

Rabah Kheddouci

THE BEST STORIES FOR KIDS

**Translated by:
Belkacem Meghzouchene**

Publications of EL-hadhara

Publications of EL-hadhara
BP 04 (A) Birtouta Alger
Tél: 0663.18.12.10
Email: kheddoucir@yahoo.com

ISBN:978-9931-357-68-1

The car Ti-Ti



Drawings by Djalal Mohamed

The car Ti-Ti

In this first story, it is about a family that wanted to buy a new car. However, each family member proposed a different color and shape for the expected car. So, they had not the same taste. How could the family solve the problem? Who would at last choose the right car?



The family of Rashad gathered to discuss about the color of the car they were going to buy, on the occasion of his following birthday.

The daughter Amel said:

- I wish it a small, red car.

The son Tahar said:

- The best car must be big and blue.

The mother said:

- A beautiful car should be huge and white.

The father said:

- I would like a tall, black car.

The grandmother said:

- My favorite car is large and green.



2006/11/16
م. م. م.

Then, all the family members conveyed their preferences. Everyone chose the size and the color of the expected new car, with the exception of Rashad, the little boy who kept silent and brooding.

The father asked his son:

-Which car do you prefer, Rashad?

The little boy answered after a short moment of thinking:

- I will tell you later!

Rashad walked to his desk and took a sheet of paper, a brush and a watercolor box. He drew a car and dubbed it *Ti-Ti*...



Before he colored the car, he had mixed the colors...

At first, he blended the red and the blue, and he got a newer dye. He smiled and said:

- My sister wished it red, and my brother wanted it blue...I do not like this violet, dark color!

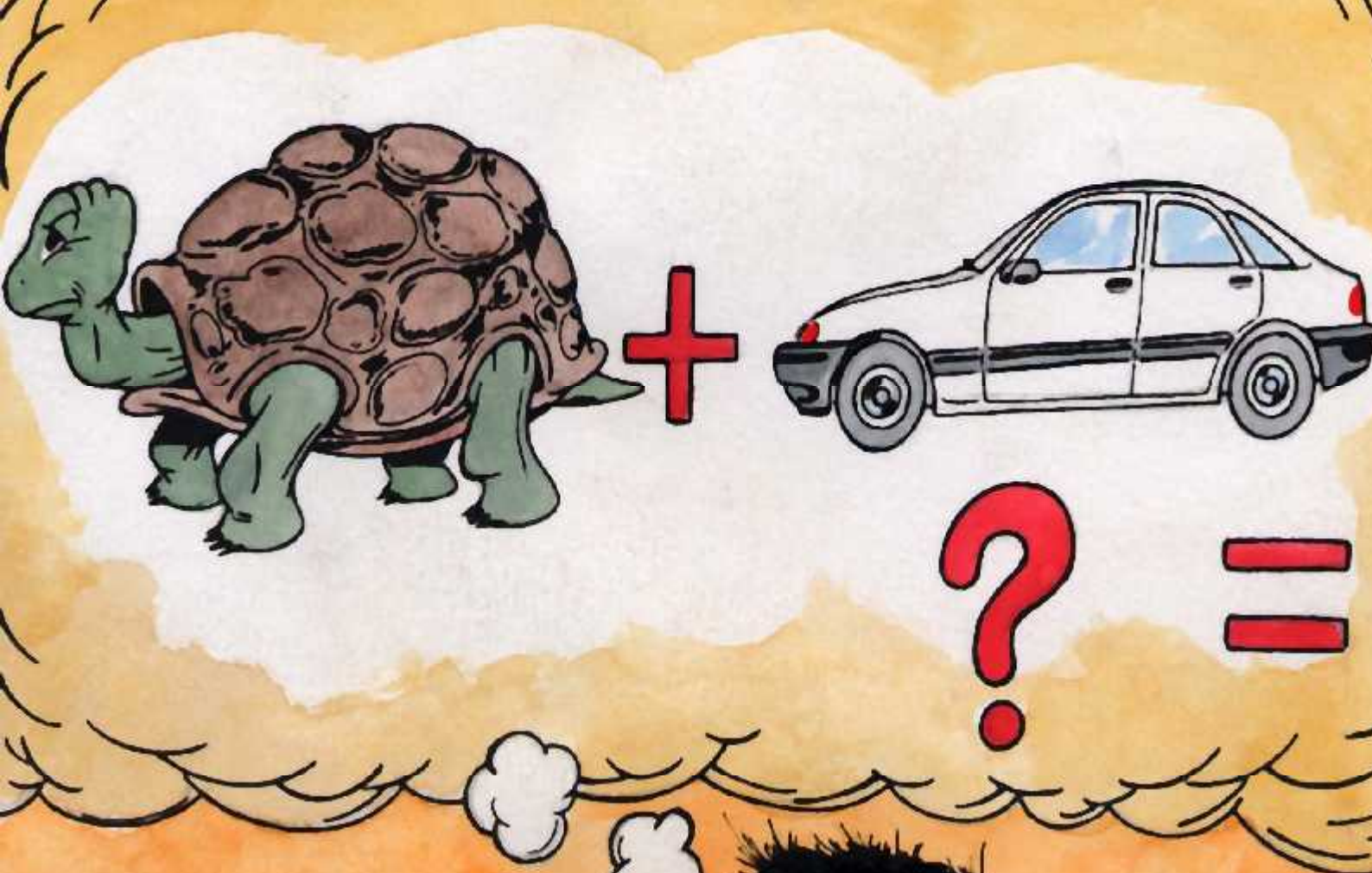
The second time, he put the black and the green together. He laughed:

- What a dim color! This is the desire of both my dad and granny!

He then said:

- Let me see the desire of dad and mom... The mix of black with the white... It gives the gray hue... I dislike it, too!





2005/11/11
H. M. M.

Rashad continued his experiments. He mixed yellow and red, yellow and blue, red and white. He tried all the color combinations. He got an orange car in the first time, a green car in the second time, a rose car in the third time, a violet car in the fourth time, and so on.

At last, Rashad mixed all the watercolors and painted the drawn car. He named it *Ti-Ti*.

Rashad put the drawing inside an envelope and gave it to his father, saying:

- This letter contains the features of the required car. It will be opened only by the manufacturer of cars!

The father took the closed letter of his son Rashad, and then headed to the factory of cars. There, he asked the constructors to make a new car, matching exactly the drawing of Rashad.





Car
Factory

After one week, all the family visited the factory. They found their special car ready. The car had a strange shape and funny colors.

The look of the car *Ti-Ti* stunned the family members.

The father asked Rashad:

- Why? Why did you prefer this shape and these colors, Rashad?

Rashad smiled and then spoke to them:

-Am I not free to choose my car *Ti-Ti*?



I saw that my sister desired it small and red, my brother big and blue, my mother huge and white, my father tall and black, and my grand-mother large and green. But me, I like it red like a rose, blue like the sky, white like snow, green like grass, and black like the hair of my sister...I wished the car like the flowers of the spring, with all its dazzling colors!

They laughed at him:

- This is a *turtle*, not a car!

Rashad answered them:

- I have chosen the shape of the turtle, because it is slow in moving. Do we not say: *Carefulness is safety, hurriedness is regret? Or, better safe than sorry!*

They all reminded him one thing:

- We live in the age of speed!

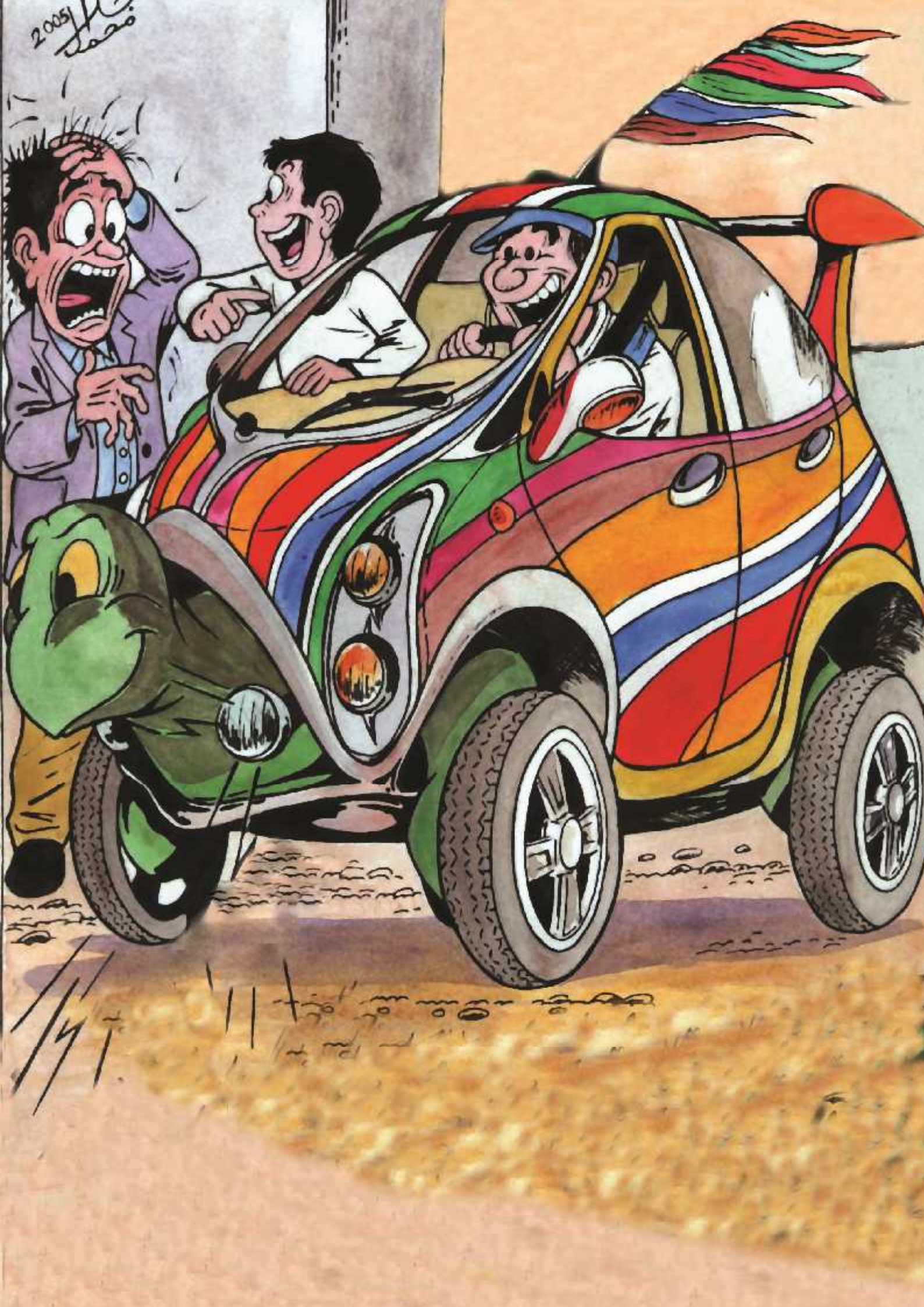
Rashad stared at them, and then said:

- Oh, okay! You would like a speedy turtle? I will ask the manufacturer to add two wings to make it a flying car!

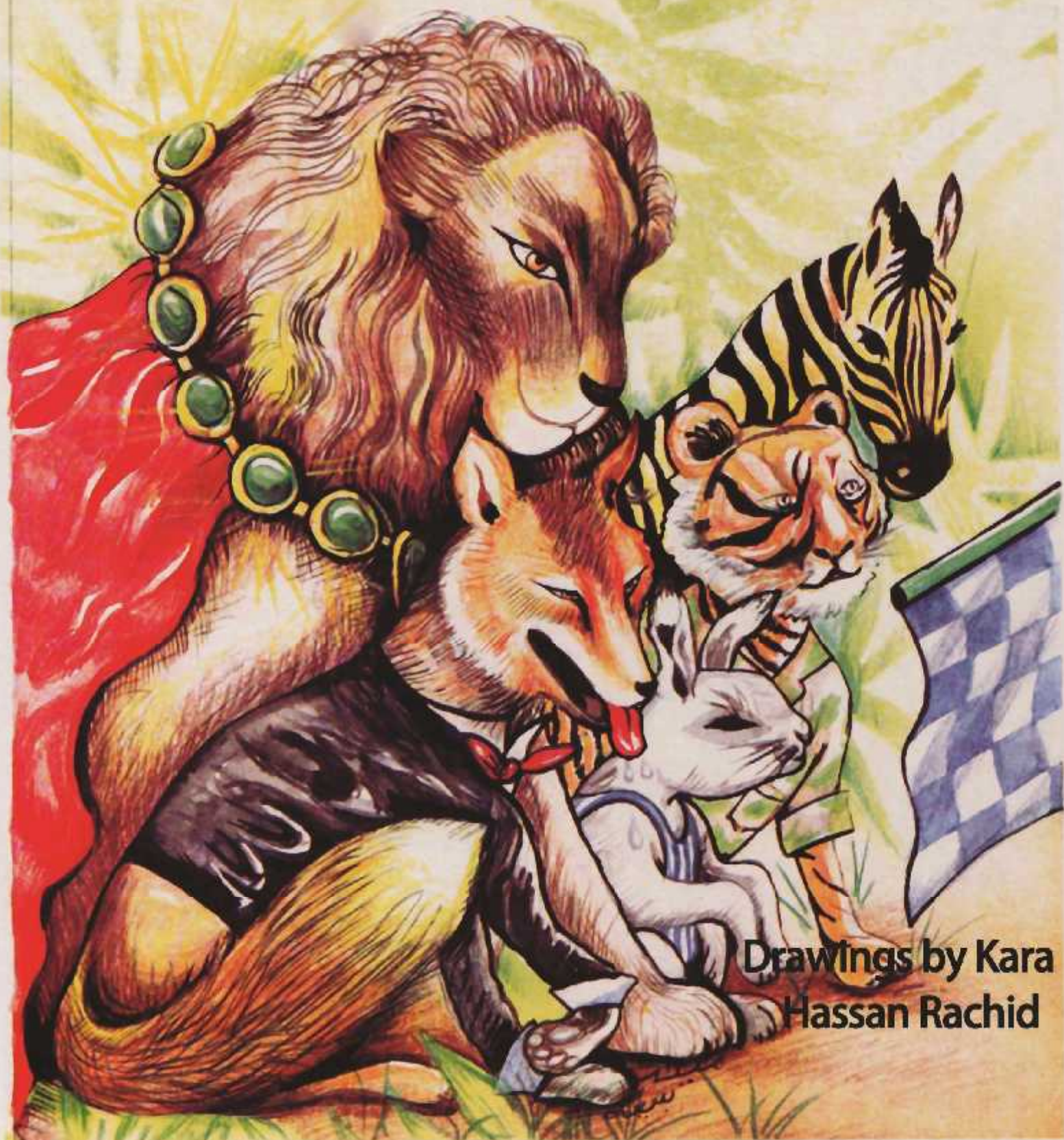
Rashad climbed in the car and started to sing:

- My car *Ti-Ti*... The car of dreams... It swims in water... It flies in the sky!

2005
H
S



The race of animals



Drawings by Kara
Hassan Rachid

The race of animals

In this second tale, the animals living in the forest should elect a new king, as was the custom every year. A race was held, and the winner would be reigning over the kingdom of animals. Would the race be fair and peaceful? What were the tricks each contender used to win the throne of the forest?



920

الكتاب

الكتاب
الكتاب
الكتاب

In one of the thick forests, the animals gathered in the afternoon to celebrate the birthday of the beginning of the spring.

They were used to choosing a new king.

As was the custom, the animals took part in the race at the end of the celebration, and the winner was given the banner of the kingdom.

Then, each species of animals chose its representative in the race.

The racers stood in the same starting line, and the other animals, like rabbits, wolves, gazelles, lions, hedgehogs, foxes, apes, and so on, would encourage their delegates with songs and constant handclaps...

Suddenly, all the animals fell silent.

The old wolf moved forward, turned back to all, and then howled aloud, announcing the starting of the race.

The rivals dashed ahead in a wild race and amazing excitement. Every racer ran fast to arrive the first on the finish line, where the jury members waited them near the great river, which flowed through the eastern side of the forest.

In the middle of the forest, the running young wolf told himself:

- I prey on the rabbit before the arrival!

And so thought the fox.

The lion said:

- I kill all the runners to win this race!



The rabbit did not say nothing.

The race went fierce, and the runners split their ways, each searching for the right path leading to the riverbank, but they all crashed into trees, sending the birds flying away their nests in confusion!

There arrived rabbit on the finish line, panting and sweating from the two ears.

The members of the jury, all of them domestic animals (the cat, the dog, and the lamb), were startled. They applauded the rabbit for winning the race. They waited the coming of the remaining racers, while the rabbit prepared himself to bathe in the river.



After a short moment, the fox arrived with a swollen belly, saying:

- I am late because I was busy chasing a raven who wanted to attack the eggs of a little bird. I hate injustice!

The dog said:

- But you have eaten both the black raven and the little bird with her eggs. The wolf told us that!

The fox went angry and said:

- Where is the cunning wolf? I guess the wolf withdrew from the race when he saw a flock of sheep grazing near the forest! I am going to warn the shepherd of the intention of the wolf!



Moments later, the lion arrived, walking slowly. He was panting as he was tired. The blood stained his great mouth and his two forelimbs.

The members of the jury looked surprised when they noticed the condition of the lion, wondering:

- What happened to you, lion?

The lion pretended to be sorrowful, replied:

- A bullet hit my leg as I was trying to defend a gazelle from a hunter, who wanted to kill her with his gun.

The jury detected the lies of the lion, said:

- Yet, we see blood on your teeth, and it is a conclusive proof that you have devoured the beautiful gazelle. Besides, we did not hear any sound of a gunshot!



The lion stammered and then said regretfully:

- Yes, I have eaten the gazelle when I saw all the animals of the forest preying on each other.

The jury turned back to the rabbit, asking him:

- How did you do to arrive safe and in the first position?

The rabbit replied:

- Because I did not covet any animal. Rather, I arrived before all of them as I was running away, scared of being attacked by the other racing beasts!

سألهما لهما فيه وبعثنا المستجبات

سألهما لهما فيه وبعثنا المستجبات



The members of the jury discussed among them, and then decided:

- Congratulations, rabbit! From now on, you become the king of the forest!

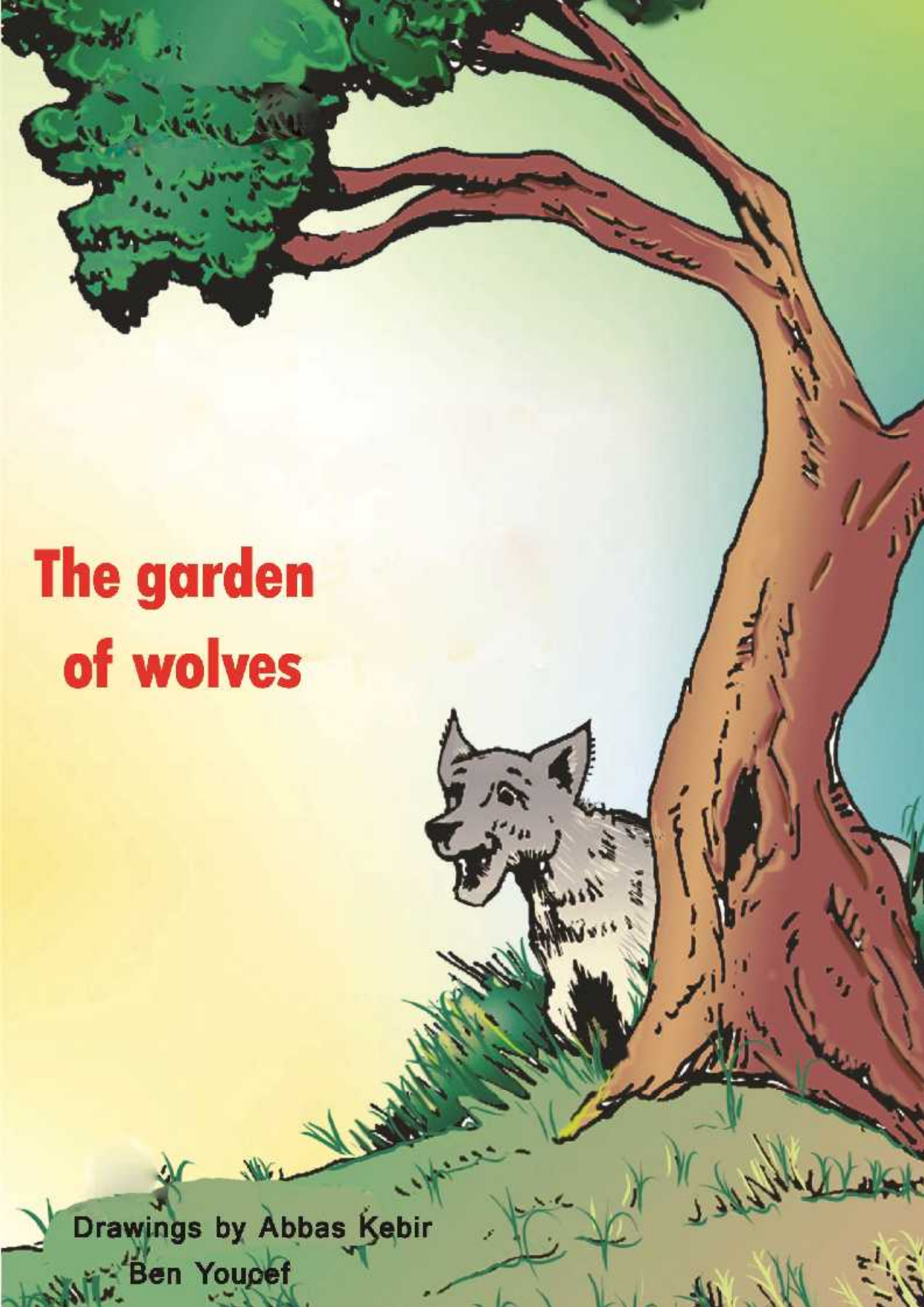
The rabbit did not jump for joy, he rather said to the members of the jury:

- Thank you, but I did not accept the throne. I would rather live amongst you in the village beside the domestic animals, far from the forest. That is to say far from the beast!

After consultation, the jury agreed upon the withdrawal of the rabbit.

فَتَحَقَّقْنَا نَأْمَهُ فَحَلَلْنَا



A stylized illustration of a grey and white wolf standing on a grassy hill, looking up at a large, gnarled tree with a thick brown trunk and green foliage. The background is a light blue sky with a yellow sun or moon. The title 'The garden of wolves' is written in red text on the left side of the image.

The garden of wolves

Drawings by Abbas Kebir
Ben Youcef

The garden of wolves

In this third tale, a man and his wife lived in the countryside. They had devised a plan to eliminate both the wolf who threatened the goats and the fox who attacked the hens. Would the couple succeed in this dangerous operation? If yes, what would happen next as the forest would be evacuated from its wolf and fox?



Every night, the shepherd Kaddour would tell his wife Aldjia the story of the wolf who attacked the flock of goats to devour one goat each time.



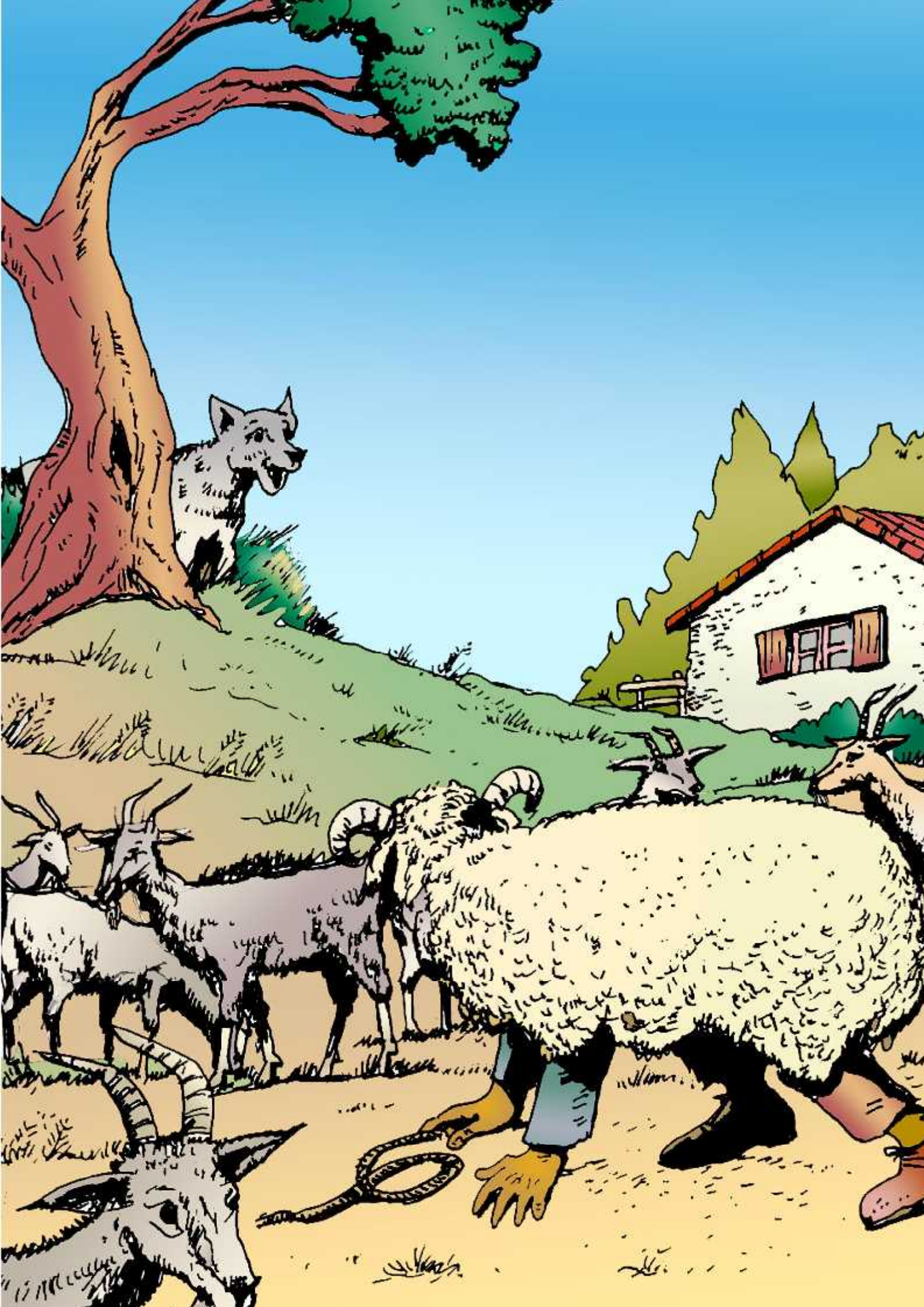
From her side, Aldjia informed her husband Kaddour that every month a fox would take away a hen from the henhouse and kill it. Altogether, they thought about a trick to seize both the wolf and the fox.

Kaddour proposed his trick:

- I will wear the skin of the ram with its head, and I will walk behind the flock of the goats. And when the deceitful wolf comes to attack me, I grip its foot and I put the rope around its neck.

His wife Aldjia said:

- I will dig a hole at the door of the henhouse, and when the sly fox arrives by night, it will fall into the hole.



The two rose to execute their plans. The husband wore the skin of the ram and went out to march between the goats on his two hands and two feet as if he were a ram. When he reached the woods, he saw a wolf drawing closer, happy to see a ram.

The happy wolf said:

- I miss the meat of the sheep. It is very delicious.

The wolf attacked the skin of the ram and Kaddour clutched the leg of the wolf, quickly put a rope around its neck and dragged it to the house. From her side, his wife Aldjia dug a great hole in the path of the fox. And when the cunning animal appeared by night, it cautiously closed in on the hens, saying:

-Today, I choose a rooster. I am fed up of hens...

Suddenly, the fox fell in the hole and could not get out of it.



Kaddour and Aldjia felt happy as their schemes succeeded. Yet, they wondered what they should do with the captured wolf and fox. The couple did not want to kill the two animals by beating them, nor did like to let them starve to death.

Kaddour thought a lot before he said to his wife:

- I'm going to take the wolf and the fox to the director of the zoo in Algiers. I will sell them to him, so that the visitors of the zoo can enjoy seeing them.

His wife agreed upon the idea, and then she said:

-Do not forget to set a high price for the fox and the wolf!

Kaddour executed his idea. He rented a car and transported the wolf and the fox to the great amusement of his neighbors. In the evening, he came back with a good amount of money.



In the following week, Kaddour captured a she-wolf and his wife trapped a female fox. Like the first time, Kaddour had sold them to the director of the same zoo. He would do so, capture and sale, until the nearby woods were emptied of the wolves and the foxes. Therefore, he no longer worried about that these beasts preyed on his flock of goats and the hens. Thus, the livestock and the poultry of Kaddour lived in peace, not fearing the gone wolves and foxes, and started to spend the nights in the woods. As the days passed by, they got accustomed to living in the woods and forgot to go back home. Moreover, they were scared at the thought of joining again the stable and henhouse, because they remembered how in the past Kaddour was slaughtering some of them during the celebrations of weddings and *Sacrifice Feasts* and *Ashura*...



Kaddour tried to bring the goats back home but he failed. Aldjia tried to return the hens to the henhouse but she fell short, too. Their money began to decrease day after day, and the poverty soon knocked on their door.

Serhane gave a piece of advice to his father Kaddour:

-What don't you go back to the zoo to buy a wolf and a fox, and then release them in the woods? This way, the goats and the hens will fear them and will be compelled to turn back home!

His father smiled and said:

-It is a clever idea.



In the morning, Kaddour got ready to leave the village towards Algiers. Unfortunately for him, he came back in the evening alone, with neither the wolf nor the fox.

He told his wife:

- The director of the zoo refused my demand of buying a wolf and a fox.

His son asked him:

-Why?

- He told me that the law did not allow my request, and I need an authorization similar to that of a passport...

After a short moment of silence, Kaddour resumed talking:

-When the director saw my miserable situation, he had pity on me, and he proposed to me to work as a warden in the zoo!

A week after, Kaddour and his family moved to the town and he became a warden of wolves and foxes in the zoo.

A few days later, Kaddour would speak to the wolves:

-Once, I had been a guardian against you, and now I'm watching over you! I had been fearing you, and now I am afraid for you! Good heavens! How things turn upside down!

After a period of time, Kaddour and his wife felt boredom. They missed the breeding of goats and hens. Kaddour bought four goats, three hens and one rooster. He released his animals in the zoo, so that the goats grazed beside the area of wolves and the hens pecked at the earth in front of the area of foxes, only small hedges separated between them...

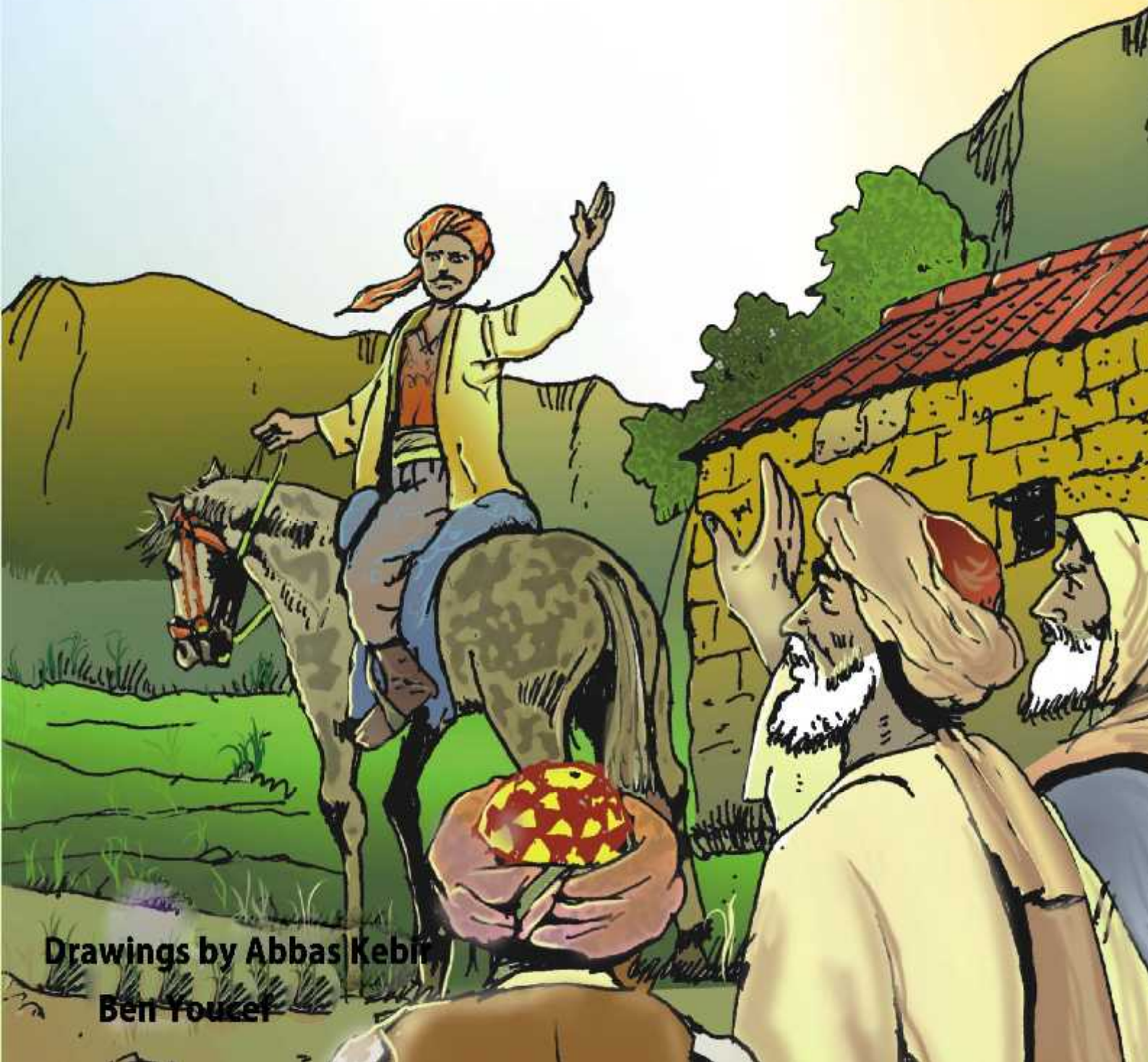




Everybody got accustomed to watching this sight. The hens and the goats dared to come near the hedges, gazing at the beautiful eyes and the slim muzzles of the wolves and the foxes, moving closer, as if they had already befriended each other!

But the wolves and the foxes were delighted to discover the splendor of the rooster, the kindness of the hens, and the elegance of the goats. The wolves and the foxes wondered how they had ignored all these beauties for such a long time! They almost jumped over the hedges to apologize for their previous misbehaviors!

The passageway of Kheira



Drawings by Abbas Kebir

Ben Fouzel

The passageway of Kheira

In this fourth story, people traveling toward the seaside, must cut through a thick forest. Yet, every time they crossed the bridge over a known river, a masked person would emerge and robbed them, leaving them despaired and without money. The nearby villagers gathered to find a solution to kill the disguised bandit. A knight volunteered to chase the robber. A great surprise struck the people when they saw the knight come back with the masked person. They did not believe their eyes...



- *Beware of crossing through this way!*

This was how people would recommend and warn each other of the road linking the Plain of Mitidja and the beach. This road also stretched over Mazafran River, which ran through a thick forest inhabited by animals and birds in huge numbers. The crossing of this forest scared a lot the caravans loaded with farming and trading goods, as they went back and forth. *But, what was the cause of this fear?*

In the middle of the forest, there was a small bridge, named *Al Maqta*, people used to cross over Mazafran River. The rumors went that every time one walked through this bridge, a masked bandit wearing a *qeshabiya* emerged from the forest, holding a sword to threaten the travelers to run away and leave their goods and luggage.



On that account, *Al Maqta* became famed for its terror, and people did not cross it unless they were in groups with weapons in their hands.

The dwellers of The Plain of Mitidja remained worried about the disguised thief, who seemed dreading nobody at all. Yet, everybody feared him.

One day, the residents from the cities of The Plain of Mitidja, like Blida and Kolea and Boufarik, gathered at the banquet of the Shrine of Sidi Kebir. They discussed about the unknown bandit who stood in the way of the travelers to rob them of their money, so that the seaside inhabitants refrained from going to Mitidja and its mountains, and people of Mitidja abstained from heading to the sea for swimming.

They exposed their opinions to find a suitable solution to get rid of the masked man.

They asked themselves many questions:

Should they change the route even if it would be longer and more meandering?

Or should they choose strong men to hunt for the thief and arrest him?

Or should they burn the forest wherein he lived to kill him?

The sturdy son of the *al-Meddah* (*chanter of the religious praises*) rose up, curled his moustache, and then said:

- No, no! How you kill a man without a trail? You set the forest on fire because of a single robber?

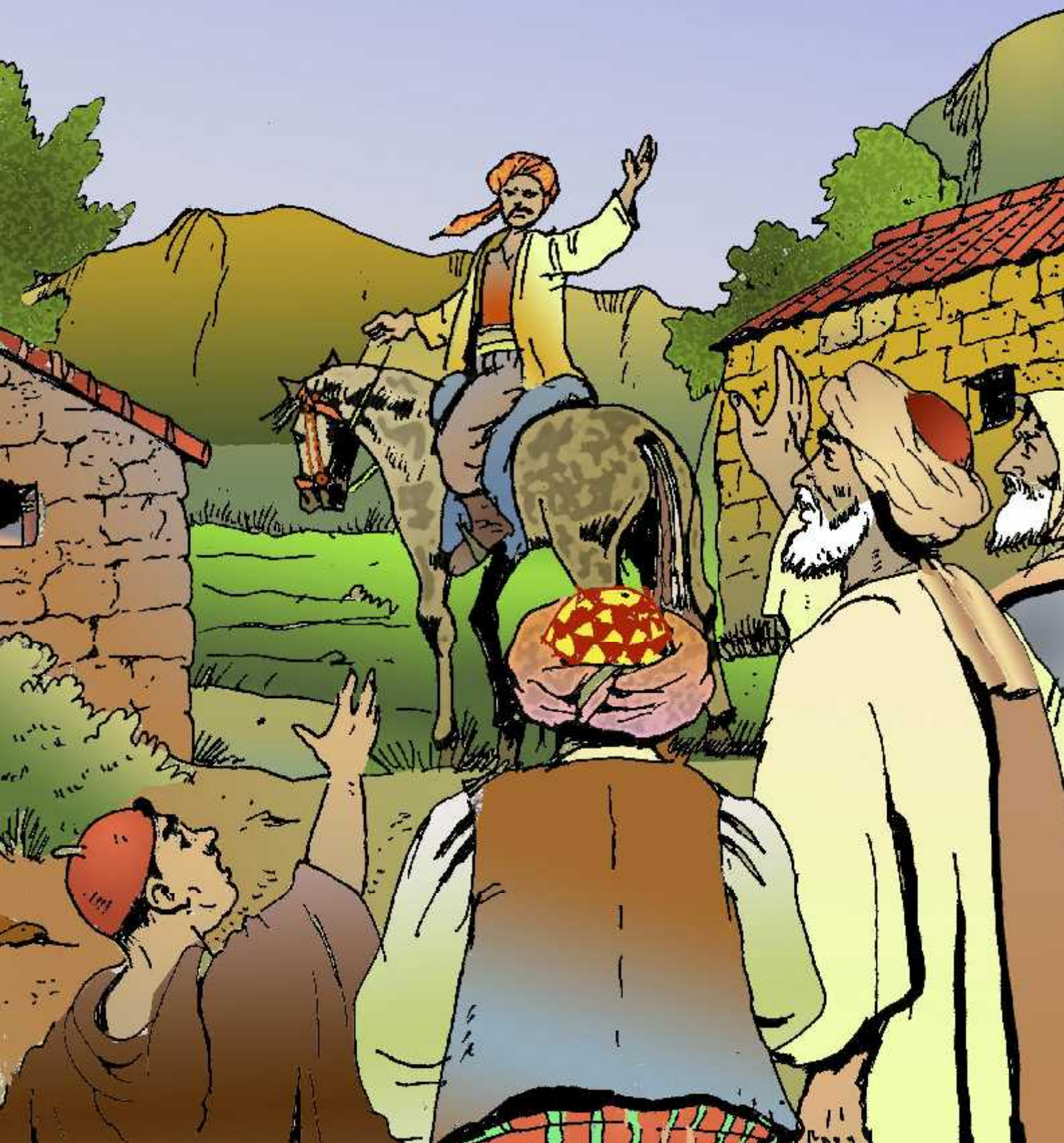
People asked him:

- Have you got another solution, man?

He replied:

- Yes! I am going alone to search for this beast, and I will not come back until I will have him dead or alive!

The listeners marveled at his speech. Some of them advised him to renounce to this perilous adventure, but he insisted on defying the disguised bandit...



The next morning, the son of *al-Meddah* readied himself well, mounted his horse and trotted toward the sea. People bade him farewell, as though they would not see him back again...

The news spread over the cities and the villages: “*The son of al-Meddah has gone to meet his death!*”

One week had passed by, and people began to wonder about his fate:

- He has been absent for too long! Let's go to remove his corpse before the wolves and the vultures devour it.

However, a surprise occurred before the end of the day!

Just in the afternoon, the knight showed up with a very gorgeous woman seated behind him on his horse. And another empty horse followed them.



The common people rushed to interrogate him:

- Who is this woman? You went to chase down the bandit or to marry a beautiful woman?

The two dismounted the horse in total silence. After a short time of rest, he told them:

- She is my wife now! And listen to the story from the beginning:

When I went to that scary passageway *al-Maqta*, I was so terrified that I decided to come back to you, but I was afraid you would be mocking me for breaking the promise I have made to you.

Therefore, I thought of a trick to rescue me of the trouble. I told myself:

“I chant religious praises like my father to amuse myself. This way, I forget all my fears, and the bandit will know that I am not dreading him and he will not be approaching me!”



I remained singing three days nonstop in the forest, looking for the bandit who used to thieving the passersby.

On the fourth day, when I was sauntering in the forest as usual, I ran across a masked man on the back of the horse, holding a sword.

At first, I was frightened and wanted to escape, but I gathered my courage and listened as he loudly spoke to me:

- You are singing though you are dead?

I emboldened more and I asked:

- What is the meaning of life when people like you stripped it to the others every time they wanted?

He interrogated me:

- Who are you?

Then I asked her:

- Did you not like my songs?

The disguised man wondered:

- Are you a poet?



I replied:

- I am a son of a chanter of religious praises.

He said:

- Thus, you are a poet...

And a after a short time of silence, he sneered me, in a menacing tone:

- What did people say about this sword before I slit your throat with it?

I shivered and I recited to her a poem:

“The sword is truer than the stories written in the books... Its edge separates between seriousness and triviality.”

- And what do you think of a given woman?

-The woman is the flower of life and the sweet basil of afterlife!

He queried me again:

-You are a poet, aren't you?

I summoned up all my bravery to answer him by saying:

- There is no need to poetry in front of bandits! The only thing I need is...

The masked man interrupted me:

-Stop! Don't say it, otherwise I tear you to pieces and cast you to the wolves...

When the disguised man drew back, I thought he was going to kill me. I prepared myself to fight him...

A few minutes flew by. Then he talked with a soft voice.

- You have to choose between two matters: either you tell me a poem deriding all the males or you die under the hooves of my horse...

I was confused then. Doubts about that stranger man started to overwhelm me. I thought it over for a while and I said:

-I would rather tell a poem flattering all the women.

He smiled and said:

- tell it to me. But if does not please me, I will spill over your blood!

I promised him:

- I will tell it to you tomorrow, right here.

The disguised man accepted my delay, and he said startling words before he went away:

-Your words are sweet, yet you are not going to save your skin from me so easily!

I had spent the night searching in my memory for the poems of my father. I only found poems praising the Prophet and the caliphates. So, I decided to compose a poem of mine to be loyal to the promise toward the masked man.

The following day, I went to meet the masked man in the same whereabouts. I found him already waiting for me. I began to tell him a poem depicting the beauty of women.



I was stunned as the camouflaged man removed a bit of his mask from his eyes, and then asked me:

- Did you ever see eyes you have praised more beautiful than mine? And that face?

I almost fell down when I saw that amazing beauty. Actually, he turned out to be a *woman*!

I did not answer her. Even though she made her hair visible, when she got rid completely of her mask.

She teased me again:

- Did you ever tell a poem in the praise of this hair?

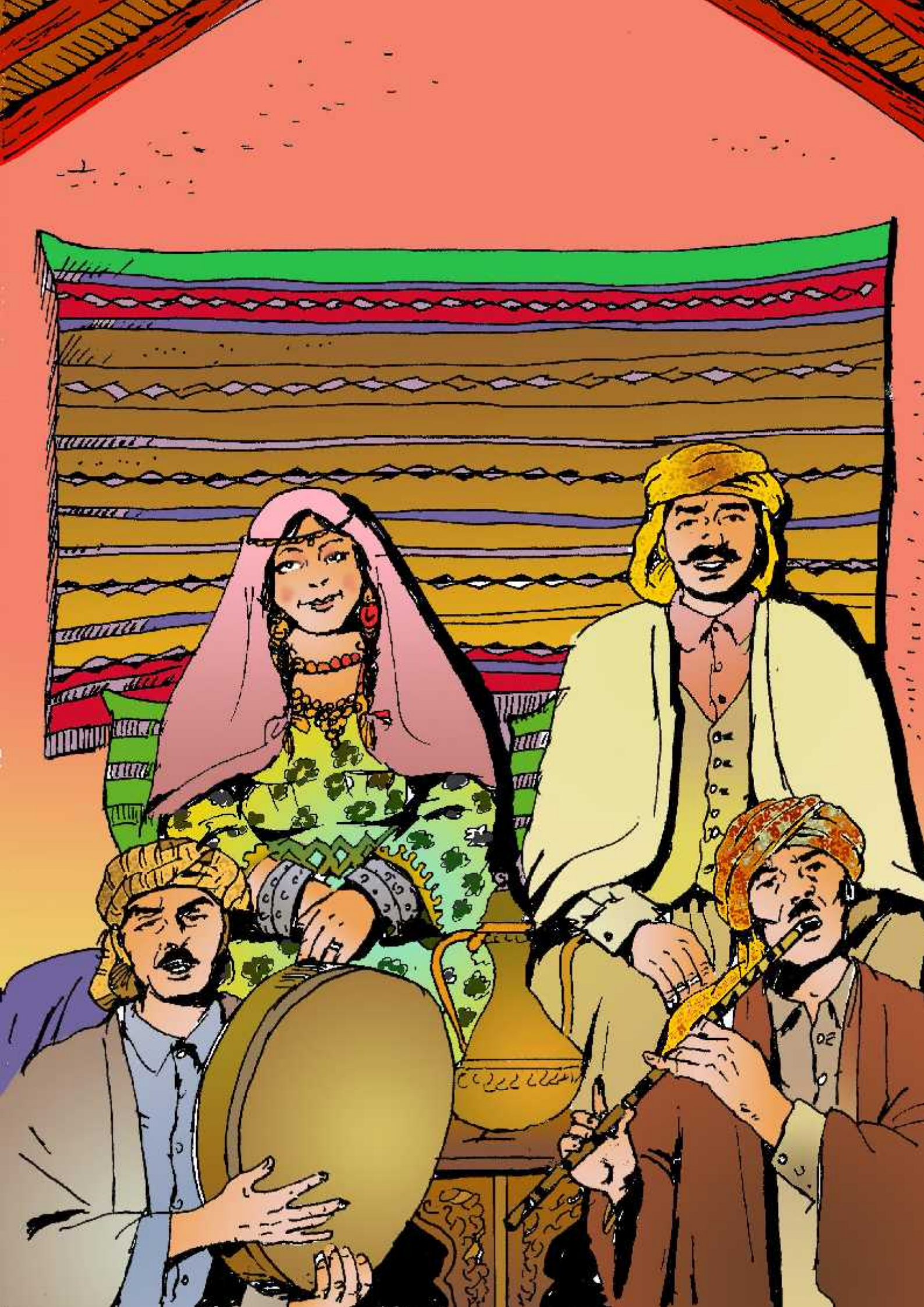
When she took off her *qeshabiya*, I was sure about her gender.

In front of my bewilderment and tremor, she smiled and said:

-My name is Kheira. The men are so blind!

After a while, she added:

-You pleased me as you fought me with poetry and cordiality. Now, I repent thanks to you.



I did not believe my eyes and I was confused. How I could not detect her feminine voice since the first meeting.

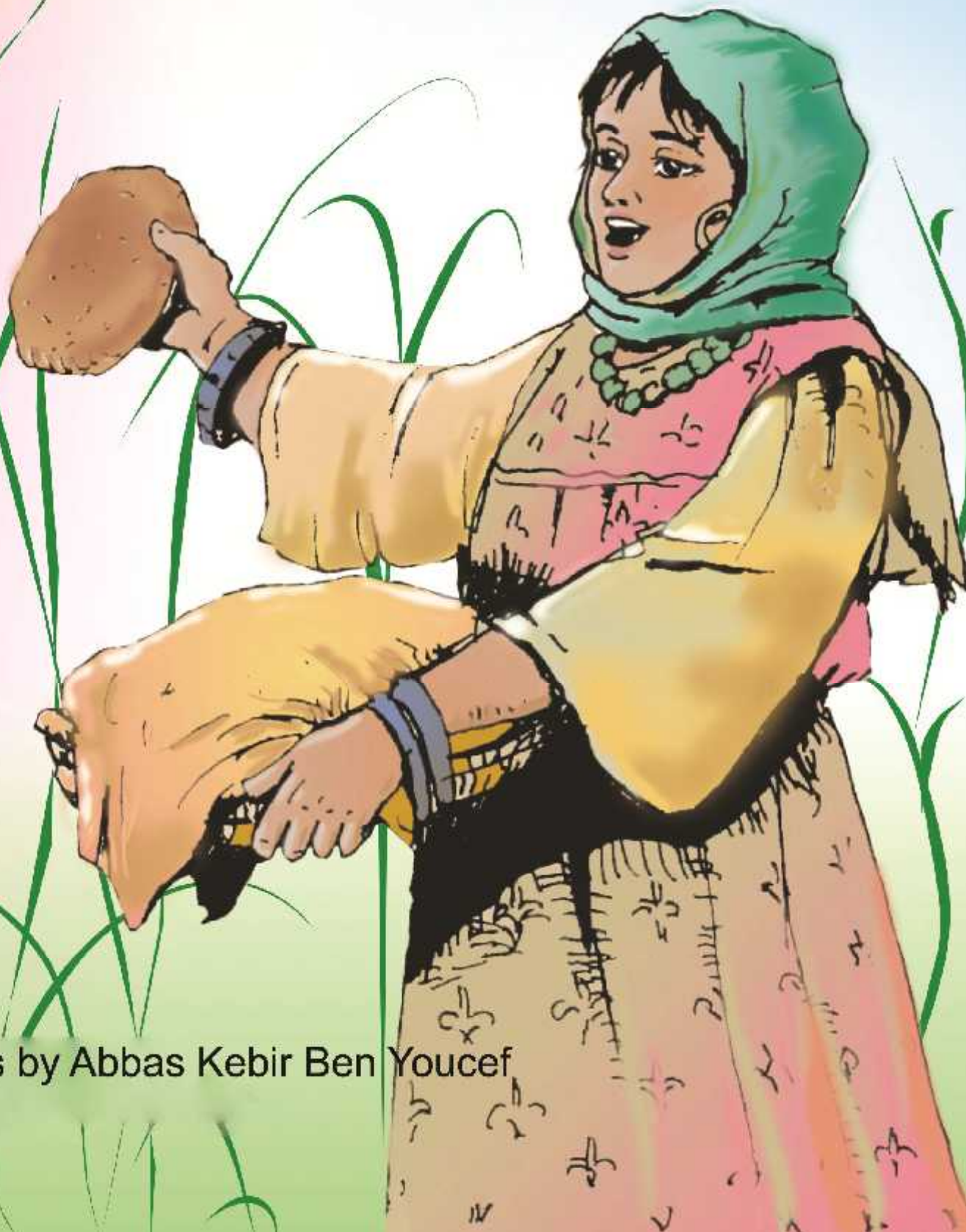
No sooner had I woken up from my day dreaming than I stretched my hand to help her get on the back of the horse. And there she is now amongst you!

When people heard the entire story about the woman disguised as a man, they were amazed and paced closer to contemplate her with great precaution. She only beamed at them, and she begged them pardon for all what she had done before around the bridge and in the forest.

People congratulated the knight, the son of the *al-Meddah*, for this merry happening. A few days later, the wedding had been celebrated between the man and the beautiful Kheira. Every person took part in the feast.

Finally, people lived in peace and reassurance, traveling by day and night without any fears. For this reason, the place had since been named: *The Passageway of Kheira*.

The girl who sells the bread



Drawings by Abbas Kebir Ben Youcef

The girl who sells the bread

In this fifth story, a little girl used to sell country bread in a thermal spa. All the visitors liked her tasty bread. But she unexpectedly disappeared without warning. People thought she had drowned during floods. Forty years later, four little girls strode the streets of the spa town to sell the same country bread...

The girl Halima lived on the riverbank of the River Hammam Melouane, which cut through two mountains much like a smile split two lips. The site was gorgeous with its green forests, clean water and kind people. It was also famous for its gushing thermal waters which could heal many diseases, like those of the skin, or the joints, or the bones, and so on.

Her family was poor, and thus lived on earnings of the little girl Halima, who was selling rural bread to the visitors of the thermal bath. Her mother would prepare the delicious, round-shaped bread. Halima would put bread in a plate, and then would sell it to the visitors. The fame of the bread reached the neighboring towns, as Blida, Algiers and Larbaa. Only the roosters of Hammam Melouane did precede that bread to reputation, as bathers would look after the coveted fowl. The most famous rooster was the one who crowed earlier in Hammam Melouane at dawn. It would finish in the stomach of the sick!



One day, people missed the little girl Halima, and the visitors did not find from whom they bought bread. They asked after her a lot.

One of them said:

- The rain and floods might have washed their hut beside the river the night of its overflowing. Consequently, the bread-seller Halima might have died along with her parents and her brother.

People got confused about the absence of the girl Halima, who had for years been used to running the long boulevard of Hammam Melouane.

They missed her sweet, soft voice, when she would share in the merriness of the nature, with its chirping birds in nearby forest and ripple of water of the Old River, flowing from Maqtaa Lazreg (Blue Passageway) through its three creeks: Wadi al-Heddad (The River of the Blacksmith) streaming from Chrea Mountains, Wadi al-Akhira (The River of The Last Judgment), and Wadi Boumaoune, famous for its waterfalls...

As the girl Halima did not show up, every tourist was compelled to buy the bakery's artificial bread, sighing for the lack of that delicious country bread a man could smell from afar.

The days went by and swelled into years. On day, the inhabitants were surprised by a new phenomenon which puzzled them.

The news spread quickly, and fed the tongues of both the children and the elderly.

What was that event?

Four strange girls appeared to sell country bread in the town, here and there.

People kept asking:

- Who are they? Where do they come from?

Both the residents and the visitors looked incredulous, as they said:

- Since the absence of the girl Halima for forty years now, we have not seen such bread!



Inhabitants interrogated one of the beautiful girls:

-Do you live here?

She answered:

-Yes, since yesterday!

And people were amazed when they knew that the four girls, Siham, Shahrazad, Hiziya and Khadidja, were actually the daughters of Halima, whom they thought was taken by floods of the river along with her family forty years ago.

The neighbors flocked to the house of Halima to make sure the news were true. Halima welcomed them with pleasure. Yet, they were befuddled for her long absence since childhood, and now she came back as a woman aged over fifty with four daughters.

After the greetings and kisses, one of the women asked her:

- Tell us how you went absent for such a long time? Forty years, please!

Halima replied her:

-It is a long story. A strange one, as well!



Another woman said:

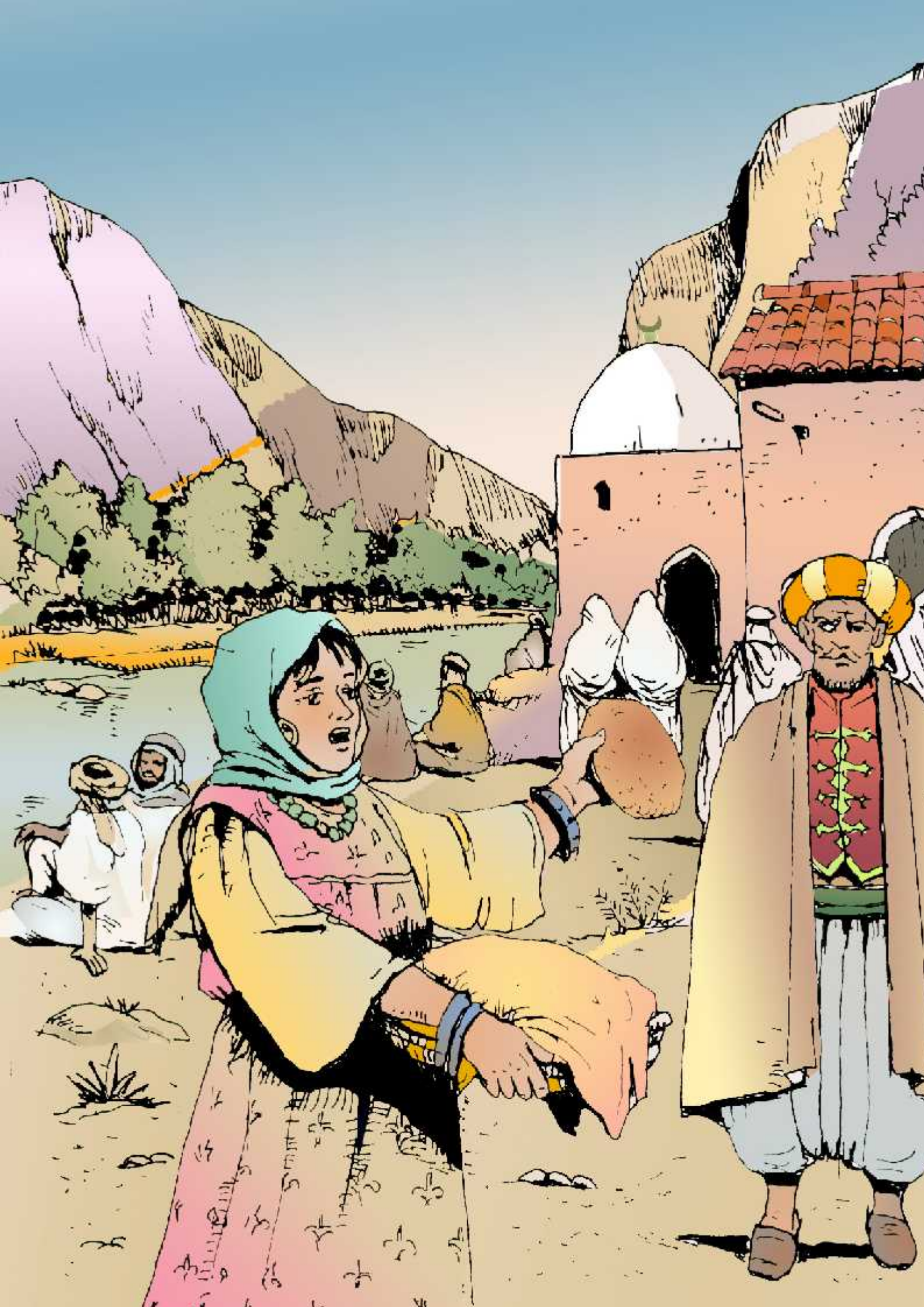
- We would like to hear your story!

Halima smiled and said:

-I will tell you my story once I have finished making bread for my daughters. You know, the visitors outdoors are waiting our bread.

When Halima accomplished her work, she seated herself on a carpet, and told the women:

-A long time ago as I was little girl selling bread to people in this village, I befriended with another girl named Aziza. She had been a daughter of visitors come from Algiers. Every week, I was waiting her coming with her father. I would take Aziza to our hut. Aziza as beautiful and sensitive, and she had a cripple in her leg which impede her from walking. But when she bathed in the thermal waters of Hammam Melouane, she began to heal. After a few months, she was completely healed and became to walk like all other normal girls like me.





Aziza was very joyful once recovered. Her family bathed in happiness, and her father told her:

-Make a wish, my dear Aziza.

- I would like to live with my friend Halima.

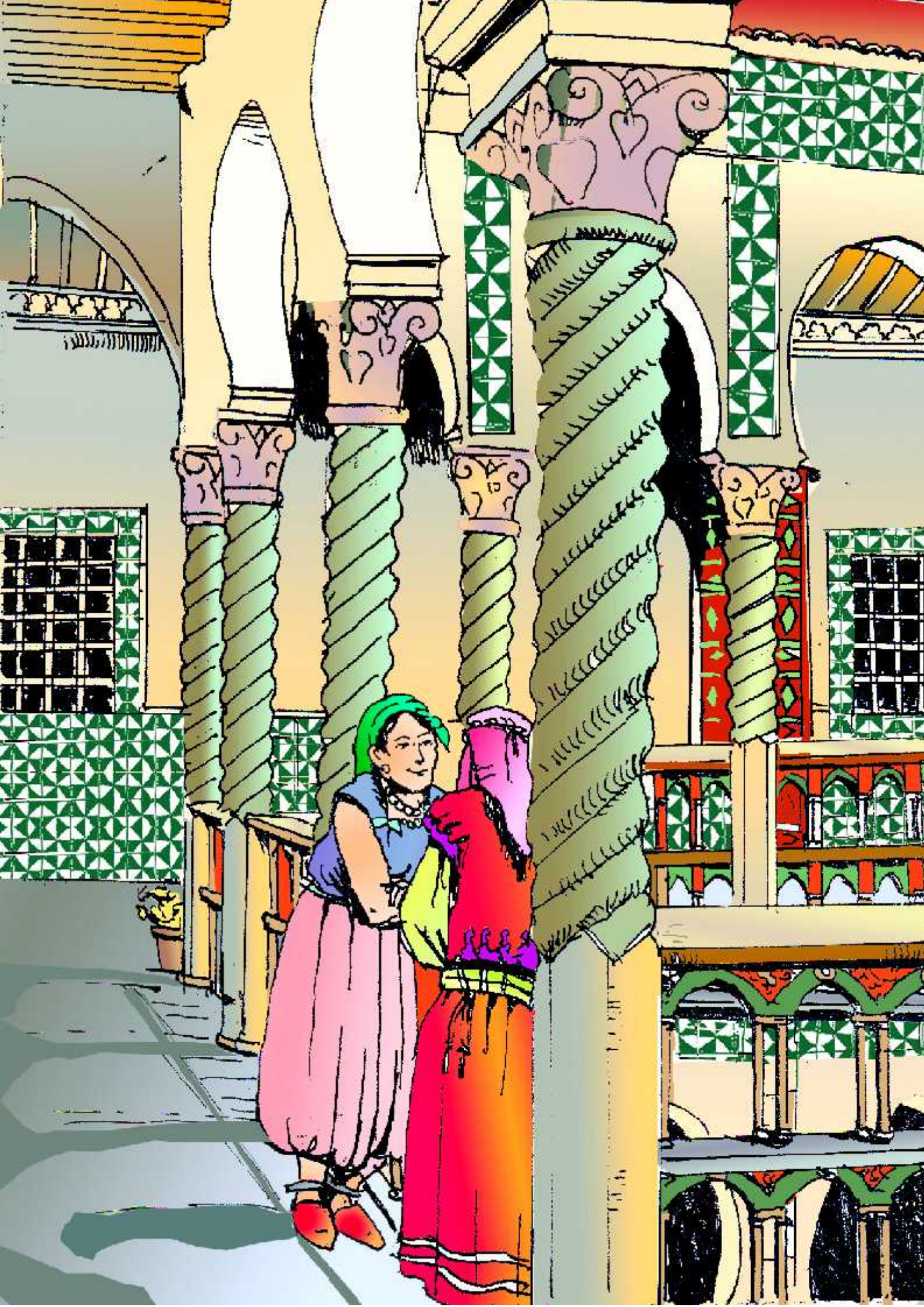
The father of Aziza told me the wish of his only child, and he asked my father's permission to let me go to live with them in Algiers. But my then-living father did not want I lived far from him, and so was my desire. Then, the surprise happened!

The eager women wanted to know more details:

-What was that surprise?

Halima responded:

- The father of Aziza introduced himself, and asked all my family to follow him to Algiers.



The women still wondered:

-Who was her father?

Halima kept silent for a while, sighed, and then said:

- He was the governor of Algiers... Truly, the Turkish Dey himself!

The women marveled at the account, as they barely believed in the story of the old Halima, who went on talking to them:

So, I and my family dwelled in the palace of the Dey, not far from his daughter Aziza, my new friend...

The day days passed by, and we enjoyed peaceful life in the palace...

And then the foreign invasion occurred, hurting all the inhabitants. The happiness of years changed into sadness after what had happened to the family of the reigning Dey...



The women asked her, all inquisitive:

- Buy what happened to your family?

Halima replied, cheerless:

- My mother died after my father fell as a martyr near the village Staouali, combating the French invasion. I and my brother Ismail became orphans and alone. Then, one of the landowning families in Mitidja adopted us. From time to time, that family would pay a visit to the family of the Dey, and I married one of the sons of my adopting family. I gave birth to four daughters. Unfortunately, the harsh days set in, as the French occupation stripped my husband of his fertile lands. When my husband yelled at the faces of the French invaders like the rooster of Hammam Melouane, they arrested him and took him away aboard a ship to faraway island, called Caledonia. Until now, he has not come back.



As to my brother Ismail, the French invaders had hunted him in Mitidja, pushing him to take refuge in the mountains of Tell Atlas, and he has not returned, too. I do not know if the wolves and lions had preyed on him. Nor do I know if he had set up home and had had children and grandchildren atop those mountains!

The mother Halima mopped the warm tears which streamed down her lukewarm cheek. She added:

- Following these difficult conditions, I did not find any help. And instead of begging for food, I decided to resort to my first work of girlhood. I went back to my old house, to assume the task I inherited from my mother: the making of country bread. I preferred to stretch out my hand full of bread. Who has said this saying is right: “*A craft in hand is better than one thousand begs!*”



Table of contents:

The car Ti-Ti.....	03
The race of animals.....	23
The garden of wolves.....	39
The passageway of Kheira.....	59
The girl who sells the bread.....	81