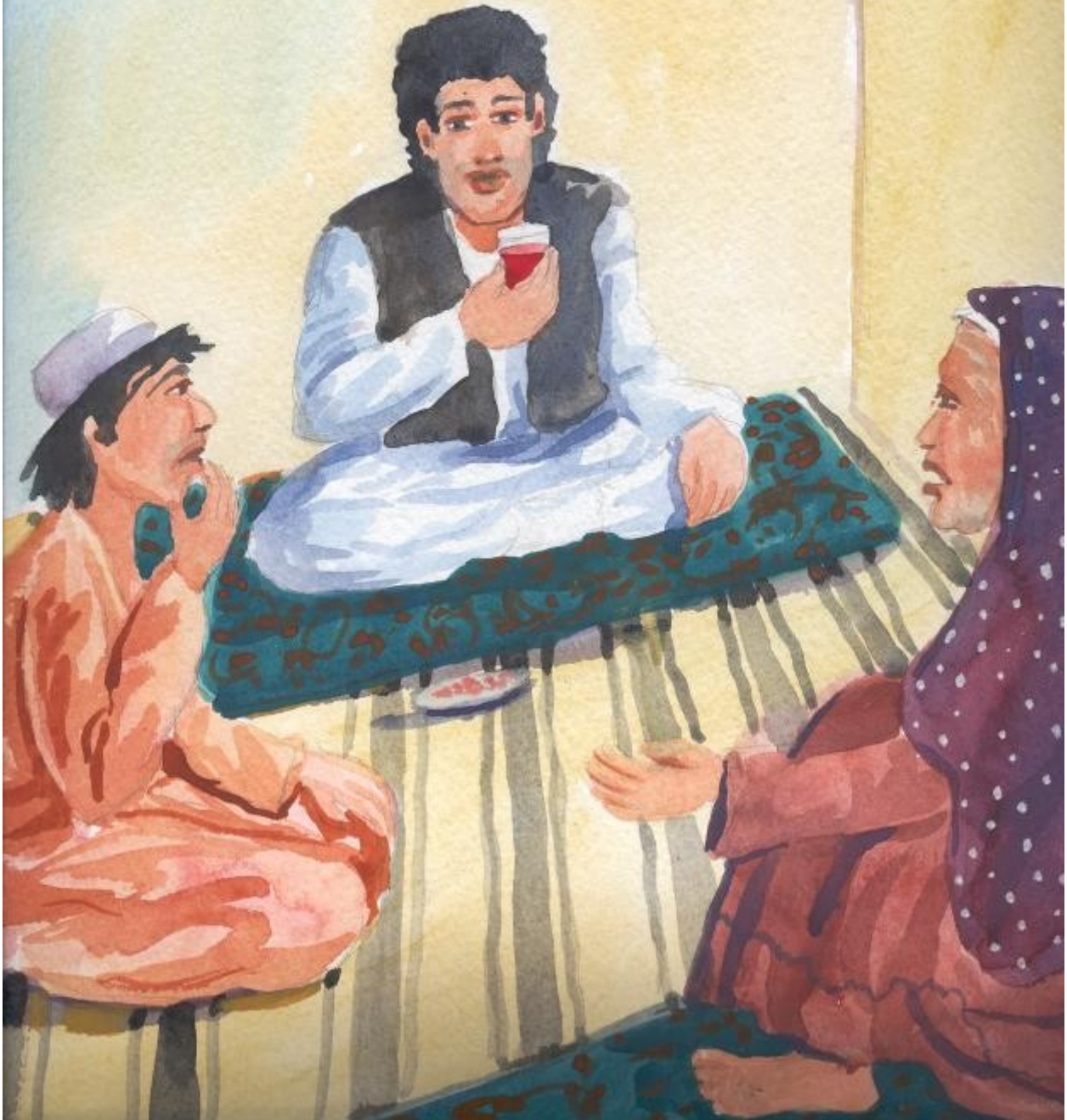
"You can," said Bibi Jan. "But first I want to know if you've really understood Omar's side. Go ahead."



Grudgingly at first, Abdullah described what was the problem for Omar. As he described it, he understood it a little better.

Bibi Jan smiled. "That's helpful, Abdullah. Now tell us your side of the problem."

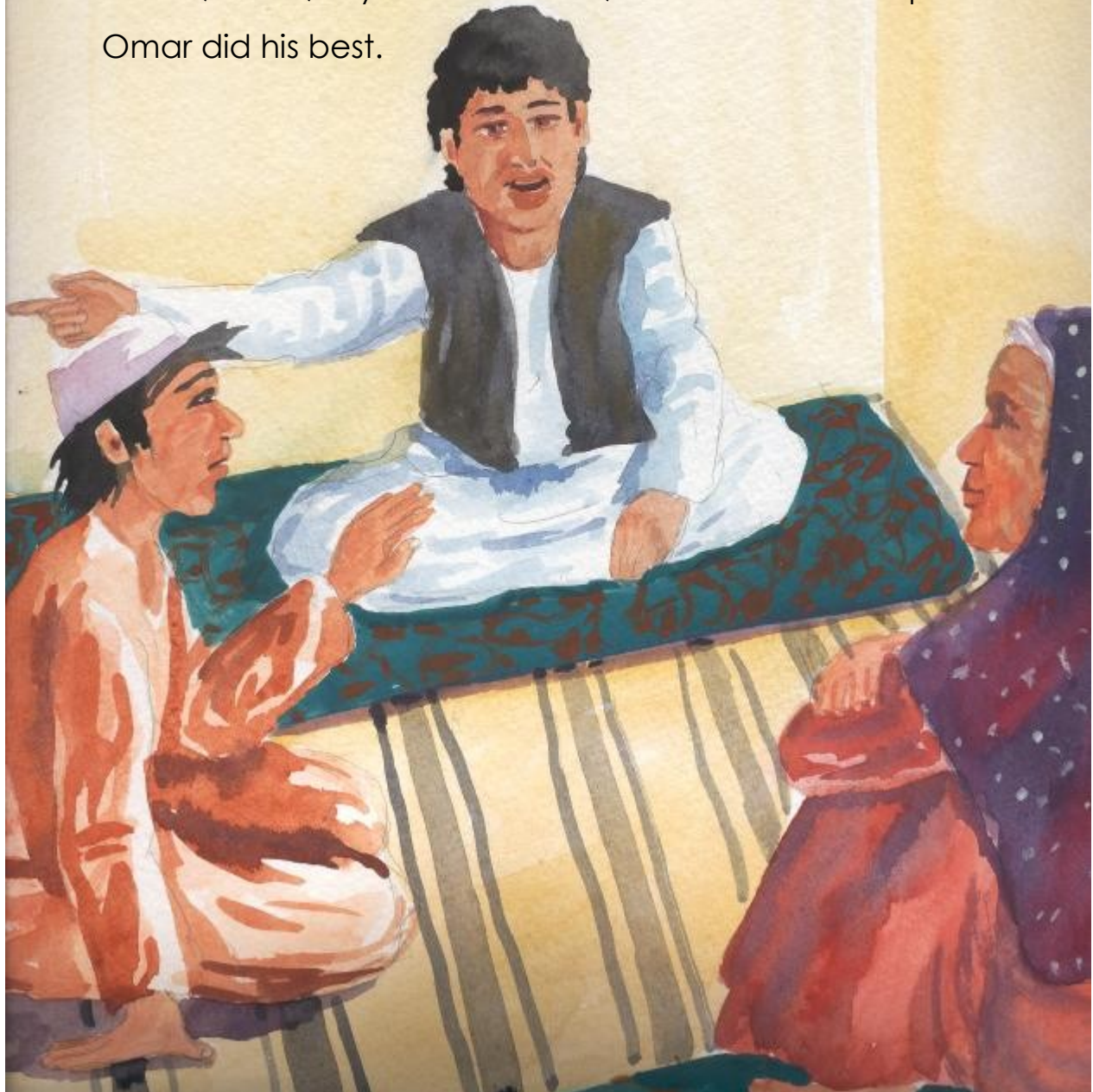
Eager to get his words in, Abdullah said, "Well, he..."



"No, Abdullah," said Bibi Jan, shaking her head, "remember, start with 'I', and tell us what you feel about what happened, and what you want."

Abdullah paused to work out how to put it. "I felt very angry when I saw the spokes of my bike broken. I just want to be able to put my bike somewhere safe and not have it stolen or damaged."

"Omar, tell us, in your own words, what is Abdullah's problem."
Omar did his best.





Bibi Jan nodded. "Now that we understand the problem, we have to come up with lots of ideas for solutions."

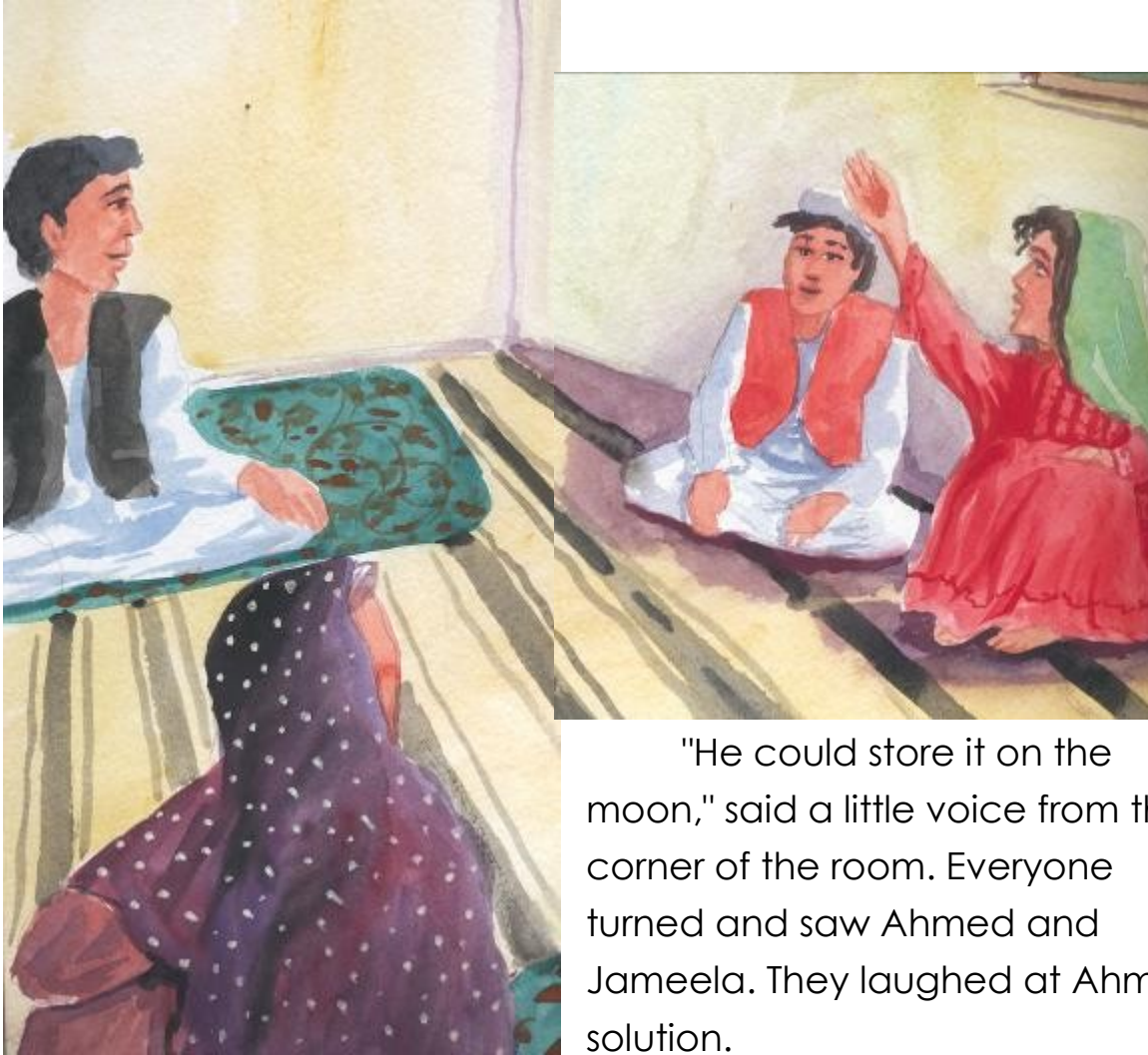
Abdullah folded his arms and smirked. "It's obvious. Omar has to watch where he puts his feet and be careful of other people's things."

"Abdullah, there isn't just one solution to a problem. There are many. We have to think of lots of ways to deal with this one and then choose the best one. OK, you've thought of one. Now, let's hear some more," encouraged Bibi Jan.

"He could keep the bike outside," offered Omar.

"No," said Abdullah. "It'll get stolen."

"Abdullah, we'll save comments on the solutions for later. Right now, we just want lots of ideas. The more, the better."



"He could store it on the moon," said a little voice from the corner of the room. Everyone turned and saw Ahmed and Jameela. They laughed at Ahmed's solution.

"Don't be silly, Ahmed," said Abdullah, smiling.

"No, let him try," said Bibi Jan. "The more ideas, the better. Sometimes an idea that seems silly sparks another really workable idea. More ideas, please."

Jameela offered, "He could get a rope and hoist it up to the ceiling each night."

"What about keeping it outside with a lock on it?" asked Omar.

"Well, I might if I had a lock," said Abdullah, "But I don't. Besides, at night, someone could walk away with the whole thing, lock and all."



"Well," suggested Omar. "How about storing it outside, locked, in the day, when we're all moving around here. At night you could bring it in and keep it in the same place as now."

"Good idea," said Abdullah. "But I told you, I don't have a lock."

"I have a padlock I'm not using," said Omar, "But I don't have a chain."

Merza said, "I'll give you a little money to buy a chain, Abdullah. It won't cost much."

It sank in for Abdullah that Omar, the boy he'd begun to fight with, was offering to lend him a padlock. "Gee, thanks for that offer, Omar. Would you want a loan of the bike sometimes?"

"Sure, I would," grinned Omar. "I'd love it. I used to have one, before we had to leave our village."



"There's one last thing we should speak about, boys." Merza looked from one to the other. "And that is, could we have prevented this problem in the first place?"

Both fell silent. "I don't know, Papa," Abdullah said softly.

"What if you'd discussed the problem with Omar before putting your bike in that place?"

Very thoughtfully, Abdullah nodded.

Grandfather Kaka Ghulam had slipped quietly into the room and sat, running his fingers over his beads. "Praise be to Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful."

Story 10 Making Peace

Things to Talk About:

- Go over the steps of conflict resolution together.
 - Tell one side's version
 - The other person repeats that to make sure they understand it.
 - Do the same for the other side.
 - Think of as many solutions as possible, even crazy ones.
 - Choose the best solution.
 - Do it.
- What happens when people use violence to try to resolve conflicts?
- (For older children) Can large groups like political groups or countries use the steps of conflict resolution we've learned?
- Things To Do:
 - Act out (role play) resolving a conflict. You could use a conflict in your school as an example.
 - Talk to the members of your family about ways to resolve conflicts in your family.

