

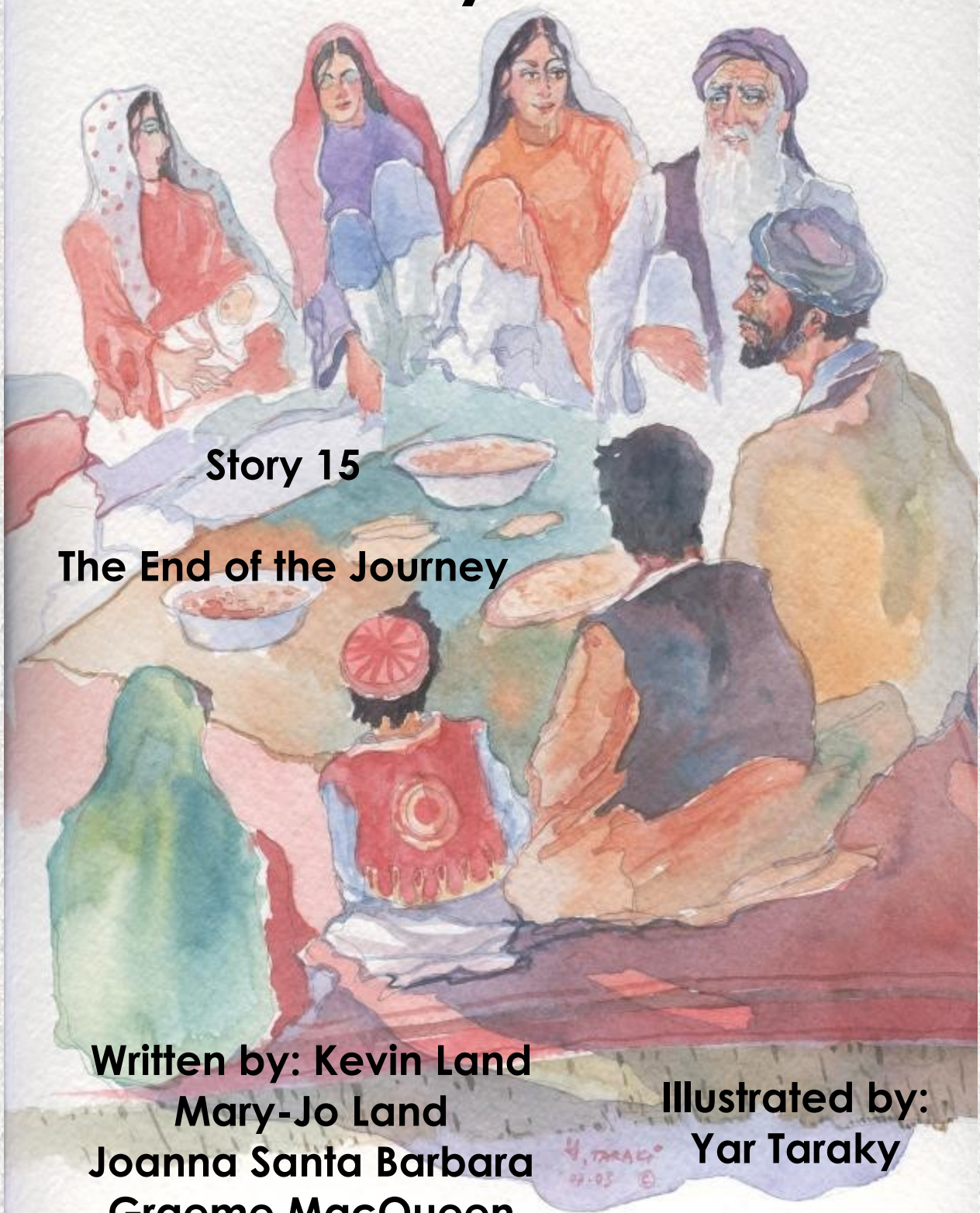
# A Journey of Peace

## Story 15

### The End of the Journey

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Story 15

# **The End of the Journey**

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.

As **“Abdullah and the Ten-foot Man”** opens, Abdullah, now living with his family at his uncle’s house for a week, comes down with a fever. He recalls his childhood dreams about wanting to grow up to be a soldier before he falls asleep. He dreams about meeting a giant soldier in the market who teaches him a lesson about the reality of war.

In **“A New Life”**, Jameela expresses her joy at being able to meet Aly and Aisha as helping to offset being away from her home. However, when Haleema tells her that she will soon have a baby sister or brother, Jameela’s anxiety over the instability of their lives takes over. Her mother helps her to understand why this is a blessing for them all.

**“Going Home”** begins with the news that after a year, the family is finally going to make the journey back home. As the family makes their preparations for their return, it is clear that there is still some tension between Haleema and Fatima.

The relationship between the two women is the main theme in **“Haleema and Fatima”**. The family is journeying back to their village, accompanied by Aly and Aisha, who will stay with them for a visit there. Suddenly, Haleema's baby is born, and Fatima helps her, using her new skills as a midwife. Though there were difficulties, Fatima is able to safeguard their health. This prompts Haleema to reconcile with her sister-in-law.

The healing process and renewal of the bonds that exist within the family are very evident in **“The End of the Journey”**. It opens with a dream that Bibi Jan has, which indicates the level of anxiety she has for the return trip and the condition of their home when they arrive. When they do, they find that the damages are minimal, and they begin the process of rediscovering what is truly important during the first meal they share together.

### **Healing Elements:**

**Healing images and symbols:** harmony, joy in simplicity, hope.

**Modeling of peaceful and virtuous interactions:** cooperation, helpfulness.

**Problem Issues:** fear of the unknown.

**Healing Strategies:** rekindling of relationships, rediscovery of heritage, fulfillment of hopes and dreams, family unity, returning home.





Bibi Jan dreamed.

She was alone in a large open-air market looking for the man who was to take her home. Anxiously, she gazed into the faces of those she passed, looking for signs of recognition. But there were none. The few who even met her eyes, darted their glance away, impatiently in search of a foolish vendor with valuable goods.



As she approached an old woman waving multi-coloured scarves, Bibi Jan felt a hand on her shoulder. She turned to see a blind man holding two pairs of shoes; one heavily worn, the other new.

"Which ones would you like?" he asked.

"I am not sure," she replied, cautiously, her attention fixed on his empty eye sockets.

"Then I shall advise you. These ones," he said, extending the older pair, "know where you've been and will take you back much faster. These others will take some getting used to, and will go more slowly, but when you finally reach your destination, you will see it in a different light. Please, accept one as a gift."

Bibi Jan held a finger to her lips while she decided, and then reached for the one she picked.

She awoke to the sound of Jameela coughing and stirring in her sleep, on the ground a few feet away from her. The child sat up suddenly and looked around her as if unsure where she was. When her eyes got to Bibi Jan, she could see that she was awake.

“Can you not sleep, Bibi?” she asked.

“I can sleep, little one.”

“Did I waken you?”

“Sometimes it's more restful to be awake than to sleep.”

For a moment, there was only the sound of the rhythmic breathing of their sleeping family around them.

“Will we still be home tomorrow?” Jameela asked.

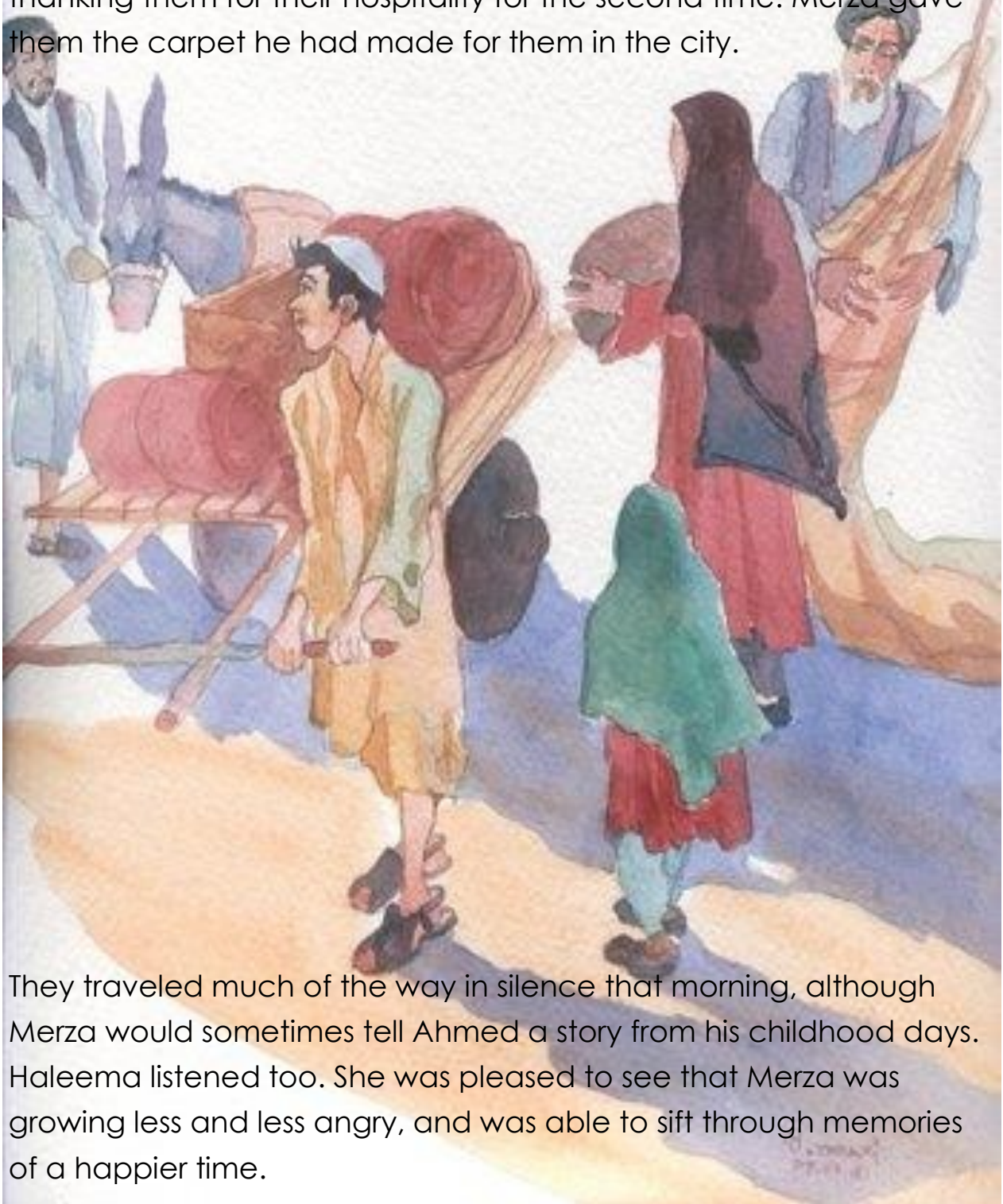
“Yes, little one.”

“And will it be the same?”

“It will be what it is,” her grandmother replied. “It will be what it is.”

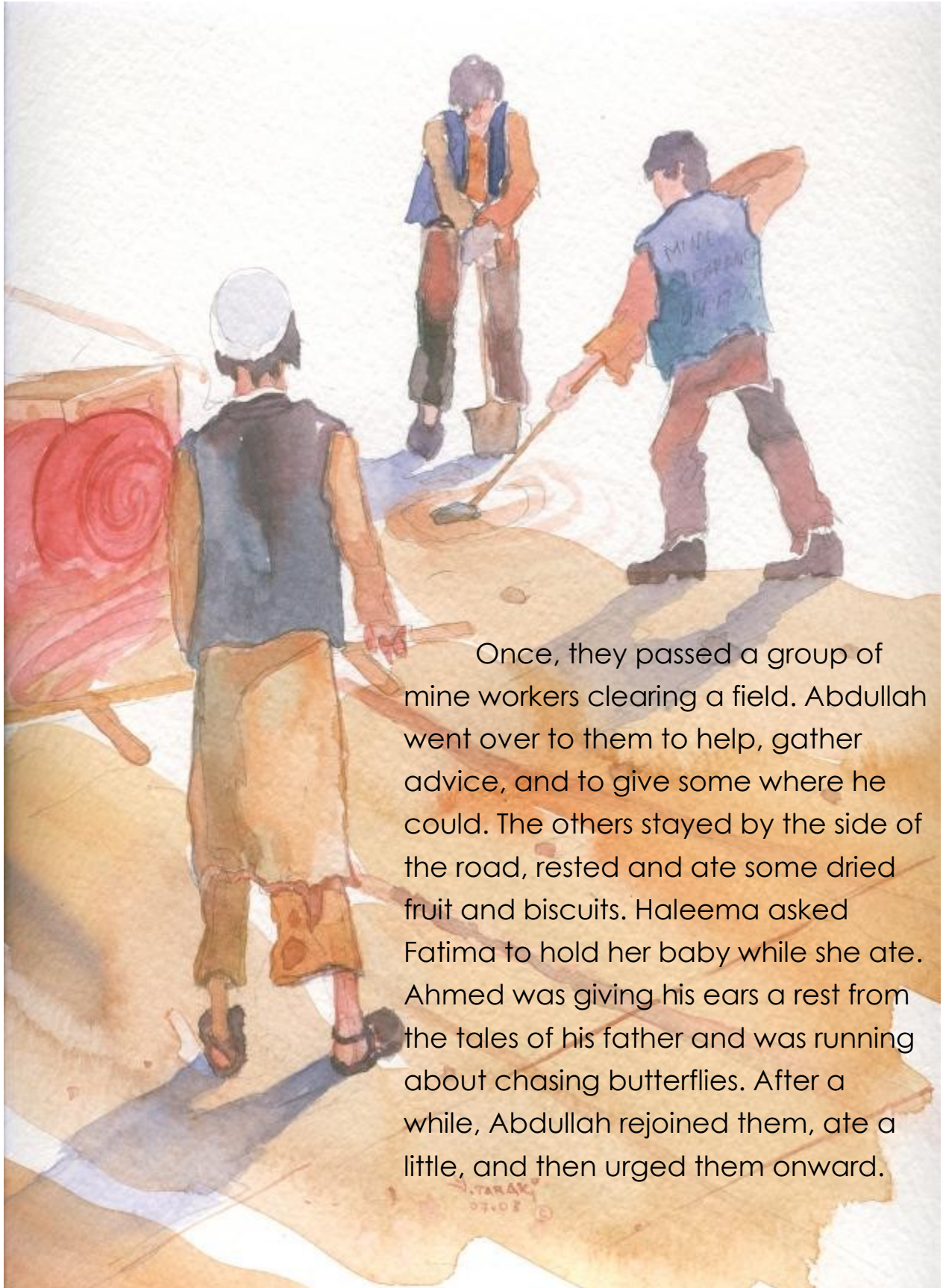


A little after dawn, the family awoke and made their preparations for the last leg of their journey. They loaded up the cart and donkey, bidding farewell to their hosts Amin and Saida, thanking them for their hospitality for the second time. Merza gave them the carpet he had made for them in the city.

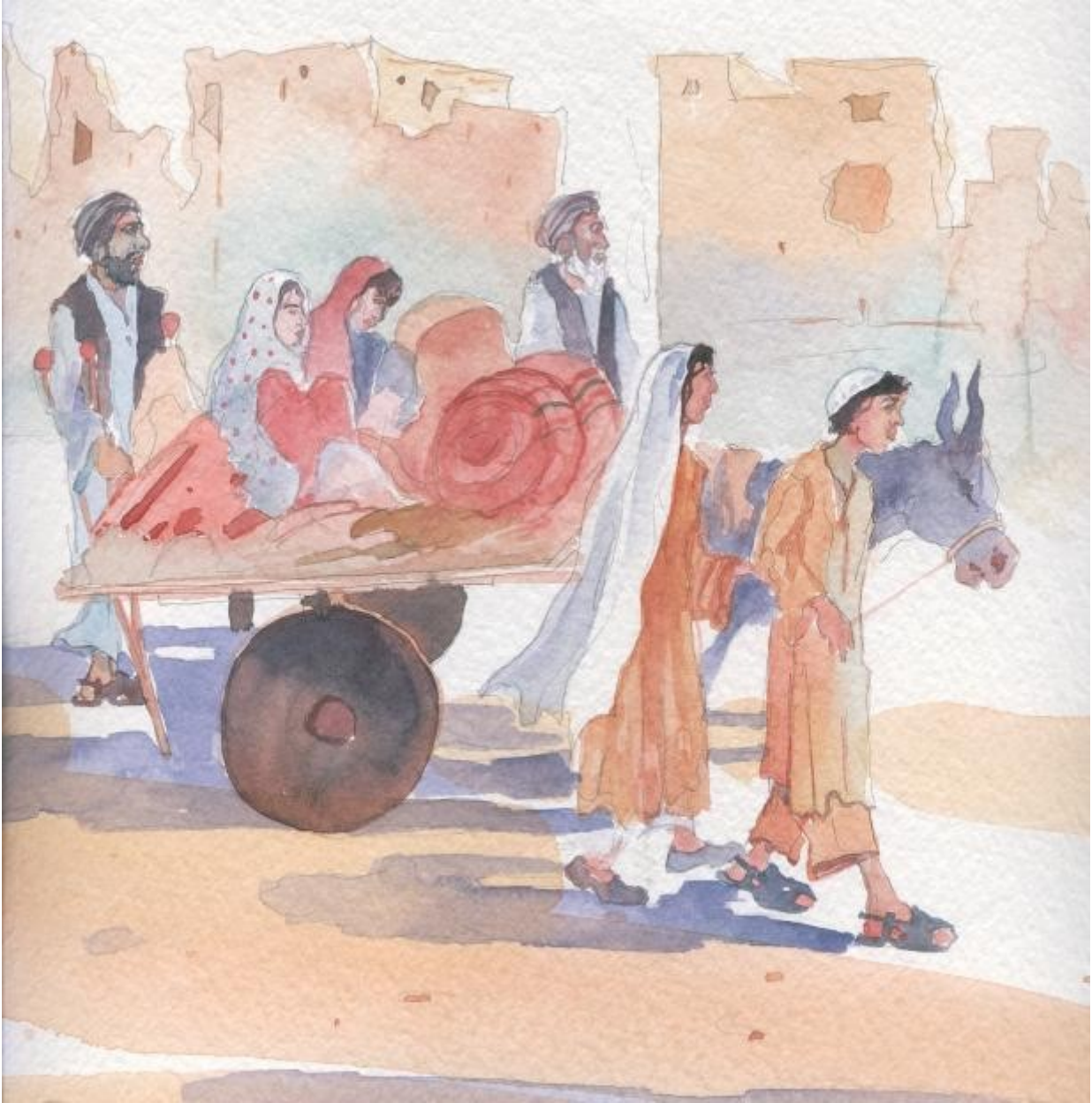


They traveled much of the way in silence that morning, although Merza would sometimes tell Ahmed a story from his childhood days. Haleema listened too. She was pleased to see that Merza was growing less and less angry, and was able to sift through memories of a happier time.





Once, they passed a group of mine workers clearing a field. Abdullah went over to them to help, gather advice, and to give some where he could. The others stayed by the side of the road, rested and ate some dried fruit and biscuits. Haleema asked Fatima to hold her baby while she ate. Ahmed was giving his ears a rest from the tales of his father and was running about chasing butterflies. After a while, Abdullah rejoined them, ate a little, and then urged them onward.



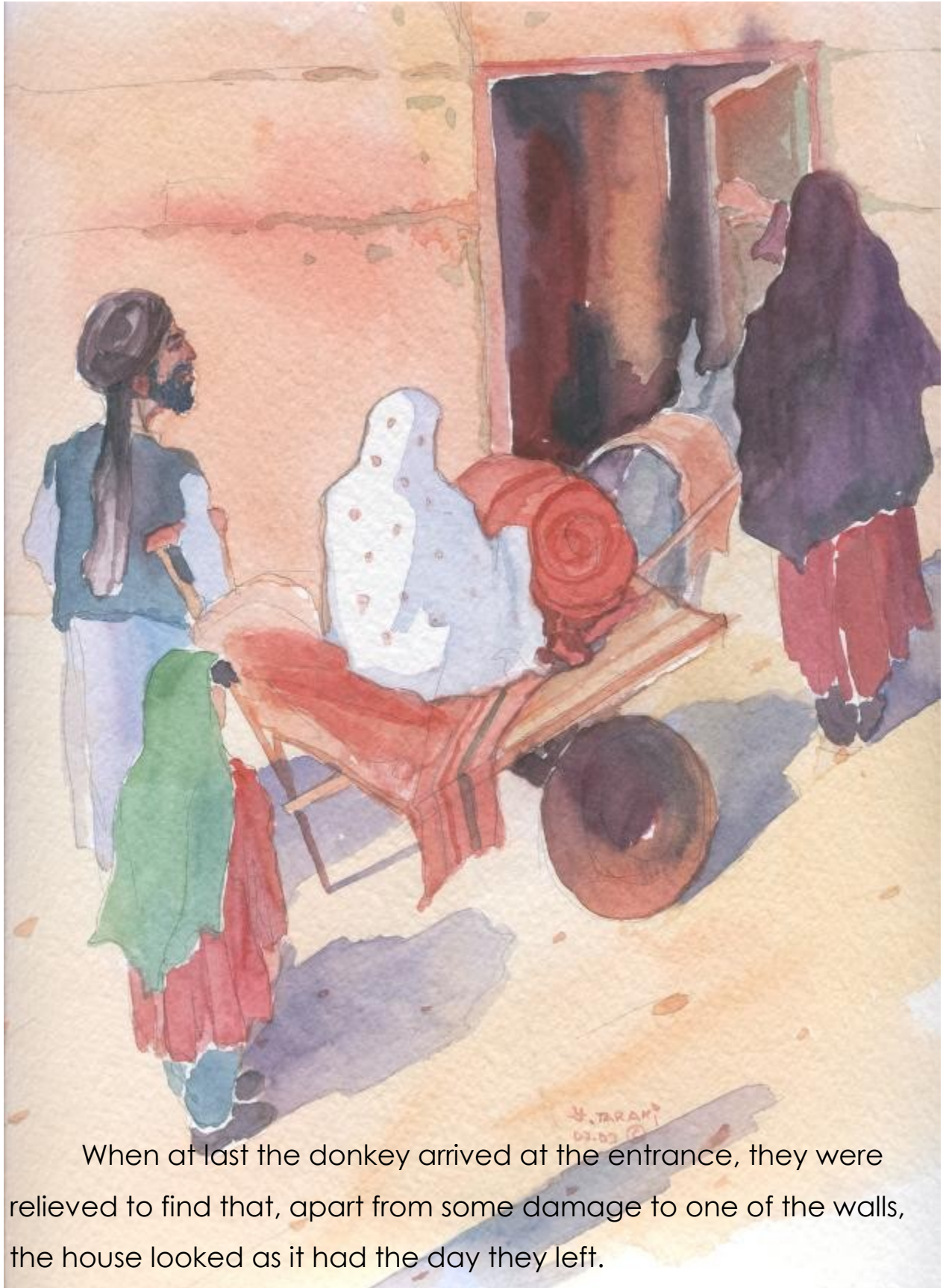
By late afternoon, they could see their village up ahead in the distance. Some of the houses had been bombed, others looted, and still others miraculously untouched. Their pace picked up as their thoughts turned to their house and its condition.

"Do you think it will be all right, Bibi?" Jameela wondered.

"One can only hope," Bibi Jan answered.

"I think it will," Ahmed offered confidently.



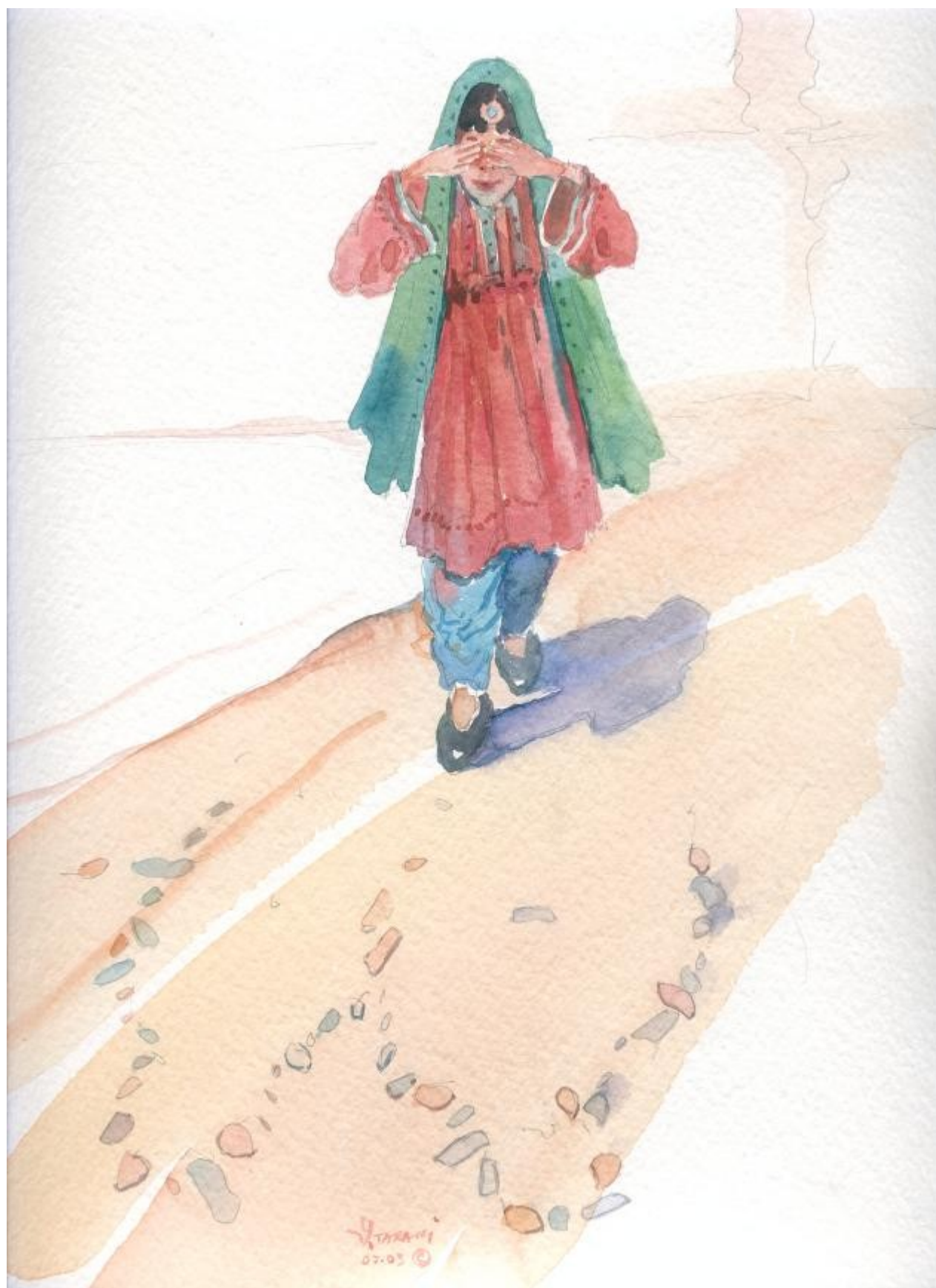


When at last the donkey arrived at the entrance, they were relieved to find that, apart from some damage to one of the walls, the house looked as it had the day they left.

For the next few minutes, the travelers inspected the compound as a group, led by Bibi Jan. As they sized up its state, they seemed to be looking at their home and garden as if for the first time. When they were all satisfied that it was as they remembered, each one went in search of special memories.

Bibi Jan headed nervously for the stable area under the house, where she began to rummage through the straw. After a few minutes, she grew fearful, until suddenly, she felt the corner of the trunk. Pushing the straw aside, she removed the trunk and opened it to reveal a large number of photographs of her family history--- from her wedding, the births of all her children and grandchildren, their marriages, and many other occasions. They were a little dusty but they were safe and unbroken.

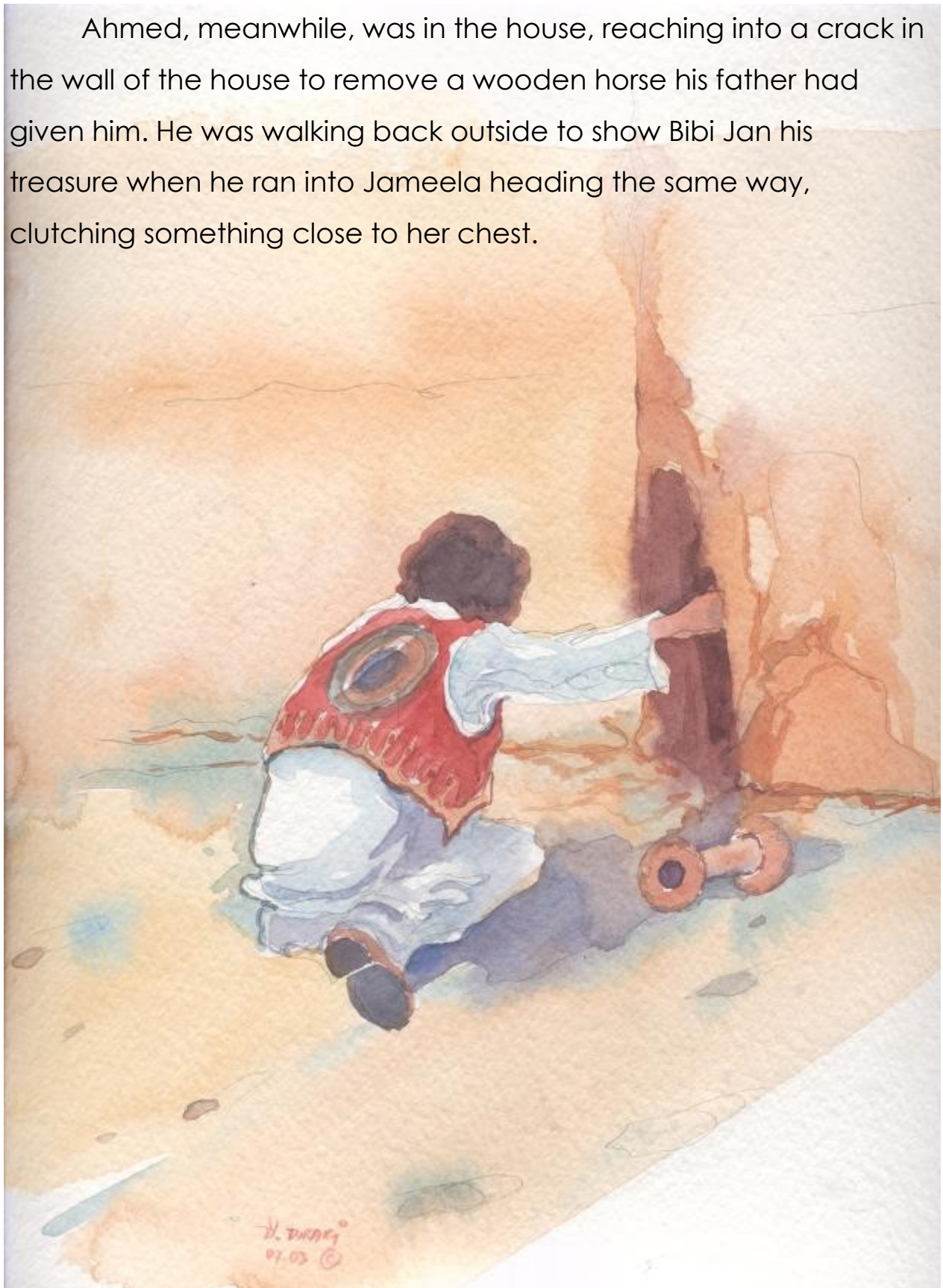
In her garden, Jameela walked with her eyes closed over to the spot where the pebble drawing had been. After offering a brief prayer to Allah, she opened her eyes to see that, to her amazement, not one pebble was out of place. She reached down and picked one up, clutching it tightly in her hands.



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Ahmed, meanwhile, was in the house, reaching into a crack in the wall of the house to remove a wooden horse his father had given him. He was walking back outside to show Bibi Jan his treasure when he ran into Jameela heading the same way, clutching something close to her chest.





Inside, preparations for the evening meal were being made. Bibi Jan called to the children and they went in to help.

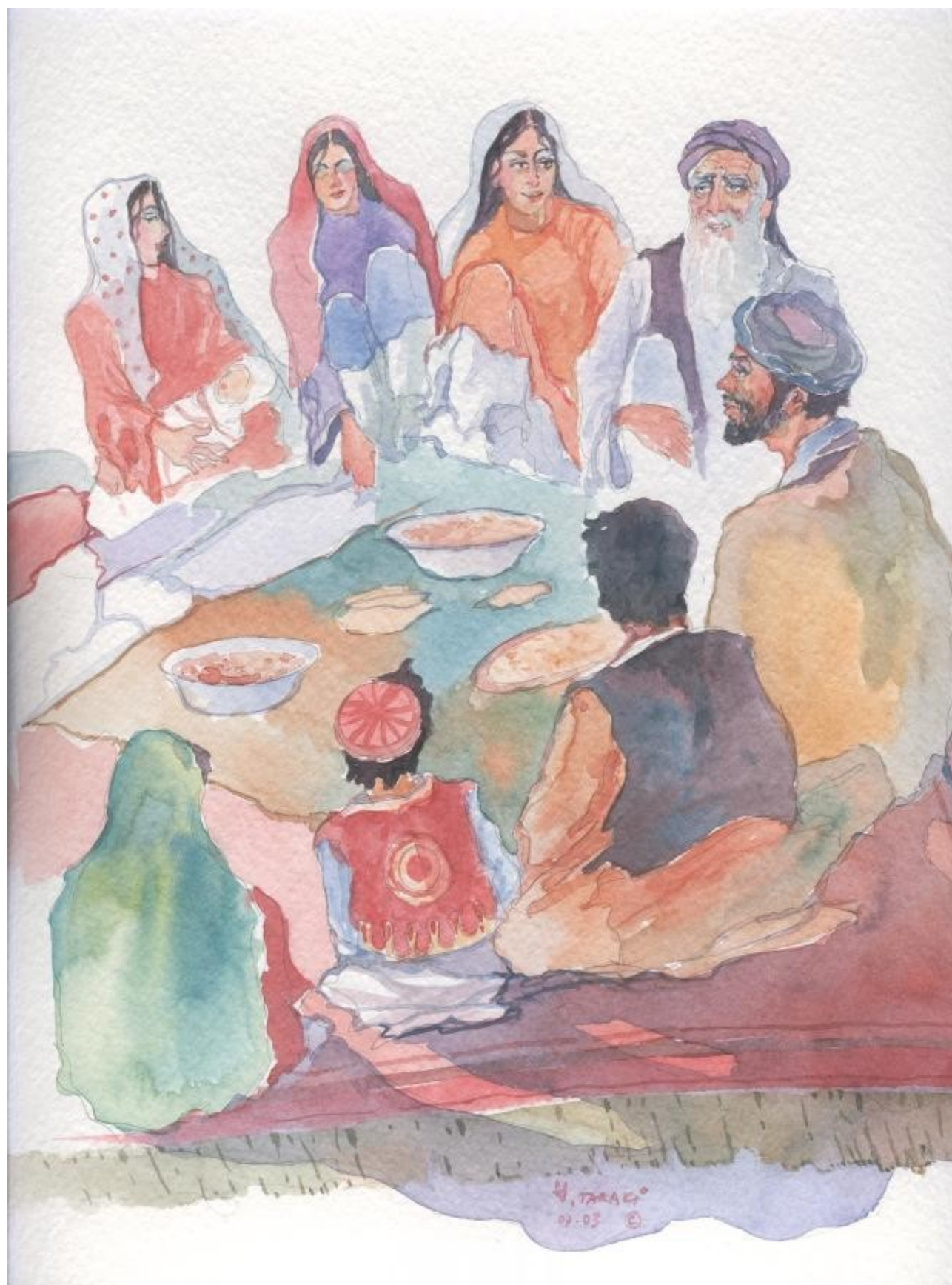
Jameela could never recall being so eager to do chores before. Their simple meal became a feast in their imaginations as the whole family gathered and gave thanks to Allah. Jameela studied the radiant faces of her family. Her mother cradled baby Fatima, while Auntie Fatima and Auntie Aisha served the food. Abdullah seemed to be such a grown man, so different from the angry brother a year ago. Bibi Jan was smiling her biggest smile while Kaka Ghulam, her father and Uncle Aly made their plans for the repairs. Everyone was exhausted but so very, very happy.

Jameela looked over to Ahmed and smiled.

"It is good to be home," she said.

Ahmed smiled and nodded in agreement. "This is the best meal I've ever had."





## Story 15 The End of the Journey

### Things to Talk About:

1. What do you think Bibi Jan's dream means? Which pair of shoes do you think she picked and why?
2. The family in the story has many hopes and fears. What are your hopes and fears?

### Things To Do:

1. Think about your hopes. Try to plan how you could fulfill your hopes.
2. What hopes do you have for your school? Your family? Your community and your country?

