

A Journey of Peace

Story 8

Reconciliation

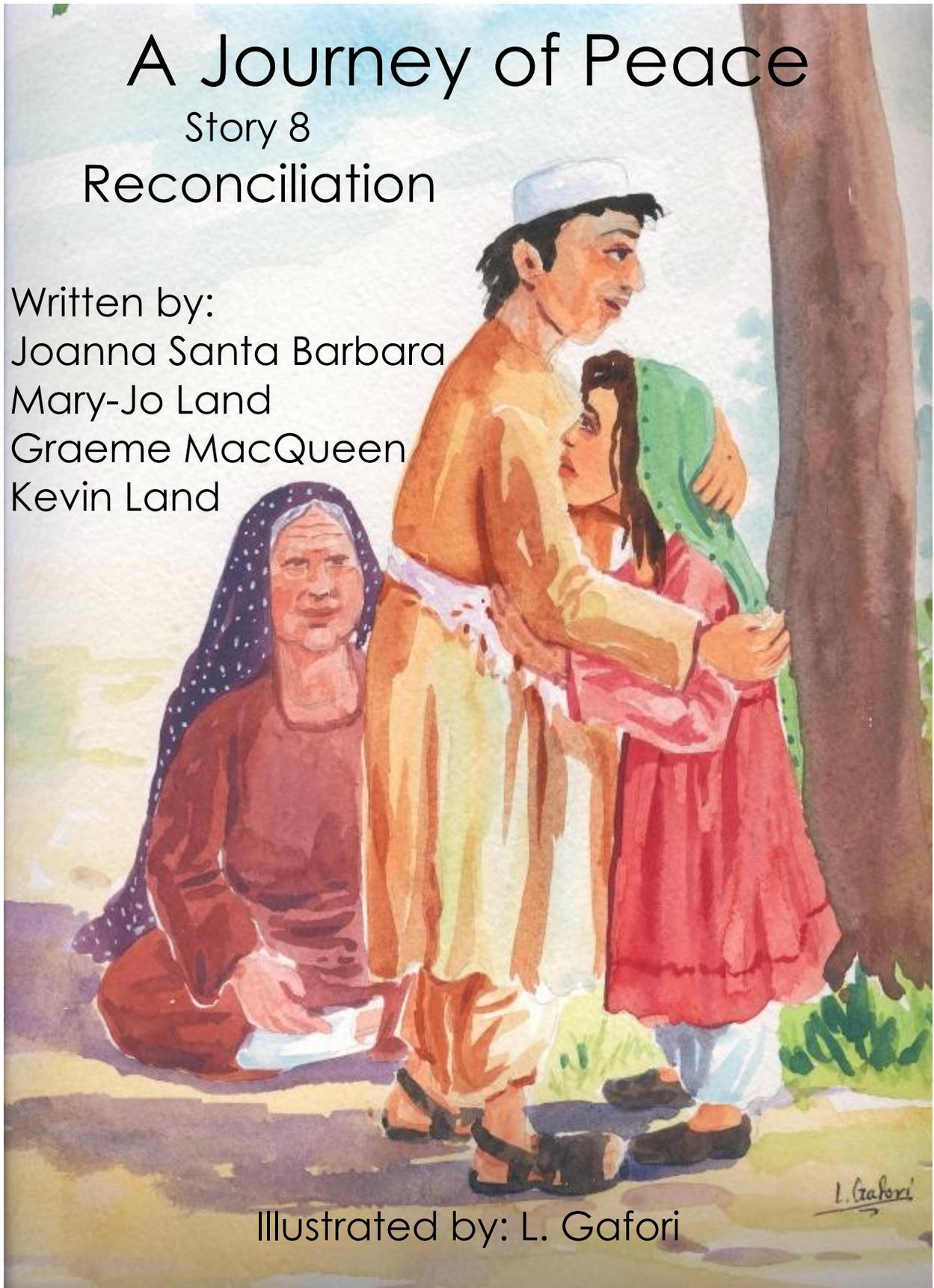
Written by:

Joanna Santa Barbara

Mary-Jo Land

Graeme MacQueen

Kevin Land



Illustrated by: L. Gafori

Story 8

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Second Edition

Written by: Dr. Joanna Santa Barbara
Mary-Jo Land
Dr. Graeme MacQueen
Kevin Arthur Land

Character Design: Yar Mohammad Taraky
Illustrated by: Mr. Gafori
Edited by: Mary-Jo Land and Kevin Arthur Land
Project Coordinators:
Dr. Seddiq Weera and Dr. Graeme MacQueen

Centre for Peace Studies,
McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada

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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**”.

Healing Elements:

Healing images and symbols: restoring harmony.

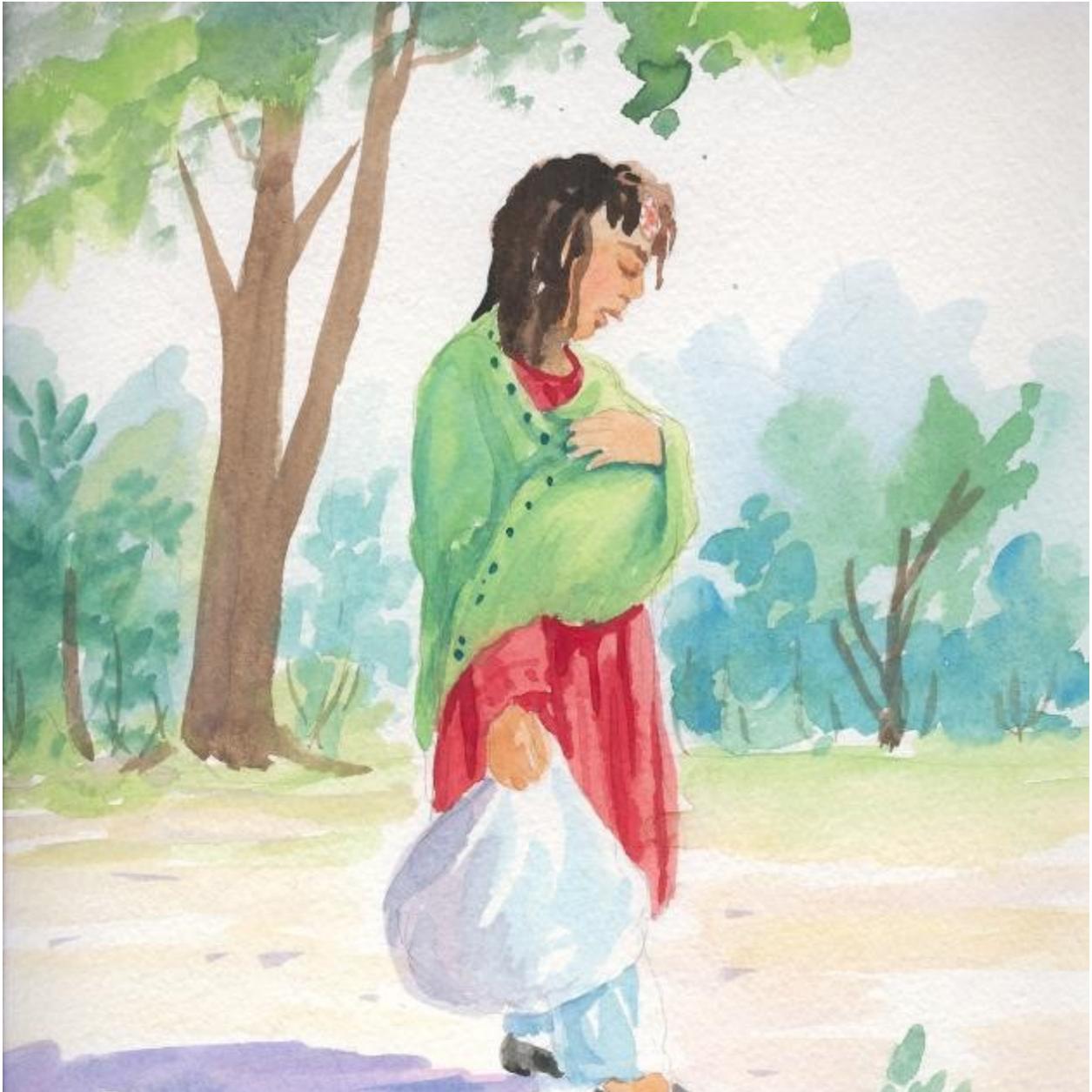
Modeling of peaceful and virtuous interactions: cooperation, listening, being non-judgmental, giving, empathy.

Problem Issues: anger, taking anger out on another person, hostility in a relationship, holding a grudge, stubbornness, shame.

Healing Strategies: helping a person empathize with the person that he or she has wronged, mediating reconciliation, apologizing, asking for and granting forgiveness, compensating for wrong-doing.

Huddled on the floor in a corner of the classroom that was now a temporary home for eleven families, Abdullah could not sleep. The events of the day swirled around him like angry ghosts. In the darkness, he could not tell if anyone else in his family was still awake, but if anyone deserved to be, it was Jameela. She had treated him like a leper since the day they arrived, and he knew why. But he was not to blame for what happened. In many ways, he was now a man in the family and he would have to make some difficult decisions that position required, even if it meant feeling the wrath of his little sister.

It all started three days ago...



The sky was gray, so the heat was bearable. The dusty road stretched through an area of low trees and bushes. Ahead trudged Jameela. She was carrying bundles heavy for a ten-year-old. Her shawl was wrapped around her shoulders. Her head was bent over and she seemed to be murmuring something into her shawl.

"Maybe she's gone mad with the stress," thought Abdullah. He drew closer behind her, silently.

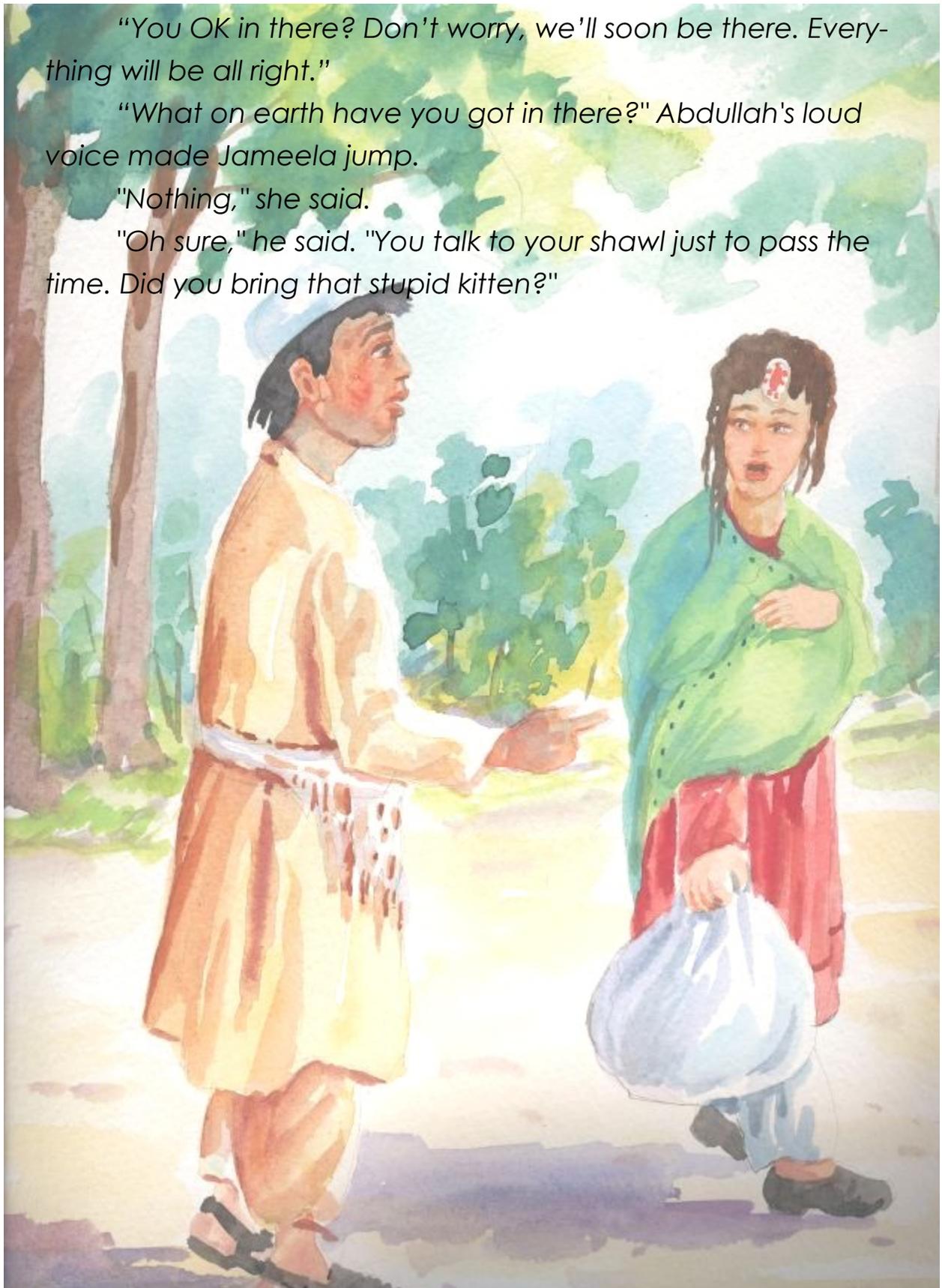
"How's it going, little kitty?" Abdullah heard her whispering.

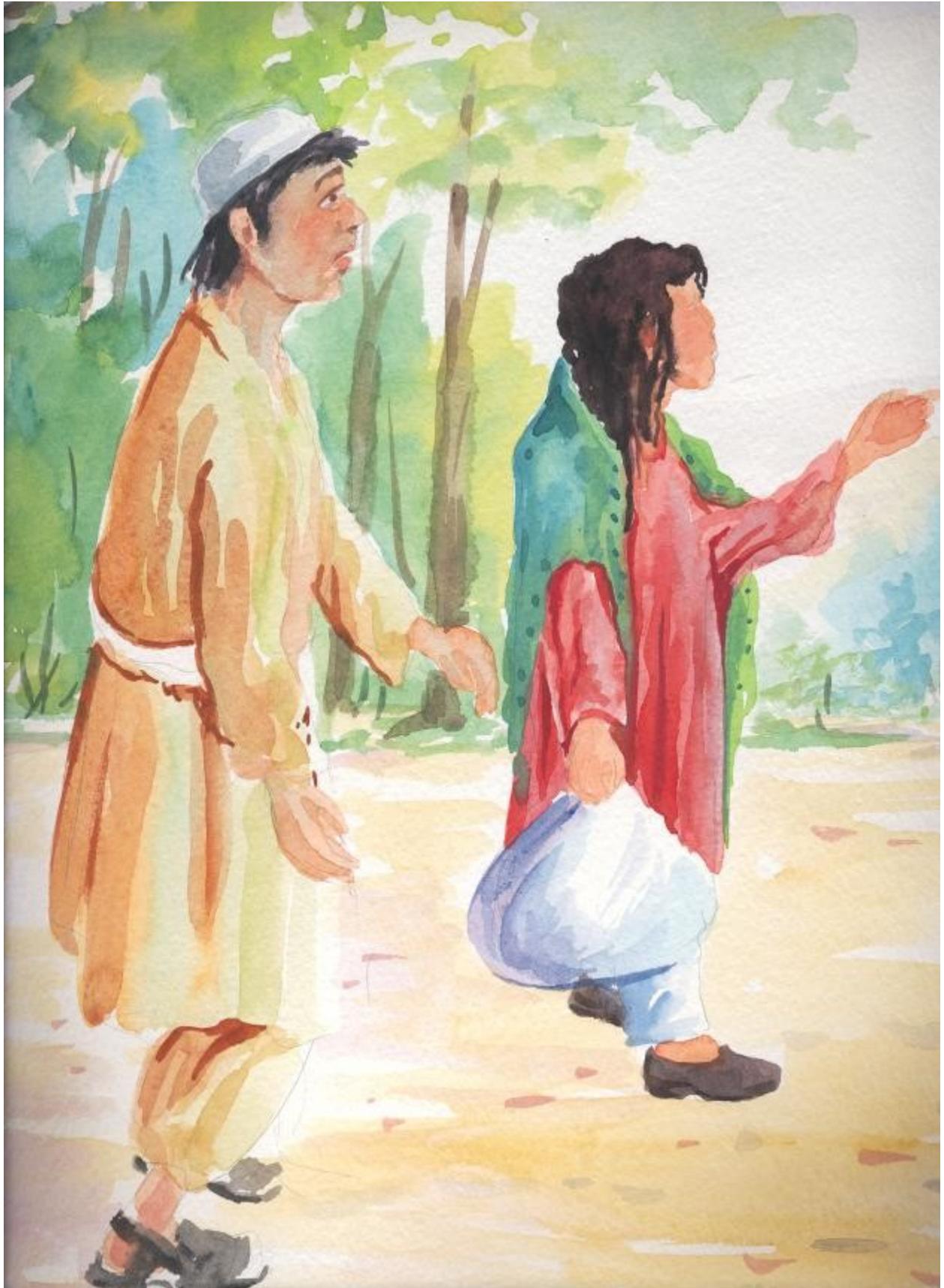
"You OK in there? Don't worry, we'll soon be there. Everything will be all right."

"What on earth have you got in there?" Abdullah's loud voice made Jameela jump.

"Nothing," she said.

"Oh sure," he said. "You talk to your shawl just to pass the time. Did you bring that stupid kitten?"





"It isn't stupid, and yes, I did bring it. You know how Ahmed loves it. And I love it. And it'd probably die if we left it behind. Leave me alone."

"It'll probably die if it comes with us, or someone will eat it. Get it through your head, girl. We're refugees. Displaced persons. We're not going on a nice holiday." Abdullah snatched the kitten out of Jameela's shawl, ran off the road into the bushes, and threw it into the undergrowth...

What was he to do? These were dangerous times and this was no place for a kitten.

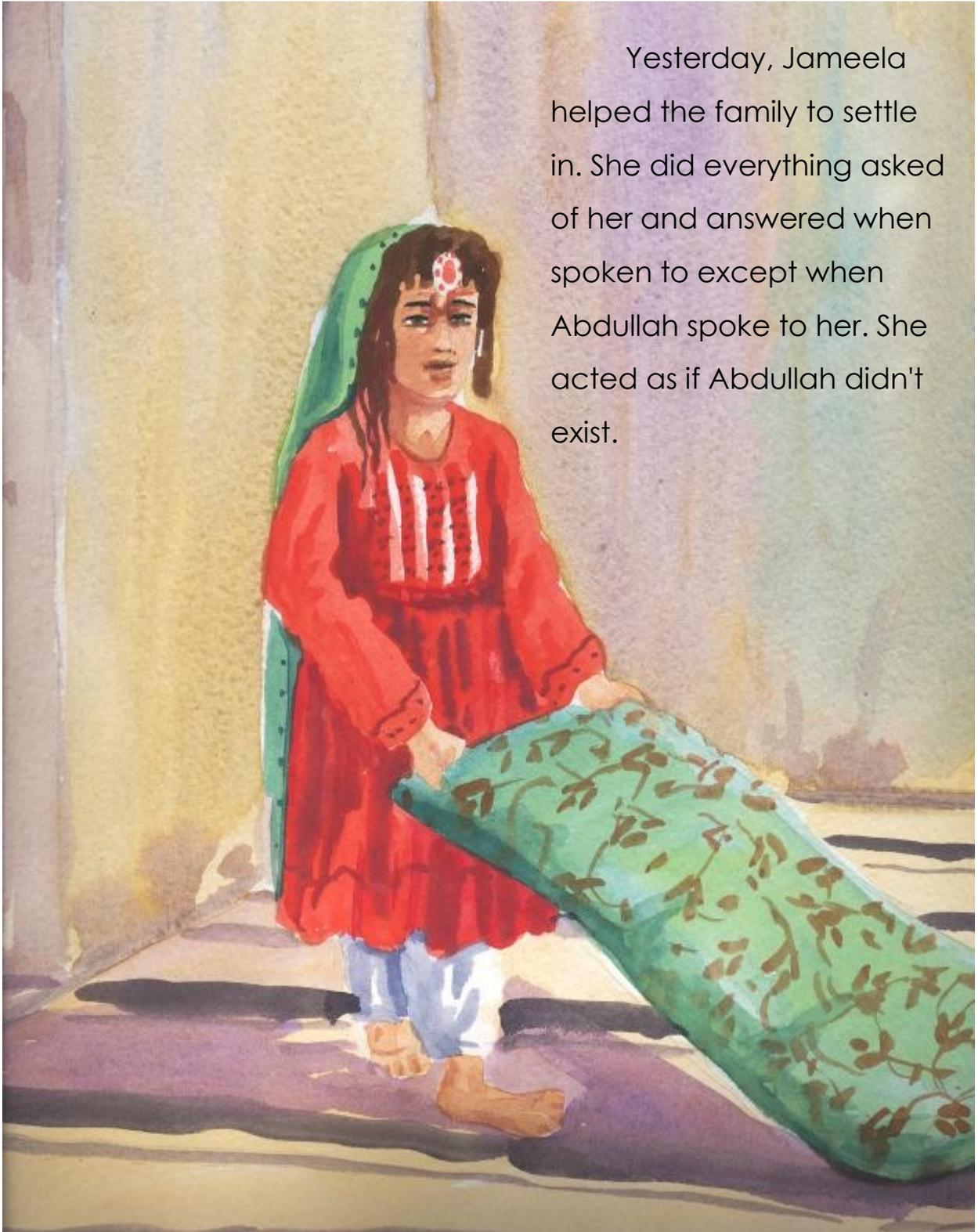


A few feet away, also unable to sleep, Jameela felt very much alone. She was still very angry with Abdullah, and she could not look at him without feeling her temper flare. She did not like this feeling. She would much rather get along with everyone. It would be nice to forgive him, but he was simply too mean to be forgiven. It was one thing to throw the kitten into the bushes, but what Abdullah did after just made matters worse.

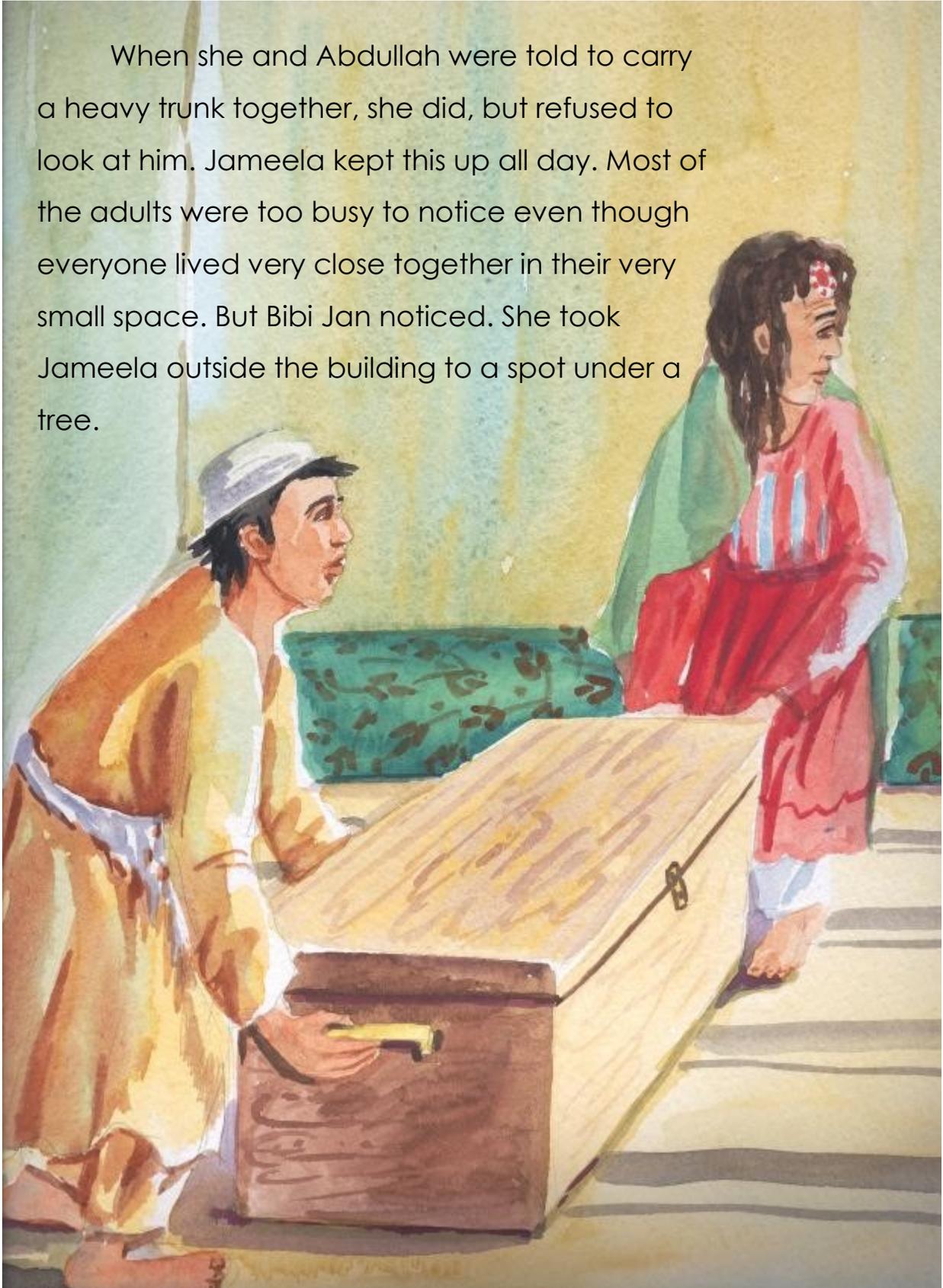
Jameela remembered that she had put down her bundle and run to find the kitten. Abdullah had blocked her. She had run at Abdullah and he had pushed her over into the dirt. Jameela sobbed. Daddy had shouted at them, telling them to hurry or they'd miss the bus. He had told Jameela to stop crying; there was no time for that nonsense now.

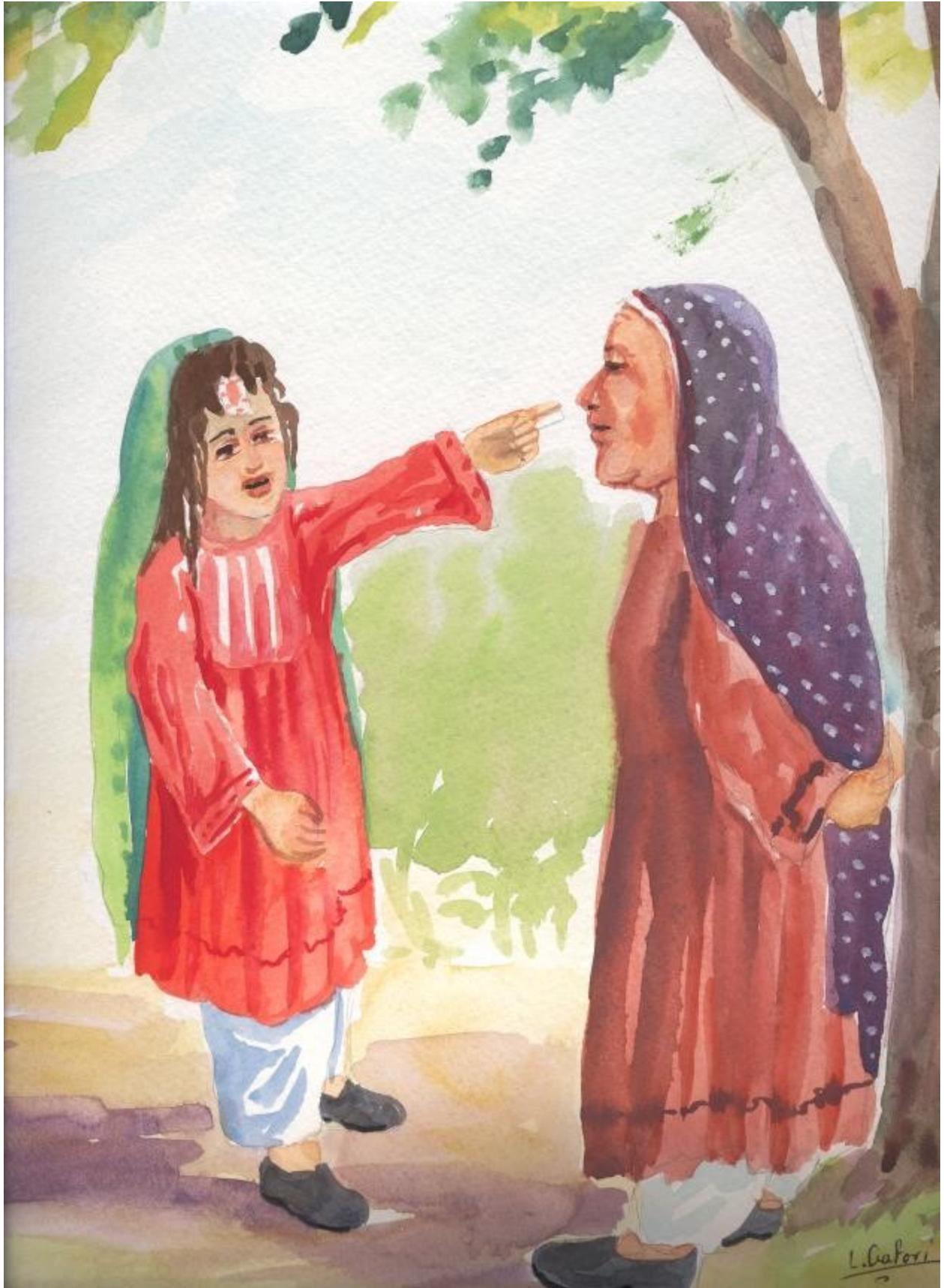
Jameela remembered saying to Abdullah, "I hate you. I wish you were dead" and vowing to herself that she would never speak to Abdullah again. She would not regard him as her brother.

Yesterday, Jameela helped the family to settle in. She did everything asked of her and answered when spoken to except when Abdullah spoke to her. She acted as if Abdullah didn't exist.



When she and Abdullah were told to carry a heavy trunk together, she did, but refused to look at him. Jameela kept this up all day. Most of the adults were too busy to notice even though everyone lived very close together in their very small space. But Bibi Jan noticed. She took Jameela outside the building to a spot under a tree.





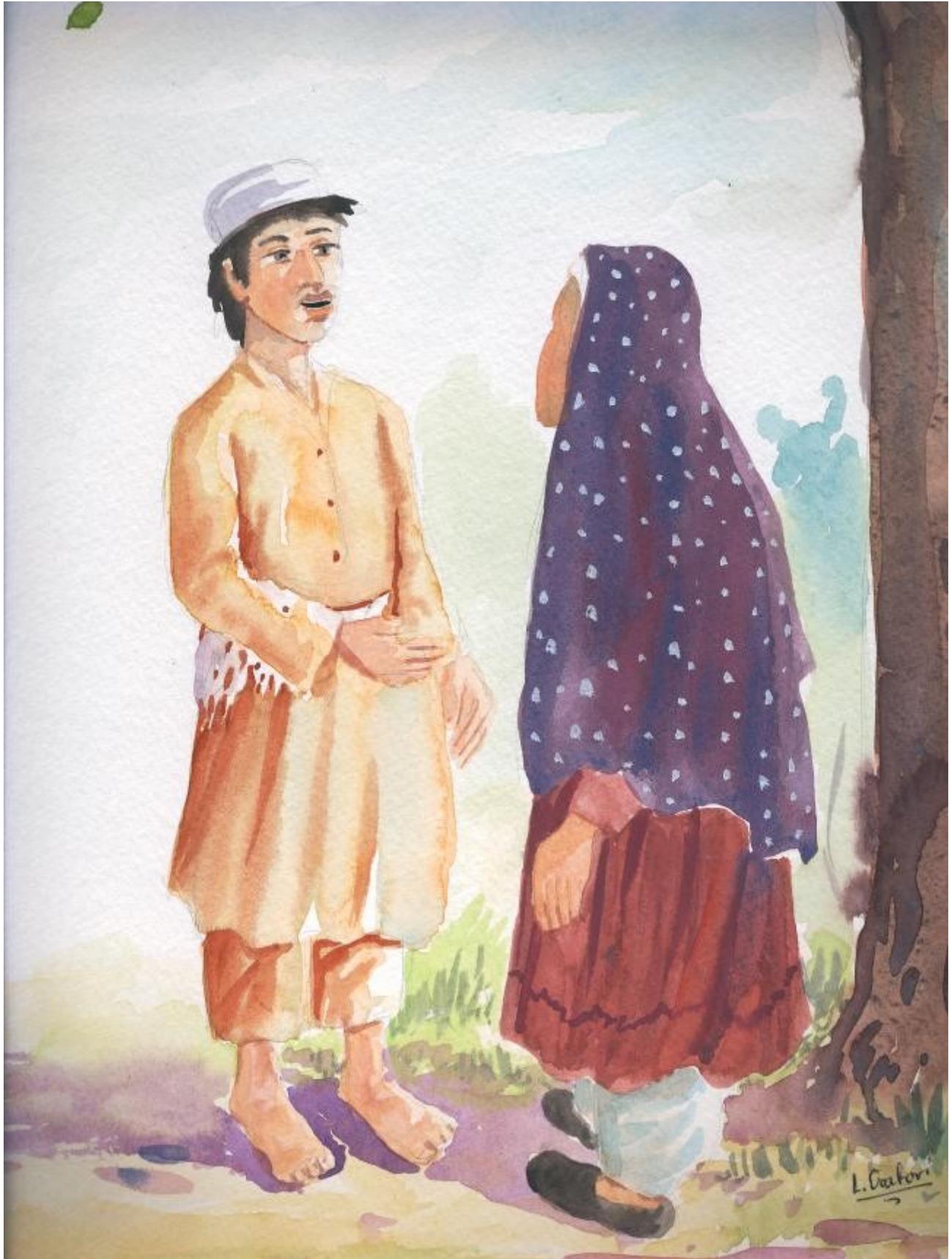
"What's wrong, my little Jameela?"

"Nothing, Bibi. What do you mean?"

"Just that you're not talking to Abdullah. Something isn't right between you."

"Oh, Bibi, he killed my kitten. Well, it's Ahmed's kitten. He doesn't know about this yet. I hate Abdullah. I don't want him for a brother."

"Jameela, Jameela, these are strong words. Tell me just what happened." Bibi Jan listened carefully. "Hmmm, that certainly was a serious wrong," she said when Jameela had finished. "I'll talk to Abdullah about this. I promise."



The next day, Bibi Jan took Abdullah out to sit under the same tree. She asked Abdullah to tell her what happened about the kitten.

"Jameela is so stupid, she thought she could keep a kitten in a place like this."

"Was it your business to decide whether that kitten should live or die?" asked Bibi Jan.

"Well, no. I guess not."

"Do you have any idea how your sister is feeling?"

"Pretty angry with me, I guess."

"Yes, and very sad too. She's a tenderhearted girl, Abdullah. I want you to understand that. She loved that little kitten and helped Ahmed to care for it. She's very, very upset."

Abdullah was silent.

"What got into you, Abdullah, to do such a thing?"

"I don't know, Bibi. I was angry and sad about leaving home. I felt as if I was losing everything, all the things I cared about at home. And then I saw Jameela. She had something she cared about from home. I was jealous." Abdullah paused a long time. "I shouldn't have done it."

"No, you shouldn't have. Any ideas about what you can do about this?"

"I don't know. I do love her, I guess, as a sister. And now she hates me."

"Well, it's up to you to do something about reconciling. First you should apologize. Can you do that?"

"I guess," Abdullah gave a tight smile. "It isn't easy, to a sister."

"No, but if you want a loving relationship, you have to. Then you have to ask her to forgive you. Can you do that?"

"That too? OK. Anything else?"

"Then you should try to find a gift to compensate a little for the loss you caused. You probably can't make it up completely; because that was a particular little kitten she loved. But you can do your best."

"Sounds fair enough," said Abdullah. "I'll try, Bibi."

Later, Abdullah showed Bibi Jan a story-book he got from an aid organization in the camp. It was about right for Jameela's reading level, or perhaps a little above. It had been carefully chosen. "What should I do now, Bibi?" he asked. "Just give it to her."

"No, she might throw it back at you. You two have some talking to do first. You go to our tree and I'll get Jameela."



Jameela was reluctant to come with her grandmother.



She said she was never going to talk to Abdullah again, and it was no use trying to make her. "You don't have to talk," Bibi Jan said, "Just listen." Bibi Jan sat them down on either side of her. Jameela wouldn't look at Abdullah.

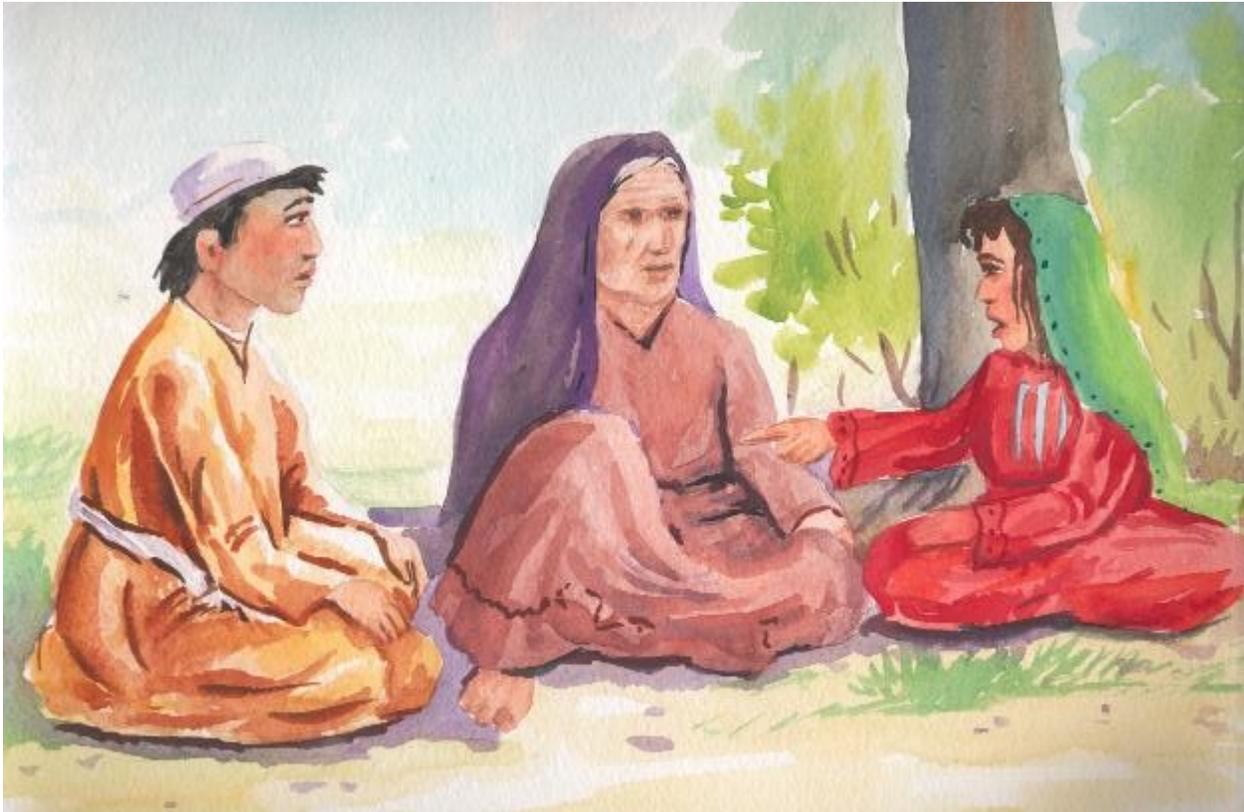
"Abdullah, you have things you want to say to Jameela, so you can start."

"I don't want to listen to that person, whatever he might say," said Jameela, looking in the opposite direction from Abdullah.

"Jameela, listen," said Bibi Jan

"Well, Jameela, on that day, I was feeling really lousy and angry and sad..."





Jameela said coolly to her grandmother, "Please tell that person that I don't care how he was feeling. He is nothing to me." Then she turned suddenly and faced Abdullah and yelled, "You killed my kitten!"

"Well, I didn't really kill it. It might be still alive. And after all it couldn't have lived in this place."

"Abdullah, are you listening to your sister or are you making excuses for yourself?" asked Bibi Jan.

"Jameela, what I did was wrong, and I'm truly sorry," said Abdullah.

"You are? You never, ever apologized to me for anything before. Are you really sorry?"

"I'm really, truly sorry. I wish I hadn't done it. I realize it hurt you very much, and I don't really want to hurt my sister."

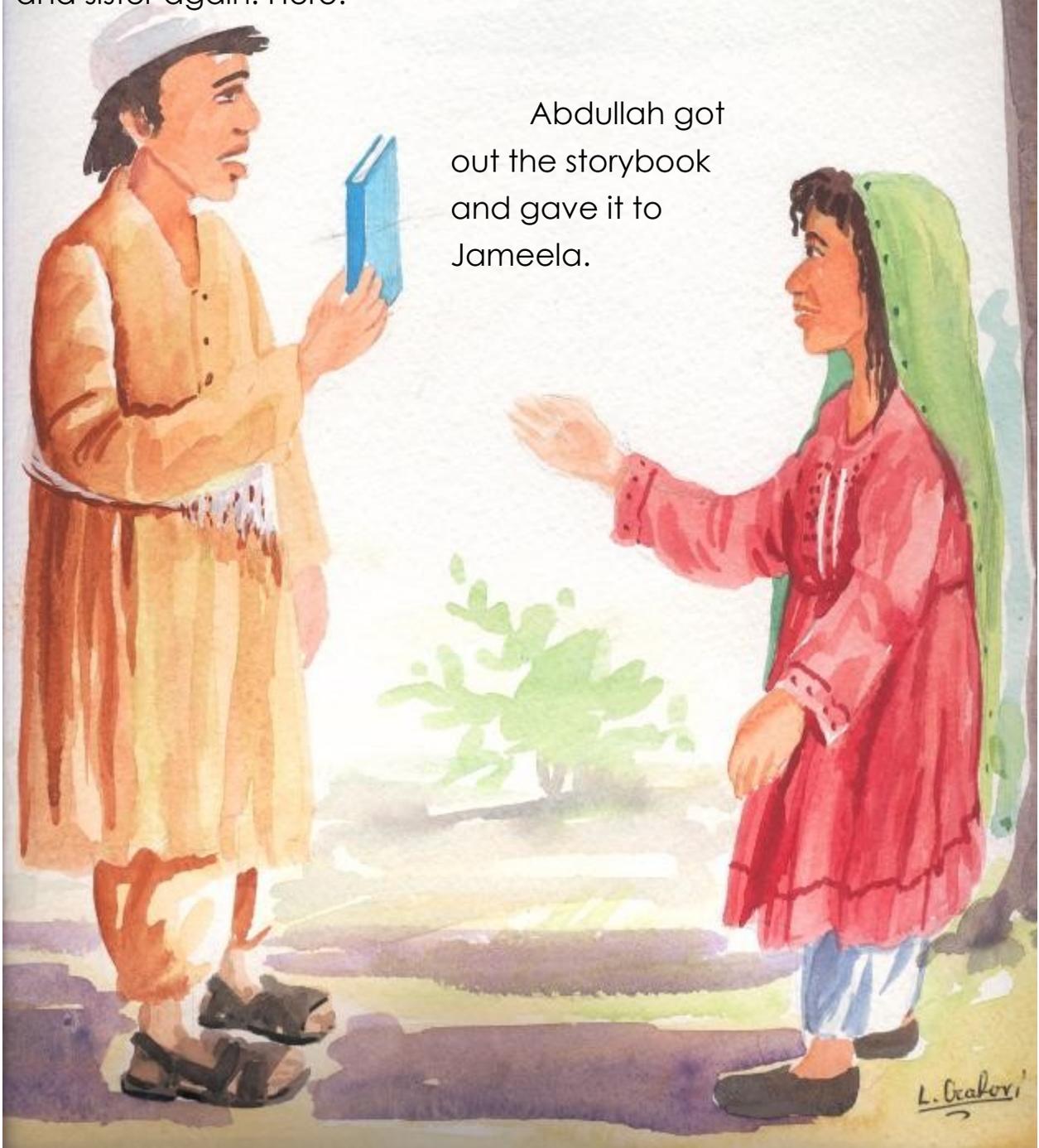
"Thanks, Abdullah. I'd decided you had no feelings at all, but you do. Thanks for apologizing."

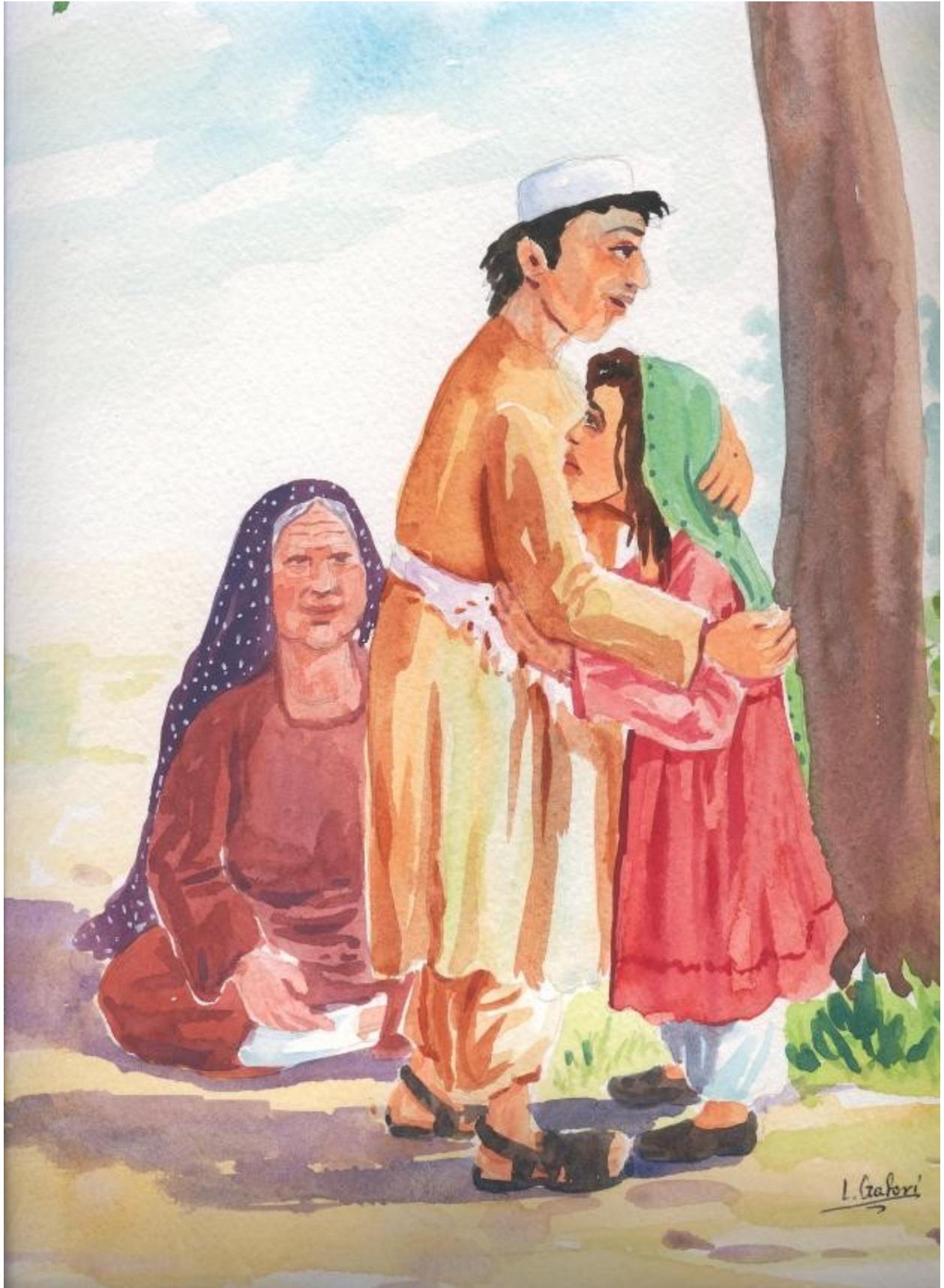
"Will you forgive me?"

"Sure, and I should apologize to you for saying some pretty bad things to you."

"That's OK. I understand why you did. I got something for you as part of saying I want to make up, and I want us to be brother and sister again. Here."

Abdullah got
out the storybook
and gave it to
Jameela.







"Oh, Abdullah, it's great. I love it. You definitely do have feelings. I can't believe I'm saying this, but I'm glad you're my brother." She ran and gave Abdullah a hug.

Bibi Jan spoke. "Here, you two. Help an old woman to her feet. I've had enough of sitting on the ground. Time for a cup of tea."

Story 8 Reconciliation

Things to Talk About:

1. When we have hurt someone's feelings, how can we make things better?
2. Is it hard to apologize?
3. Is it hard to forgive?
4. What does the Prophet (BBUH) say about forgiveness?
5. If you were having a disagreement with someone, whom could you ask to help solve the problem?

Things to Do:

1. Is there someone you've hurt that you need to reconcile with? Can you do this? Do you need an adult's help? You can remember the steps:
 - Understand the other person's hurt.
 - Apologize.
 - Ask for forgiveness.
 - Do something to try to make up for what you did wrong.

