

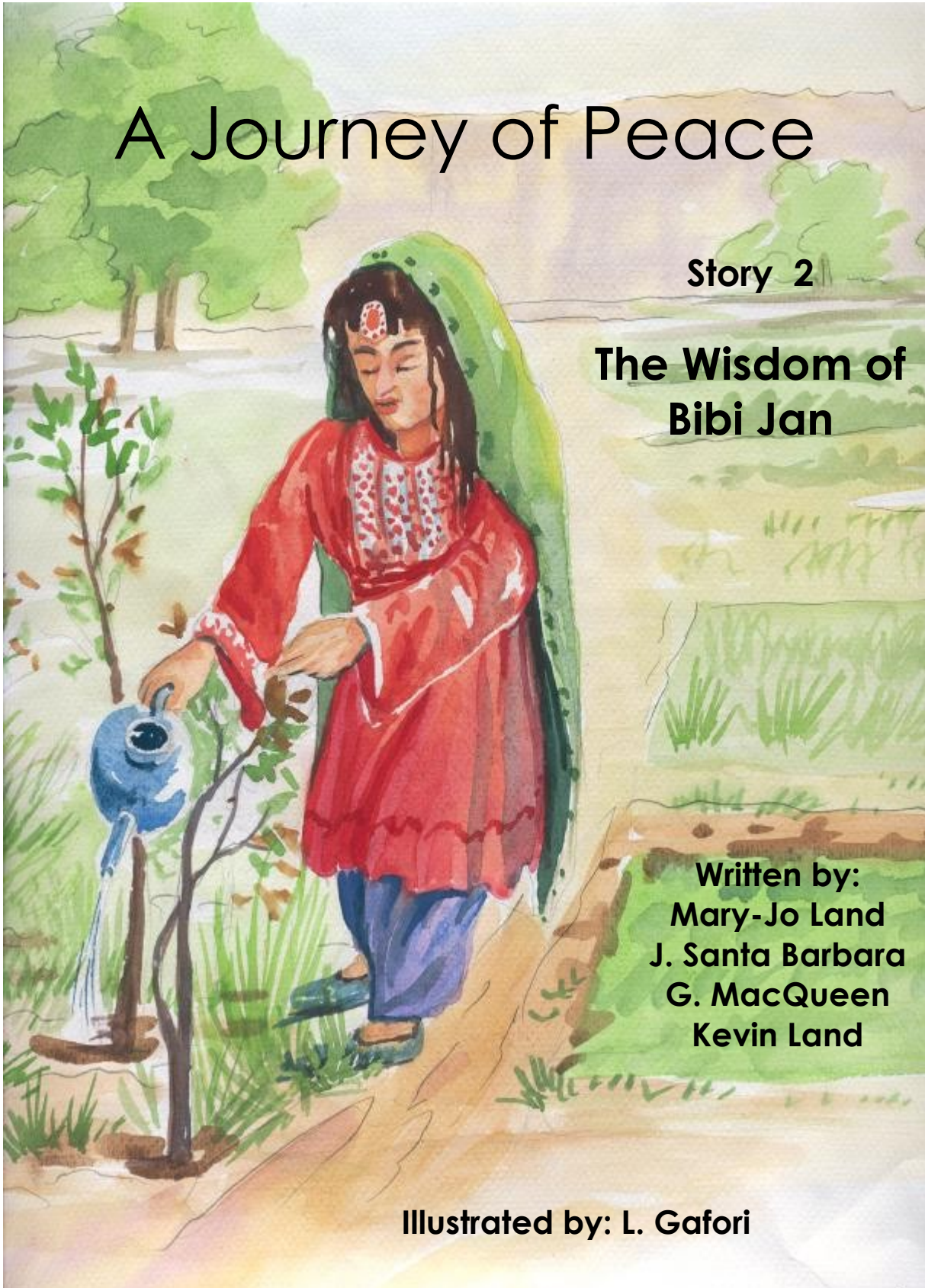
A Journey of Peace

Story 2

The Wisdom of Bibi Jan

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The Wisdom of Bibi Jan

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 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 Gifts**”, 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 in the family 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.

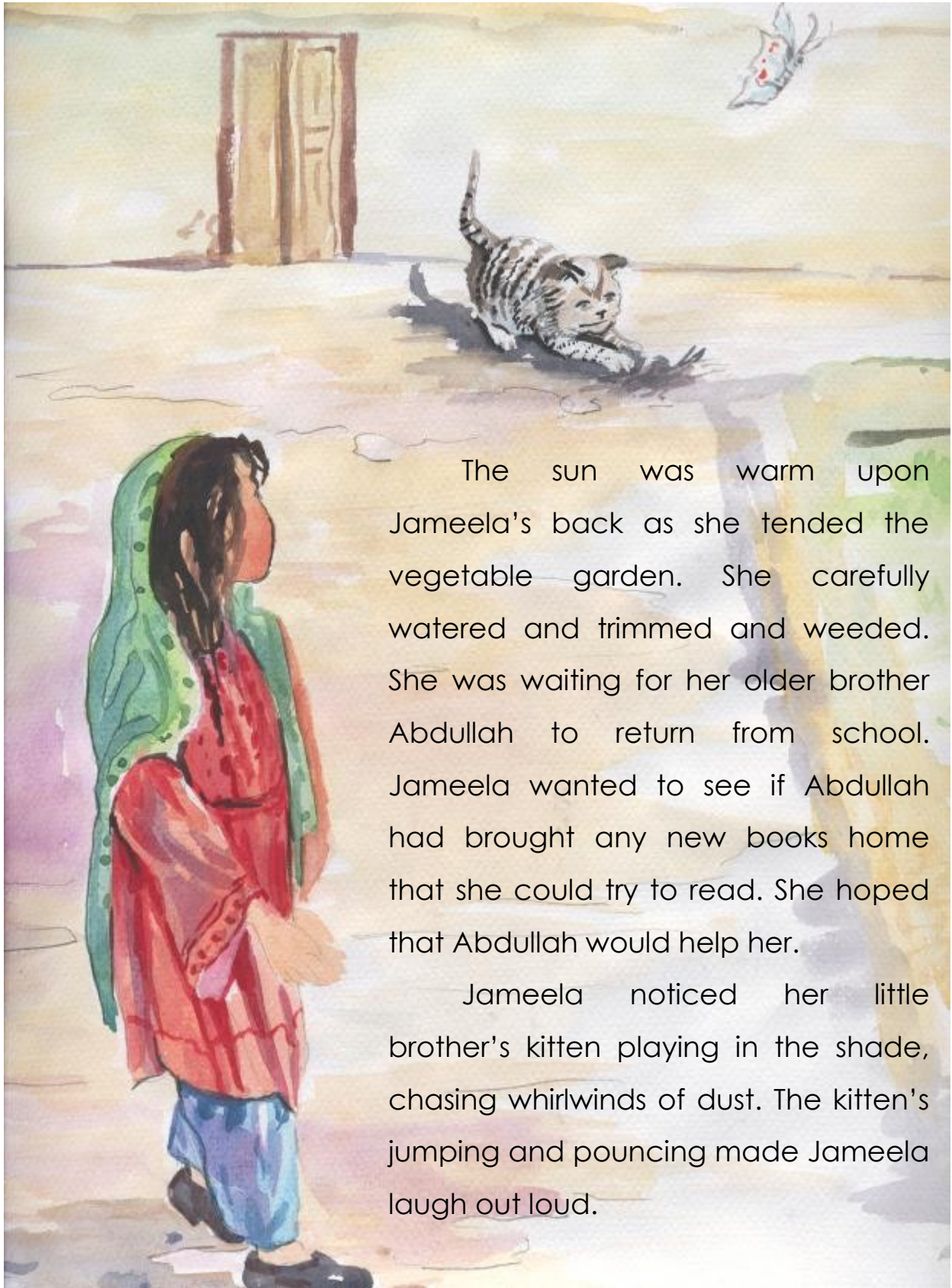
Healing Elements:

Healing images and symbols: warmth, growth, nurturing, playfulness, laughter, symbolic release, happiness, safety, comfort, love.

Modeling of Peaceful and Virtuous Acts: industry, contribution, compassion, friendship, marital harmony, respect for elders, emotional support, empathy, religious devotion, thankfulness, helpfulness, listening, physical comfort, affection, empowerment, encouragement, recognition and praise of virtuous acts.

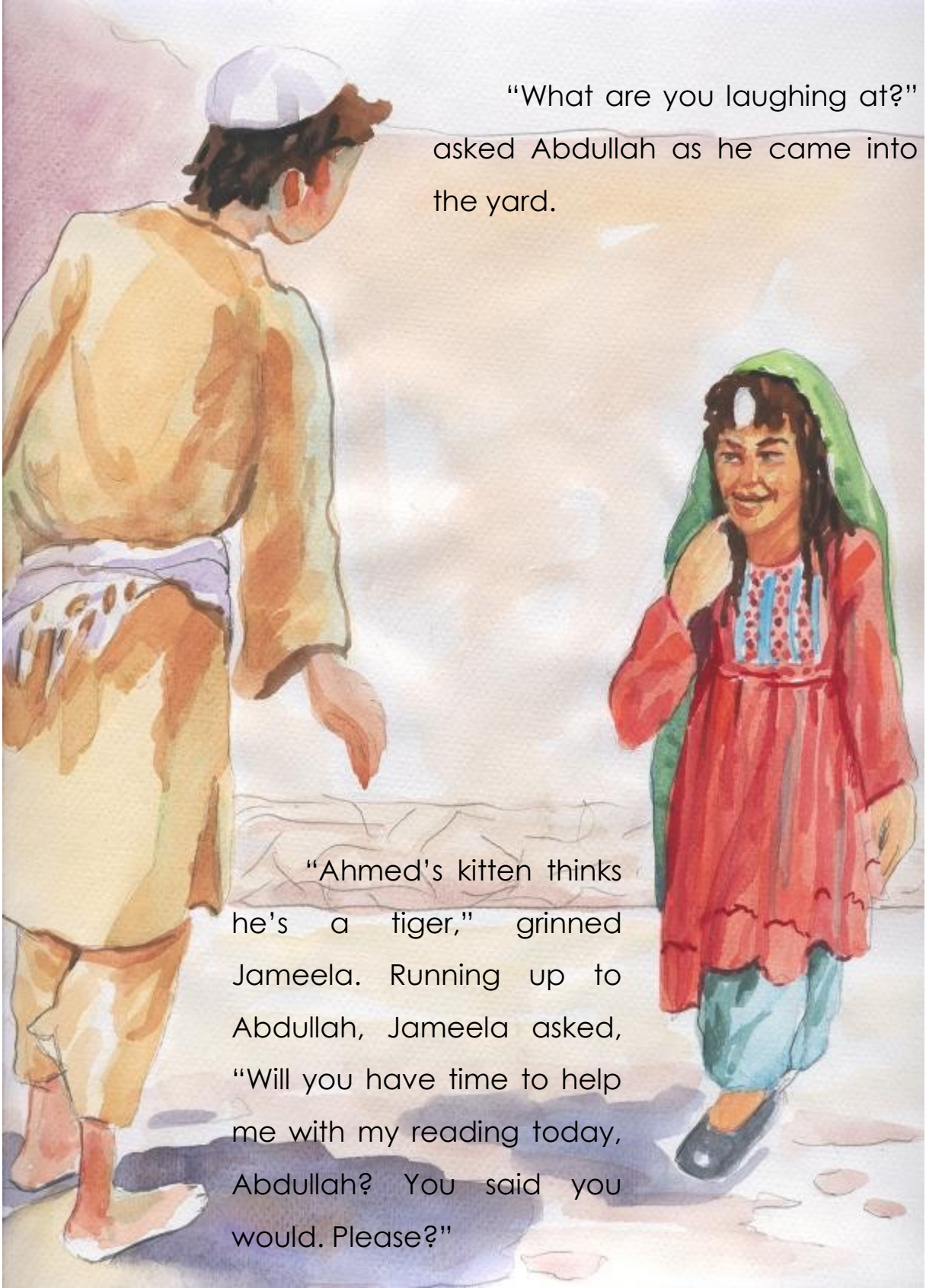
Problem Issues: longing for education, anger, feelings of being over-burdened and over-whelmed, conflict, Post Traumatic Stress Symptoms: worry, pre-occupation, nightmares, fear, sleep disturbance.

Healing Strategies: empowerment, hugging and comforting, drawing and destroying fears, drawing hopeful images, recognizing and facing fear, supporting a friend.



The sun was warm upon Jameela's back as she tended the vegetable garden. She carefully watered and trimmed and weeded. She was waiting for her older brother Abdullah to return from school. Jameela wanted to see if Abdullah had brought any new books home that she could try to read. She hoped that Abdullah would help her.

Jameela noticed her little brother's kitten playing in the shade, chasing whirlwinds of dust. The kitten's jumping and pouncing made Jameela laugh out loud.

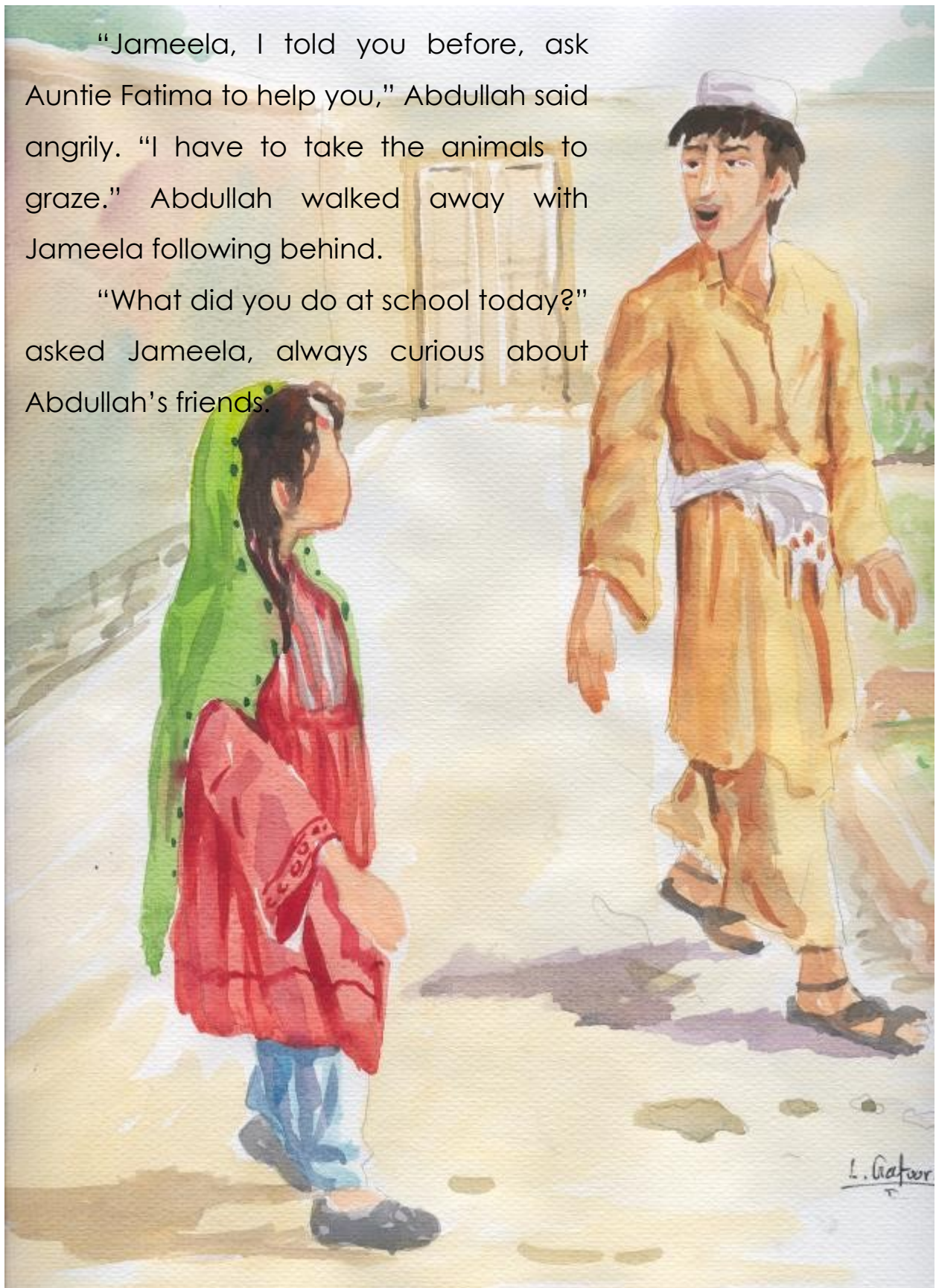


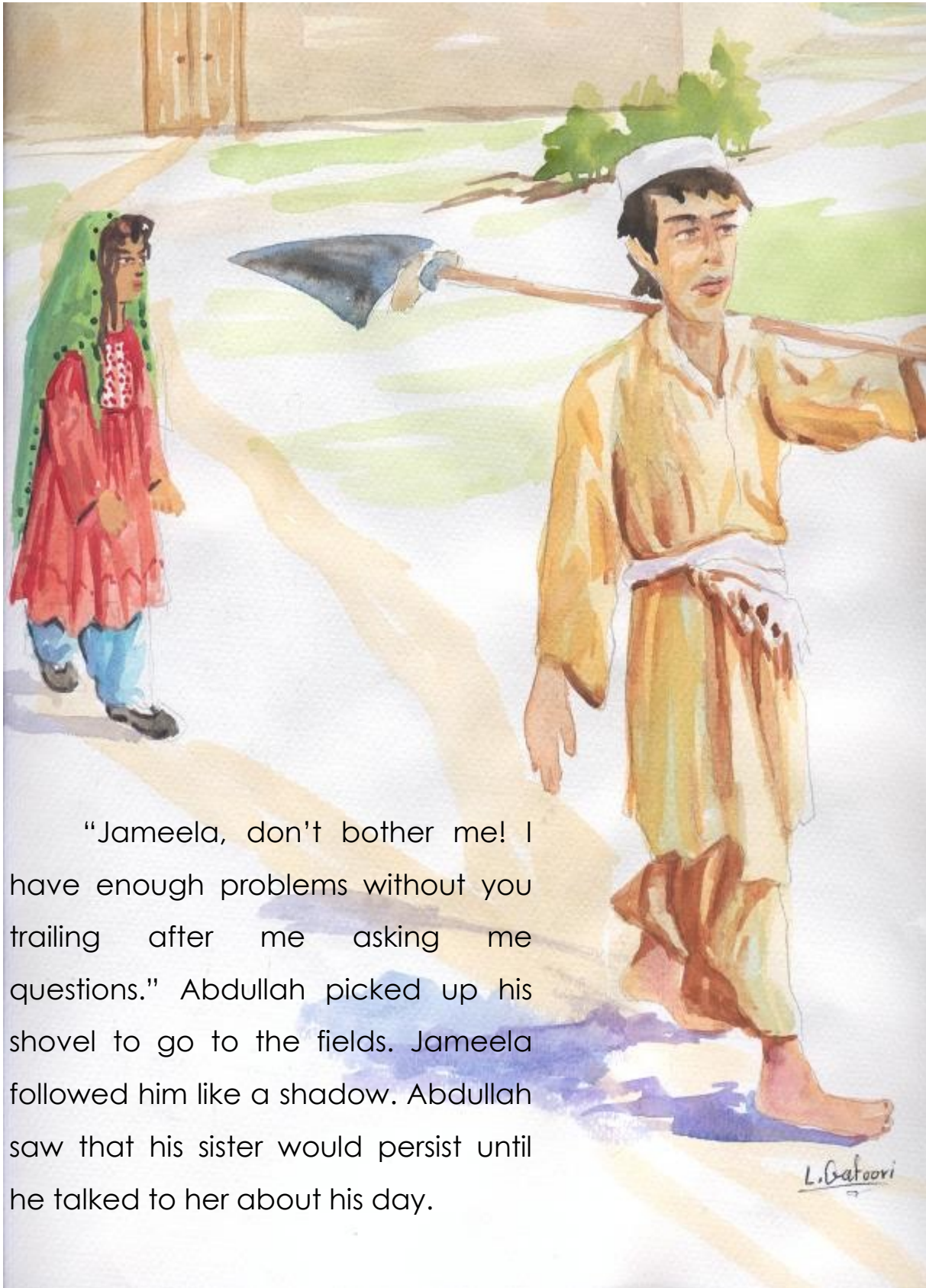
"What are you laughing at?"
asked Abdullah as he came into
the yard.

"Ahmed's kitten thinks
he's a tiger," grinned
Jameela. Running up to
Abdullah, Jameela asked,
"Will you have time to help
me with my reading today,
Abdullah? You said you
would. Please?"

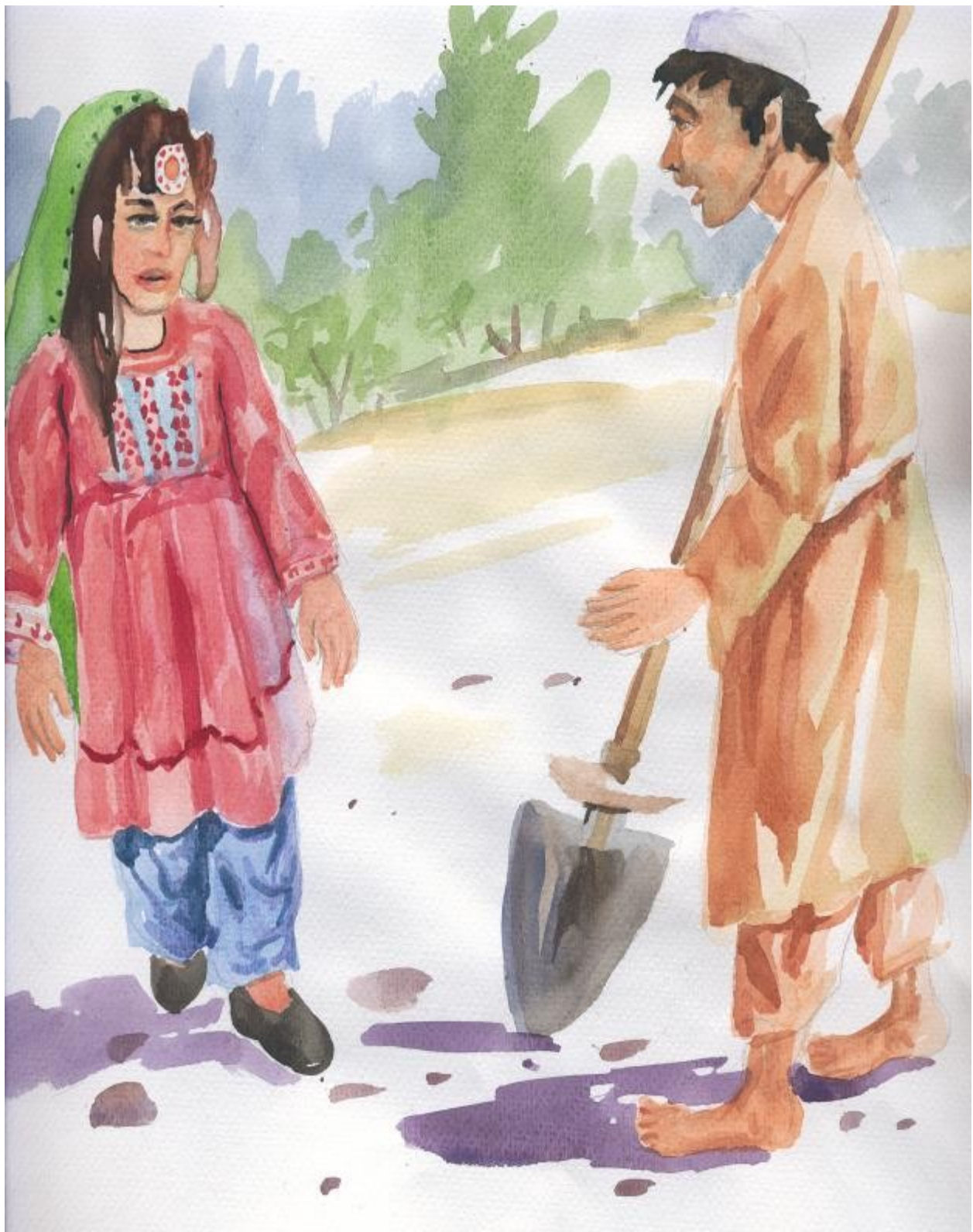
“Jameela, I told you before, ask Auntie Fatima to help you,” Abdullah said angrily. “I have to take the animals to graze.” Abdullah walked away with Jameela following behind.

“What did you do at school today?” asked Jameela, always curious about Abdullah’s friends.





“Jameela, don’t bother me! I have enough problems without you trailing after me asking me questions.” Abdullah picked up his shovel to go to the fields. Jameela followed him like a shadow. Abdullah saw that his sister would persist until he talked to her about his day.



"O.K. Jameela, you win. I am worried about my friend, Kadeem. He's acting very strangely these days. I don't know what's wrong with him. He's either getting angry with someone or he's not paying attention to anything that's happening, like he's thinking about other things." said Abdullah.

"Maybe we should ask Bibi about this. She always knows how to help," suggested Jameela. As they passed through the yard, they saw Bibi Jan and Kaka Ghulam sitting together on the old wooden bench, talking. Their grandparents looked upset.

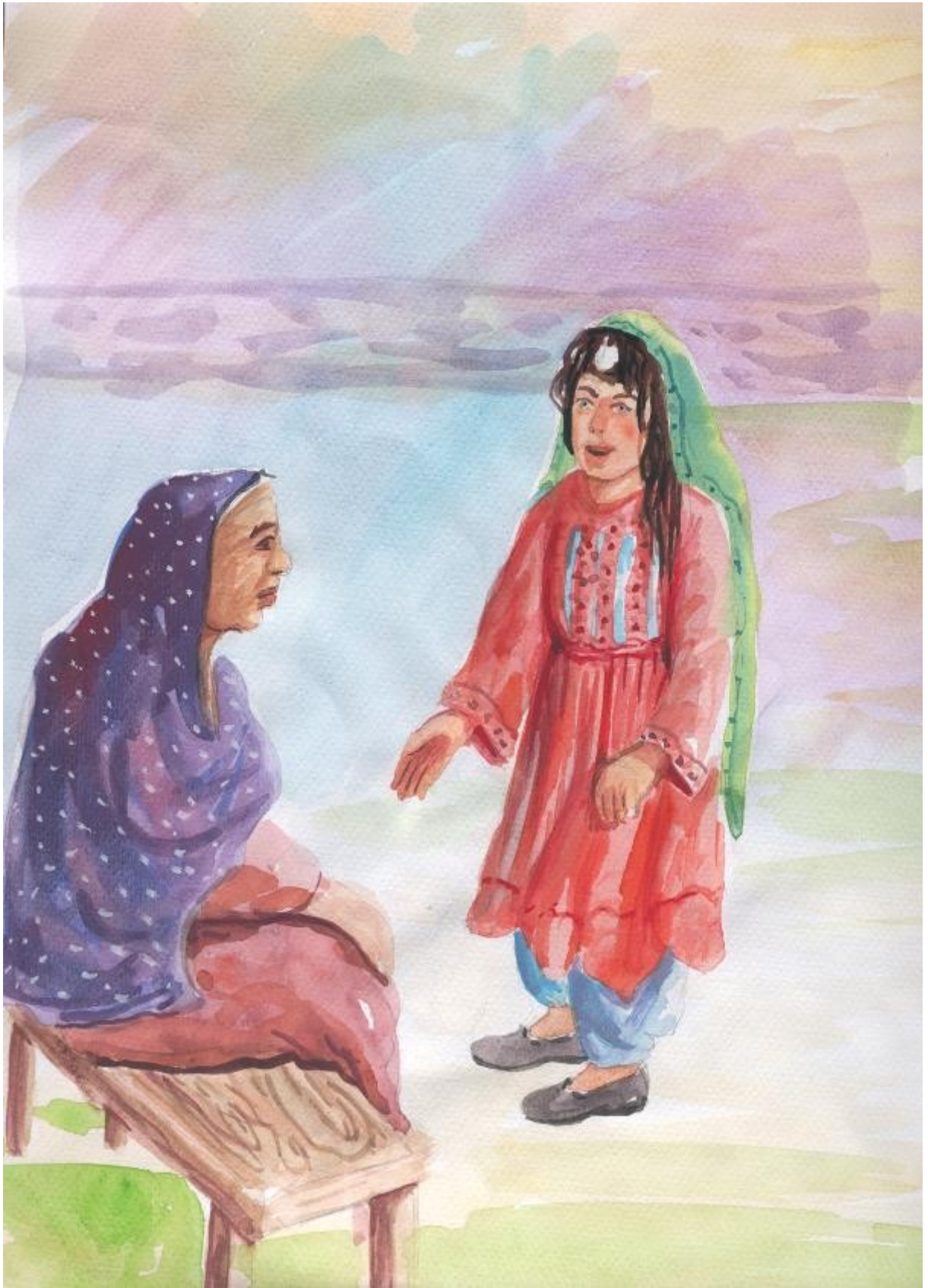
"What's wrong, Bibi?" asked Jameela.

"Has something bad happened, Kaka Ghulam?" Abdullah was worried.

"There has been some fighting in the hills. Some of the families who live outside the village are very worried and scared," stated Kaka Ghulam.

"My friend, Kadeem, lives over on the big hill outside the village. He has been acting differently lately. I wonder if the fighting has anything to do with it?" asked Abdullah.

"When we are scared, we do act differently. Sometimes we cry, sometimes we get angry and sometimes we pretend that we are not scared," said Bibi Jan. "I wonder if your friend is scared about what is going to happen."



"I thought that he was angry with me and I have been leaving him alone." Abdullah was puzzled. "What should I do, Bibi Jan?"

Bibi Jan looked kindly into her grandson's eyes. "It's hard for young men to be scared. We expect them to be brave all the time. I think that your friend would like you to be his friend, not leave him alone. Ask him to come to visit you and perhaps you can invite him home and talk quietly together. Maybe share some dried fruit. Spending time with a close friend is a good solution to being scared." Bibi Jan patted Abdullah's shoulder.

"I think that you should both go to the Mosque together and pray. This too will help your friendship strengthen," added Kaka Ghulam.

"Thank you both for your wise words, but I need to go now to tend the animals." Abdullah felt happier because he now knew how to help his friend.

"I, too, need to go. It's time for afternoon prayers." Kaka Ghulam used his cane to help himself to his feet and walked slowly out of the gate.

Jameela had sat quietly listening to her grandmother's words.

"Bibi, do you ever get scared?" asked Jameela.

"We all are frightened at some time. Do you get frightened sometimes?" Bibi Jan asked gently.



"Sometimes, I don't want to go to sleep. I lie down in my bed and try to stay awake as long as possible but the more tired I get, the more scared I am." Jameela's voice was very quiet; her tears shone in the sunlight.

"What is frightening you, Jameela, my love?" Bibi Jan touched Jameela's face and looked into her eyes.

"I'm scared because sometimes when I go to sleep, I have dreams about Ahmed and me out in the fields and there is a big explosion and I jump up and I'm scared but I am happy that I am in my bed and not in the field." The words tumbled out. Jameela's eyes were wide and her lips trembled. "And I have to look to make sure that Ahmed is safe and asleep. Then I try not to sleep but I know I will and I get scared." Jameela felt herself starting to cry and fell into her Grandmother's arms.

"Jameela, thank you for telling me about your bad dreams," Bibi Jan said. "Talking to someone you love about your fears is the first thing to do when you want to feel better. I know many different ways to help your fears get smaller and smaller and finally get so small you will hardly notice them," smiled Bibi Jan. Jameela's face began to brighten. She knew by Bibi Jan's voice that they were about to have some fun.

"First, Jameela, take my cane. Now, draw in the dirt a picture of the scariest monster you ever could imagine.... That's it, big and mean and scary. Maybe you should give it some horns

and ugly teeth... Yes, good. I am sure that monster has very bad breath. Now, Jameela, with your feet, stomp on it, and rub out the monster. That's it. The monster is all gone. You made the monster and you made it go away. Now do that with your scary dream," directed Bibi Jan. Jameela's smile faded from her face. "You can make it and you can make it go away. Try it!"

Jameela drew a big explosion in the dirt. She drew wiggly lines all around it.

"Those are my scared feelings," she said.

"Good, Jameela, they look like scared feelings. Now, just like the monster, rub it all out with your feet. Keep going until it's all gone. Good! You did it," said Bibi Jan proudly.

"My bad dream is gone. I want to do it again!" and Jameela drew an even bigger explosion with even bigger scary feelings and then scuffed them away with her feet.

"Now, draw you and Ahmed safe in your beds, just a small picture because we will leave this one for everyone to see. If you find that the rain has washed it away, you can draw it again, or place little stones on your picture so that it will stay longer. Later you can draw it on some paper to show your Mama," said Bibi Jan. "And Jameela, if you are scared at night, just squeeze my hand, and I will tell you I love you, you are safe with Bibi."

Jameela quickly collected small stones and pebbles and set them in the lines of her drawing of Jameela and Ahmed. Many little pebbles made up their big smiles. She placed a circle of stones all around her picture so everyone would notice and smile too.

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Things to Talk About:

1. How can we help our friends when they are going through difficult times? Has this happened to you?
2. Do you have scary nightmares? Sometimes it helps to tell about them.

Things to Do:

1. If you have nightmares that come back again and again, you could try to do exactly what Jameela did.
2. If you're overwhelmed with work the way Abdullah is, you could try asking for help. Sometimes it's available and sometimes it's not, but it may be worth asking.

