

A Journey of Peace

Story 5

Yunus's Song

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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**”.

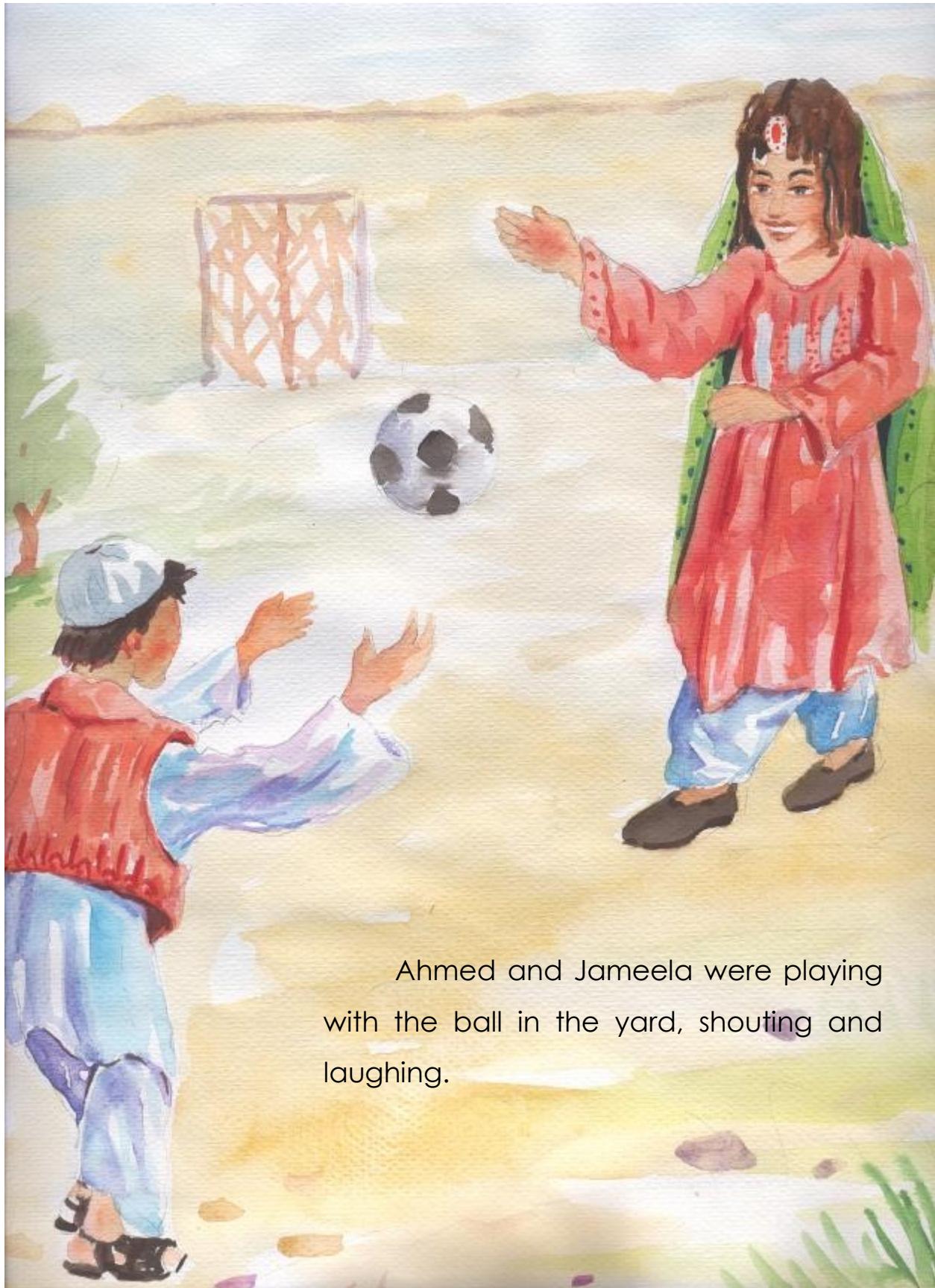
Healing Elements:

Healing images and symbols: playfulness, laughter, love.

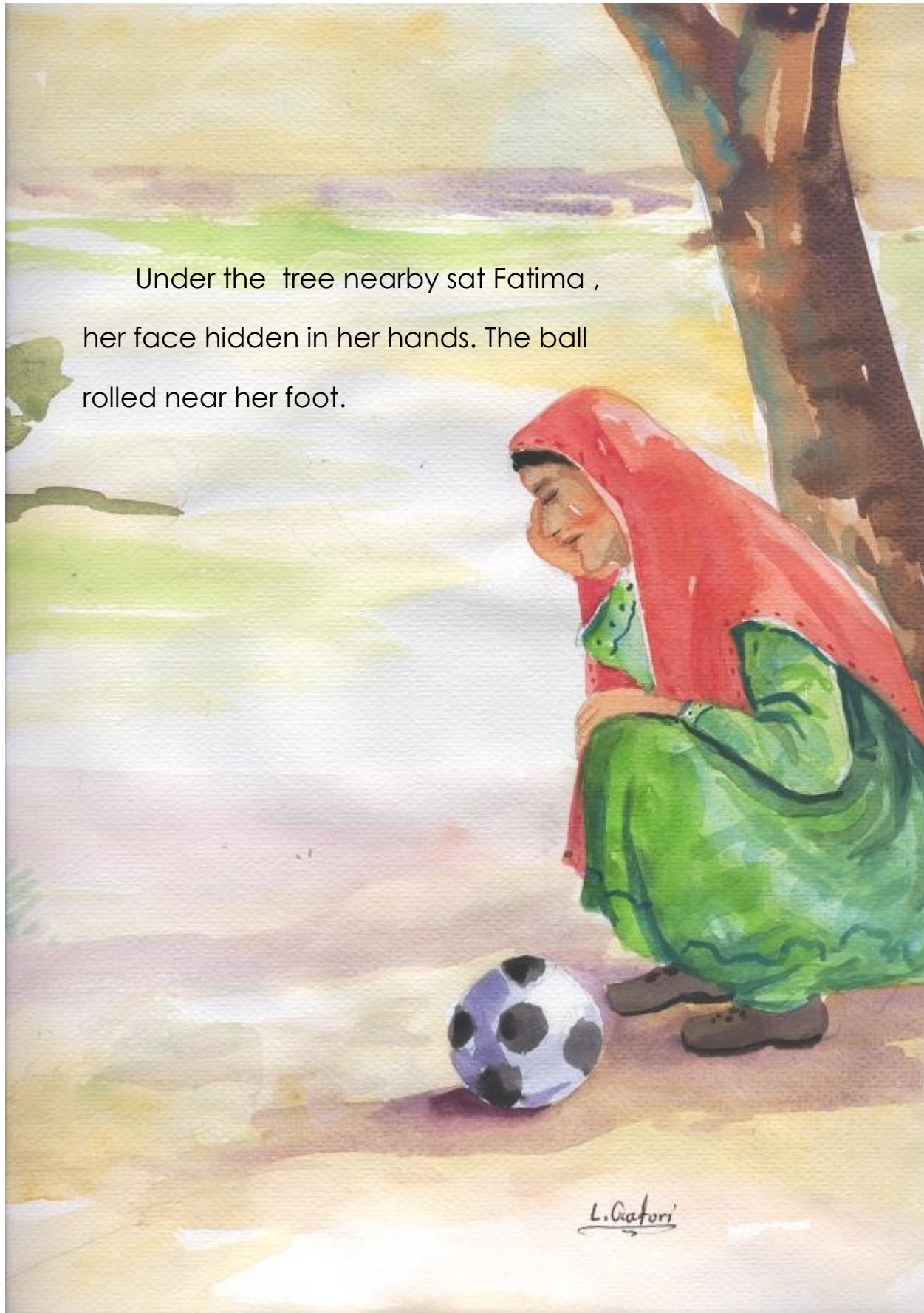
Modeling of peaceful and virtuous interactions: industry, empathy, teaching.

Problem Issues: grief and loss.

Healing Strategies: humor, trying to make others happy, encouraging sharing of sadness and memories, finding a new role for the bereaved.

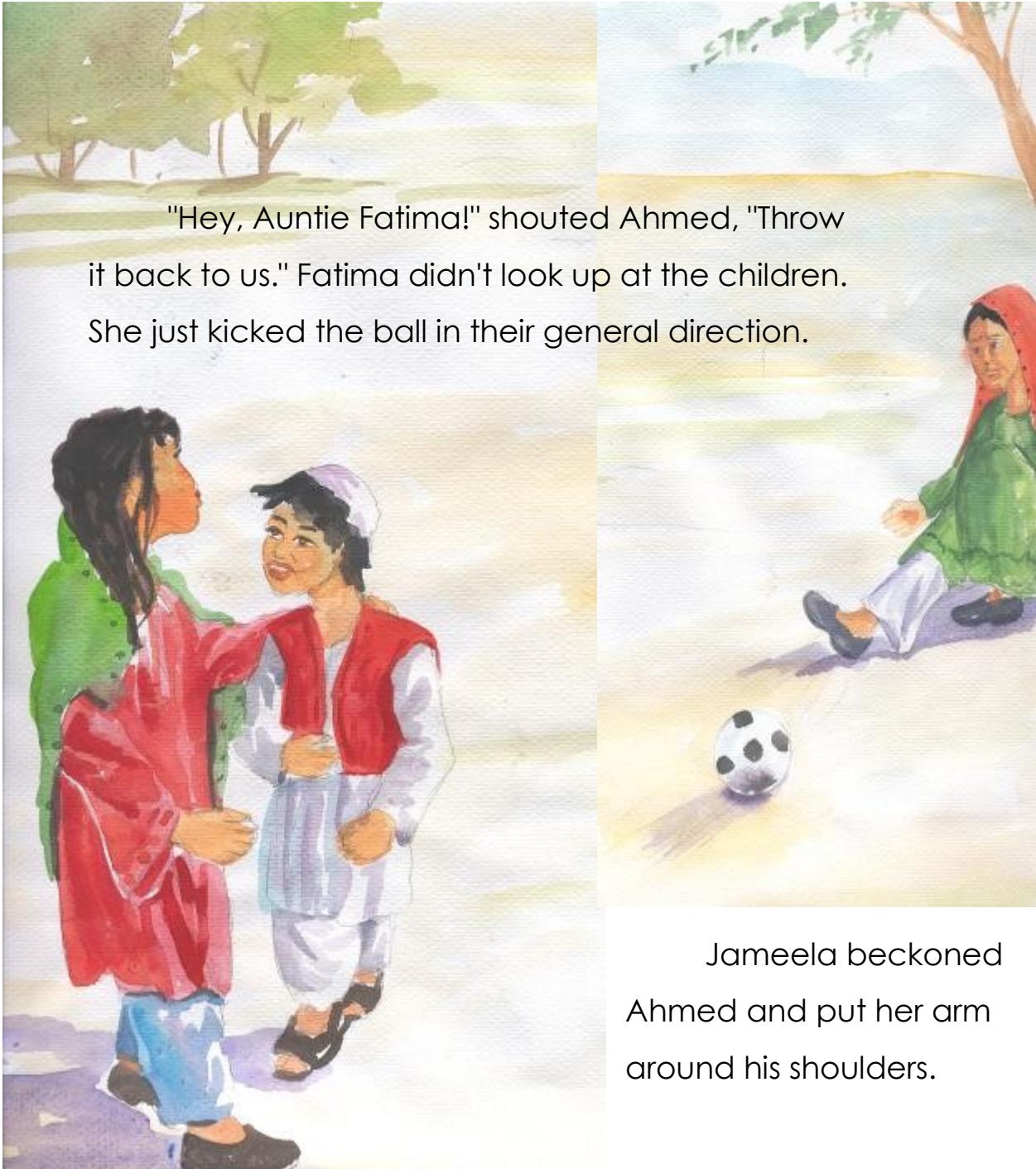


Ahmed and Jameela were playing with the ball in the yard, shouting and laughing.



Under the tree nearby sat Fatima ,
her face hidden in her hands. The ball
rolled near her foot.

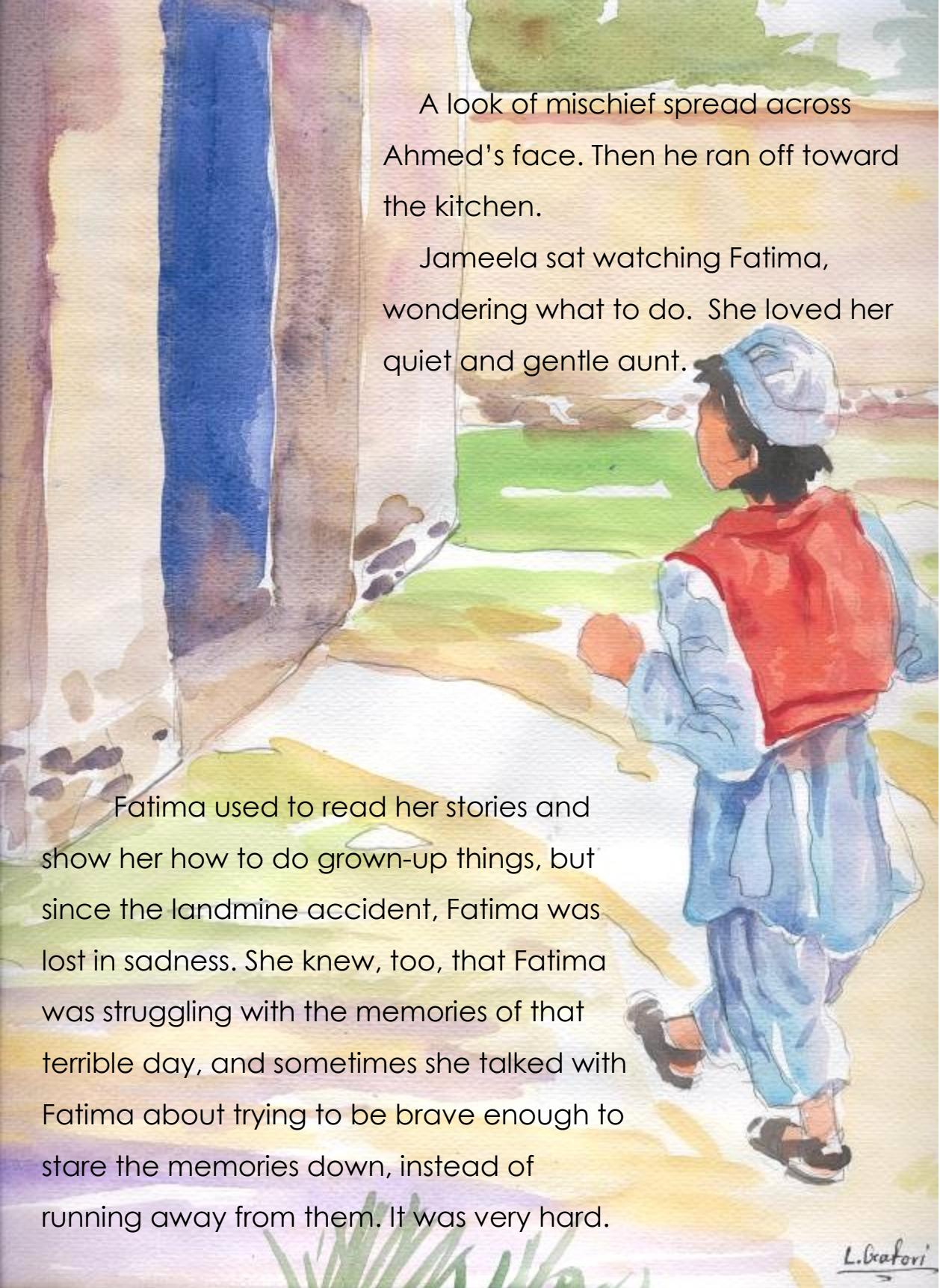
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"Hey, Auntie Fatima!" shouted Ahmed, "Throw it back to us." Fatima didn't look up at the children. She just kicked the ball in their general direction.

Jameela beckoned Ahmed and put her arm around his shoulders.

"I think she's crying," Jameela whispered.
"Yeah, she cries a lot," said Ahmed. "She doesn't play with us any more, the way she used to."

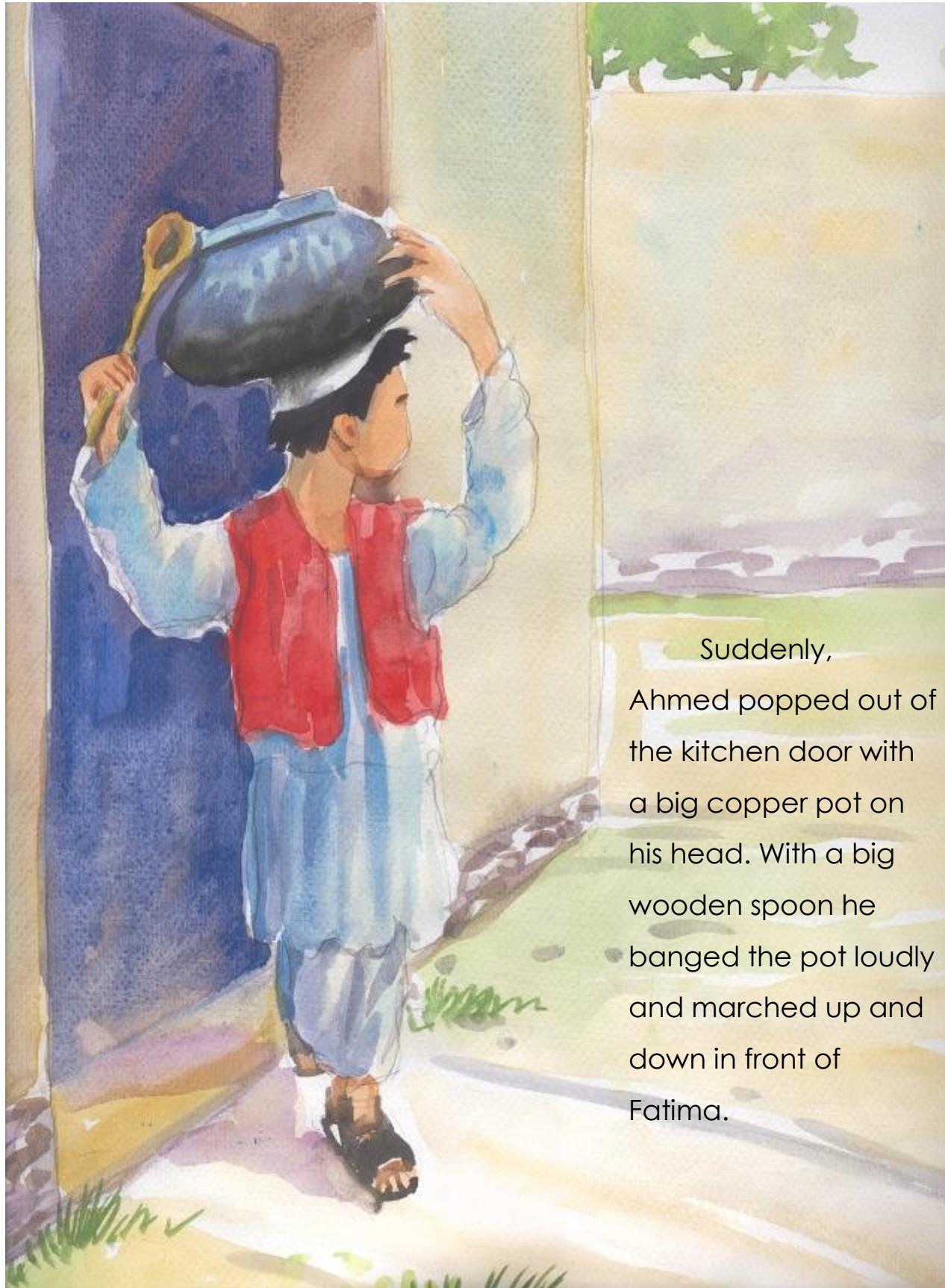


A look of mischief spread across
Ahmed's face. Then he ran off toward
the kitchen.

Jameela sat watching Fatima,
wondering what to do. She loved her
quiet and gentle aunt.

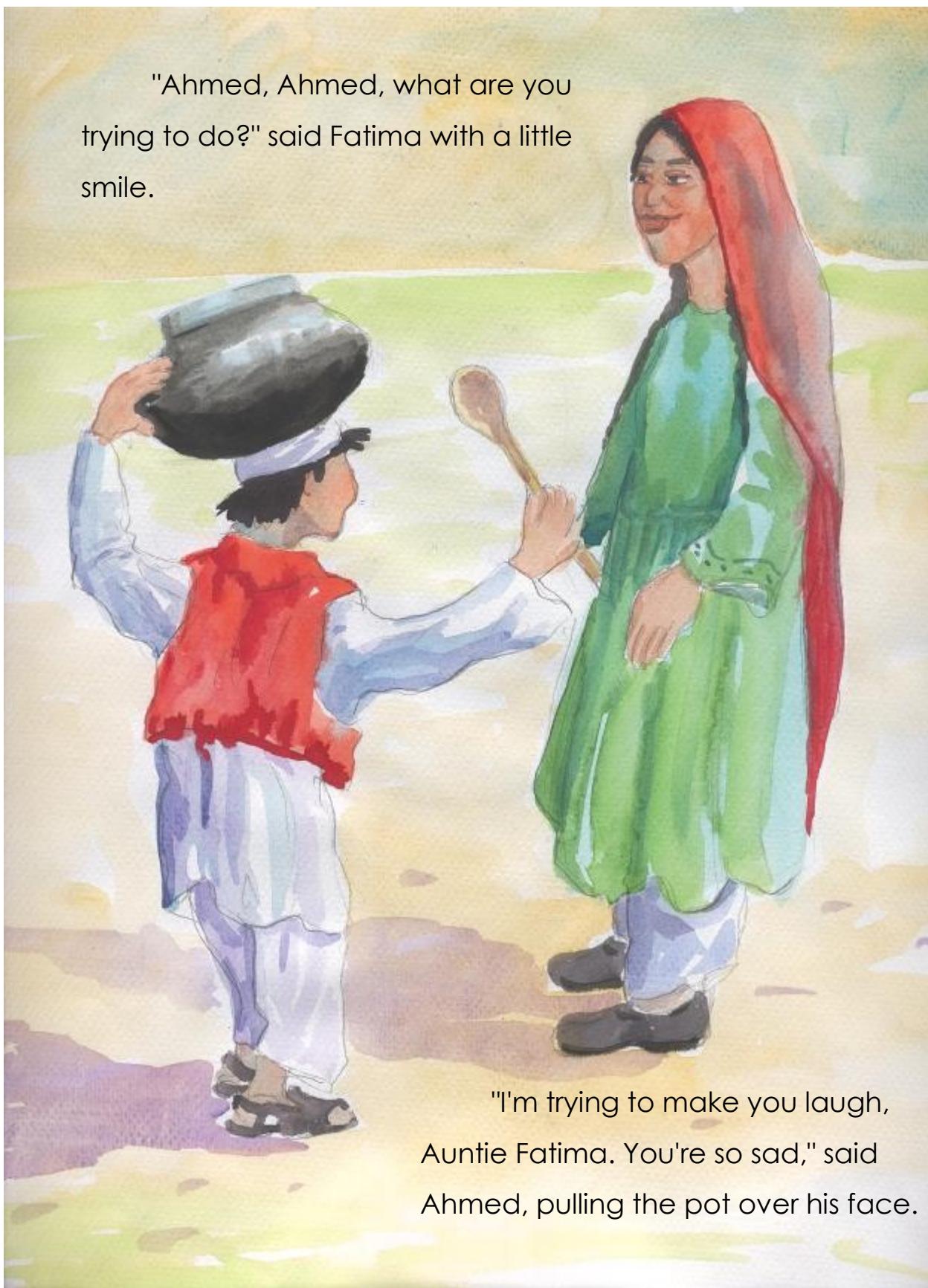
Fatima used to read her stories and
show her how to do grown-up things, but
since the landmine accident, Fatima was
lost in sadness. She knew, too, that Fatima
was struggling with the memories of that
terrible day, and sometimes she talked with
Fatima about trying to be brave enough to
stare the memories down, instead of
running away from them. It was very hard.

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Suddenly,
Ahmed popped out of
the kitchen door with
a big copper pot on
his head. With a big
wooden spoon he
banged the pot loudly
and marched up and
down in front of
Fatima.

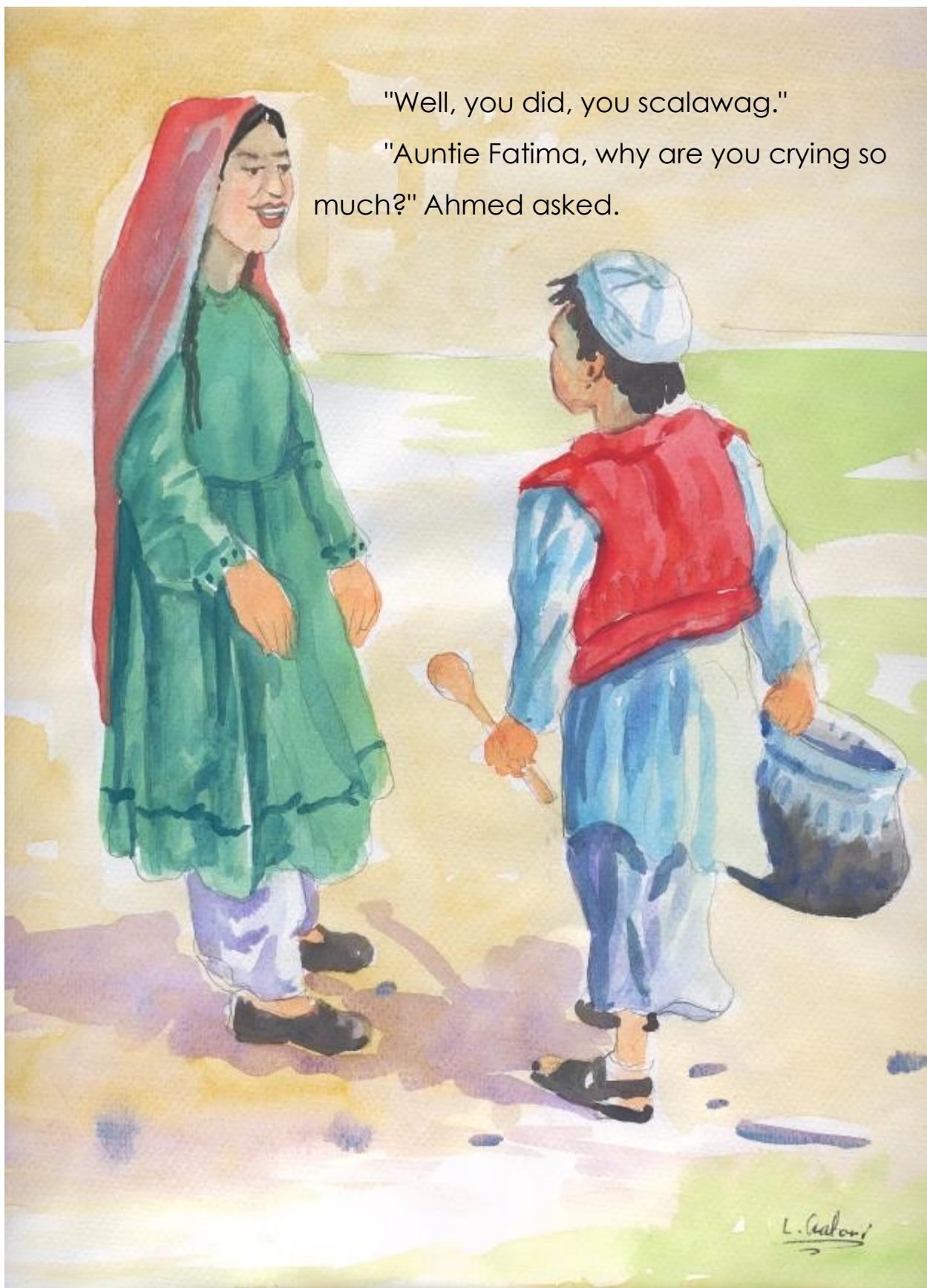
"Ahmed, Ahmed, what are you trying to do?" said Fatima with a little smile.

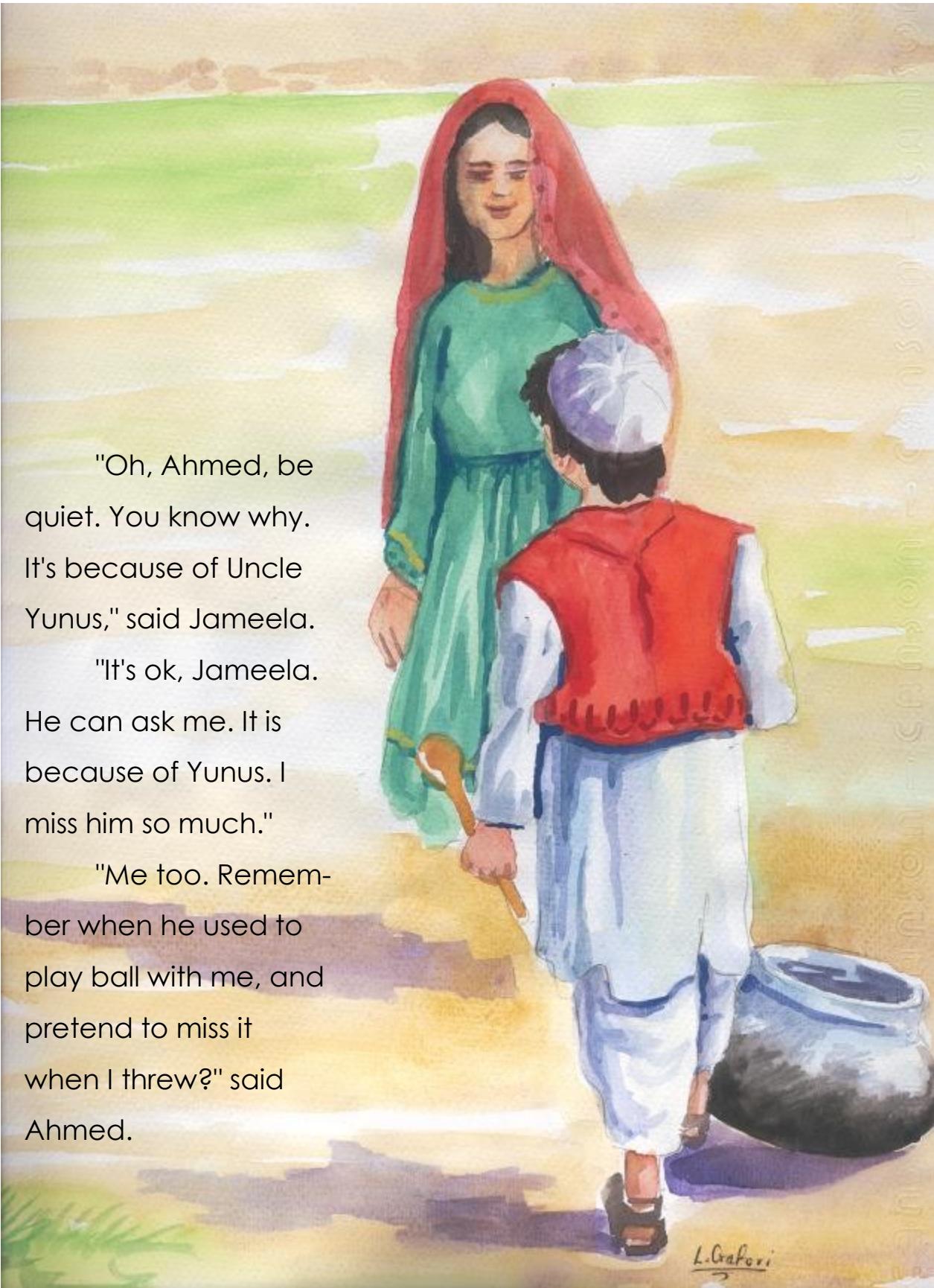


"I'm trying to make you laugh, Auntie Fatima. You're so sad," said Ahmed, pulling the pot over his face.

"Well, you did, you scalawag."

"Auntie Fatima, why are you crying so much?" Ahmed asked.





"Oh, Ahmed, be quiet. You know why. It's because of Uncle Yunus," said Jameela.

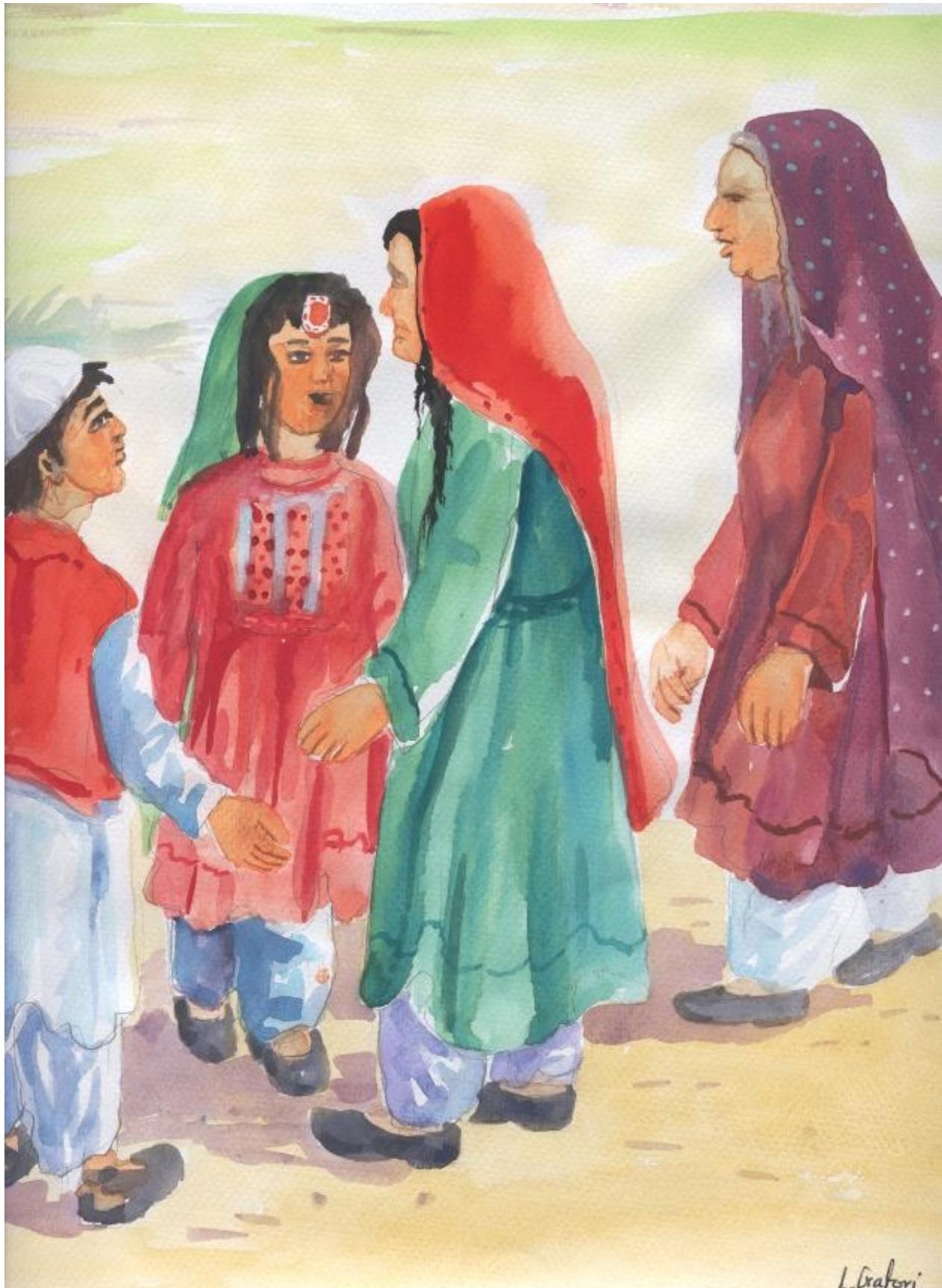
"It's ok, Jameela. He can ask me. It is because of Yunus. I miss him so much."

"Me too. Remember when he used to play ball with me, and pretend to miss it when I threw?" said Ahmed.



"And when he'd chase me around the well?" said
Jameela.

Fatima broke down in tears again.
"Oh no. We've made her cry again. Oh, we're sorry,
Auntie Fatima. We won't mention Uncle Yunus again."
Jameela's eyes welled up as Fatima cried.



Bibi Jan drew near. "It's alright to cry. It's good to share memories. It's good to talk about the things we loved about Yunus. There were so many things to love about him. Fatima, remember the day you were married and he was teasing you so much during the wedding? He said he thought he was the cleverest person in the family until you came into it, and now he was sure you were the cleverest. I thought you would burst with blushing."



He was proud that I had an education...but I don't know what use it is now, or what use I am at all..." Fatima looked down at the sewing in her lap.

"Auntie Fatima, you could teach me reading and writing. Uncle Yunus wanted me to be educated too. He said so. Could you, Auntie?" begged Jameela.

"Oh yes, Jameela. I'd really like to. Could I, Bibi?" asked Fatima, hopefully.

"I think Yunus would really have liked that. Why don't you two find some time each day when the chores are done? But Fatima, I want to say more to you about what we're all going through."

"Bibi," said Fatima, "I don't want to burden you at all. It's terrible for you. He was your youngest son, and so wonderful," Fatima said, wiping away her tears.

"Fatima, dear, it is terrible, for both of us - mother and wife. So we can help each other. I don't feel like grieving alone. I want to share the good memories of my son with you. You loved him so much and made him so happy. Sometimes, let's have a cup of tea after supper, and some of my special dried fruit. We can look at the photos of Yunus and remember our happy days with him. Let's do that tonight, Fatima."

Fatima nodded, too full of feelings to speak.

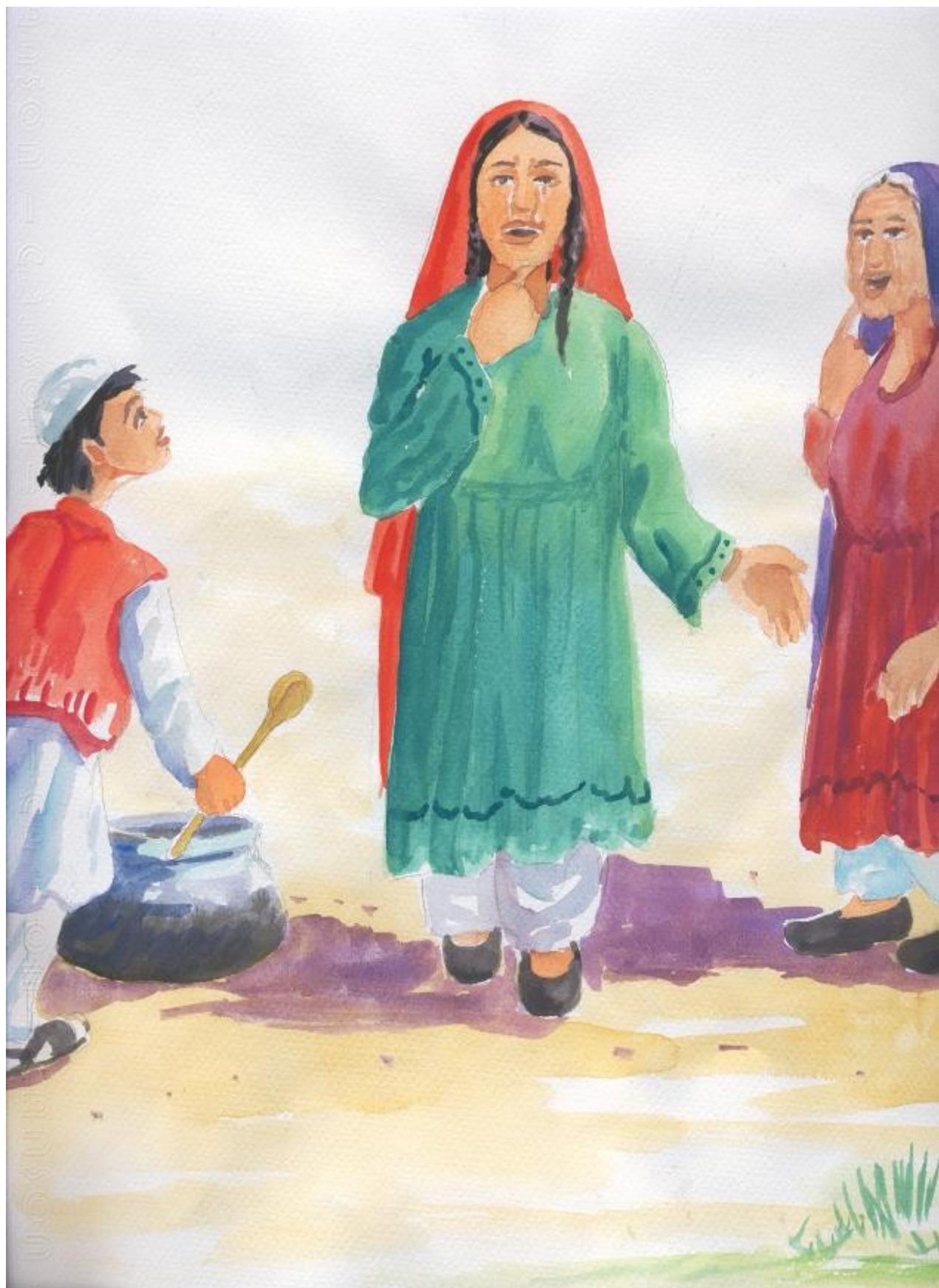
"Will you do me a special favour tonight then?" said Bibi Jan. "Will you wear the lovely necklace he gave to you? I'd so like to see it on your neck again, and to remember his delight."

Fatima nodded again.



Ahmed said, "Auntie Fatima, do you remember that funny song Yunus used to sing to me?"

Fatima began to sing the song. Bibi Jan and the children joined in, Ahmed banging the rhythm on the pot, all of them smiling at each other in their memories and with tears running down their cheeks.



Yunus's Song

Things to Talk About:

How do you show others how you feel? Do you cry when you are sad, laugh when you are happy? How do you know when someone else is sad, or lonely, or angry, or happy?

If you feel sad or angry or lonely because someone you love has died, try to talk to someone you trust about how you feel. It helps to let the feelings out. If someone you know feels upset because someone they love has died, try to be a good listener to their feelings.

