

The Light Is Waiting for You

By Dr. Shamma Bint Mohamed Bin Khaled AL Nahyan

Translated by: Wafaa Ashraf

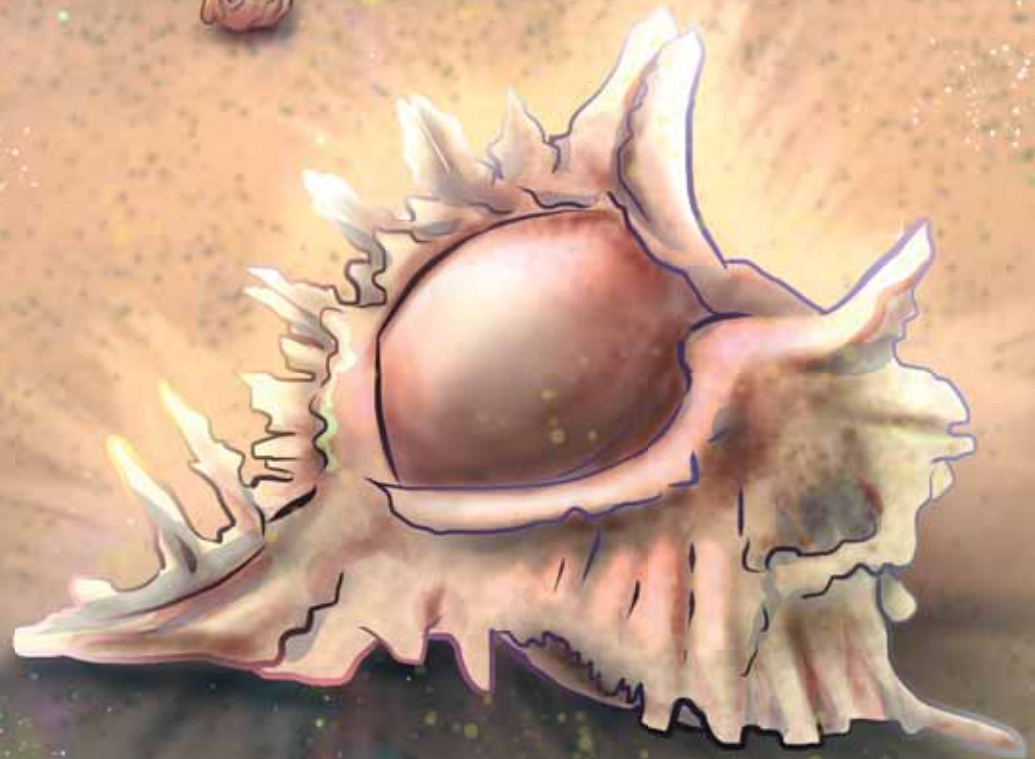
AL-Dar AL-Masriah AL-Lubnaniah

(1)

Ahmad was still waiting for the sun to rise so he could go to the seaside with his brother, Saif, and their friend, Hamad, to enjoy the spring break together and collect seashells from the beach.

When the sun rose, the brothers ran to the beach, where Hamad awaited them. “Let’s collect some shells from the beach,” he said.

2



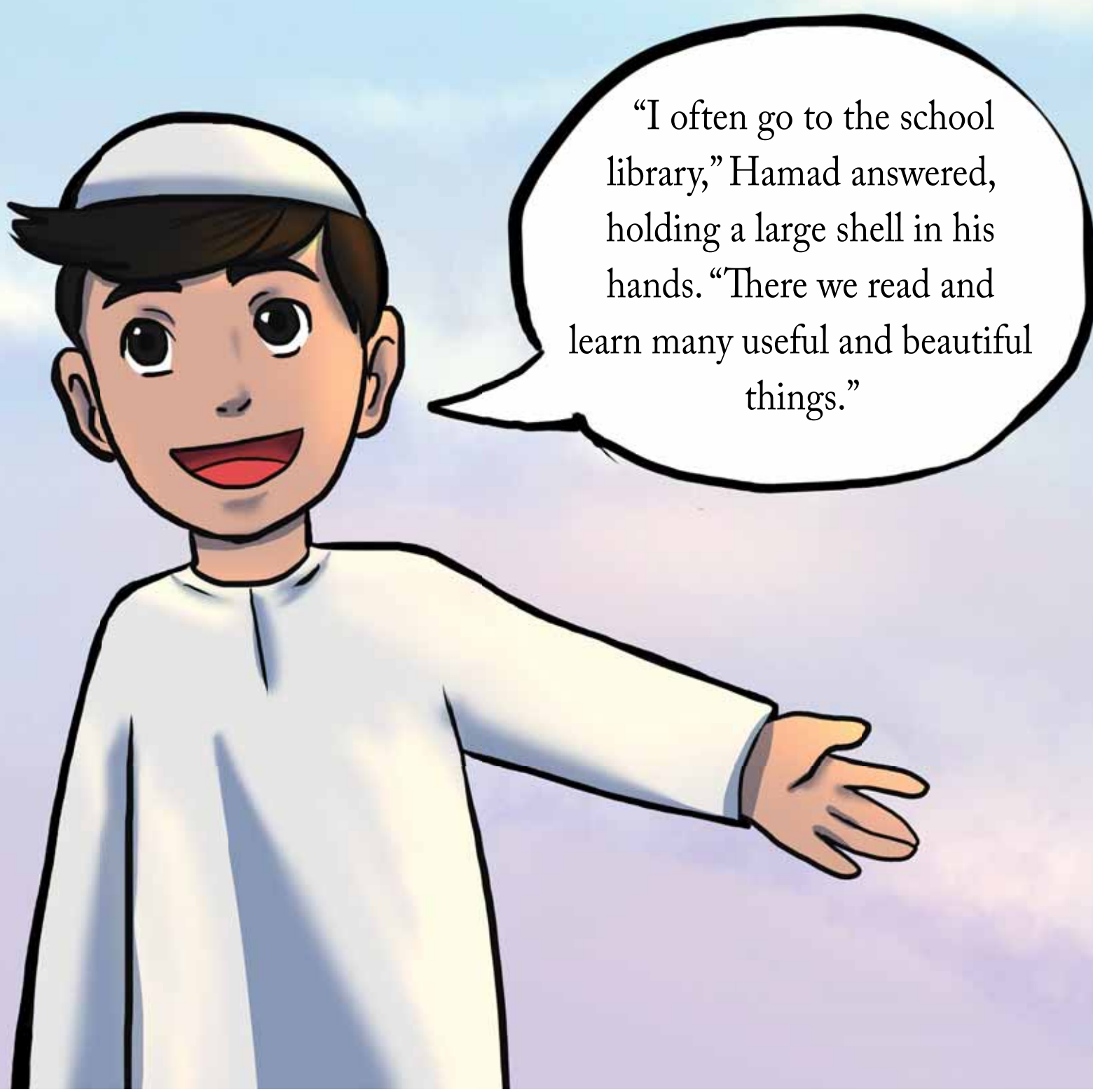
Together, they went ahead and collected a lot of shells.

“These shells, do you know what they are?” Saif asked.

“Seashells are the outer covers which protect the animals living inside, called mollusks,” Hamad replied.



“How do you know that, Hamad?” Ahmad asked.



“I often go to the school library,” Hamad answered, holding a large shell in his hands. “There we read and learn many useful and beautiful things.”

“This is great, Hamad,” said Ahmad. “Next time, God willing, we’ll go with you so we could read and learn. Now, I have a new idea—what if we collected the empty bottles on the beach?”

“But that’s not our job, Ahmad!” Saif said, astonished.

“We’ll collect them to make beautiful things from them, like house or car models.”



Hamad was very enthusiastic. “What a wonderful idea! We’ll recycle them and help preserve the beautiful environment of the beach. I learned that from a book about environmental pollution, which stated that one plastic bottle takes a hundred years to decompose.”

Gladly, Ahmad said, “You know so much, Hamad, because you read a lot.”

“Let’s go, then.”

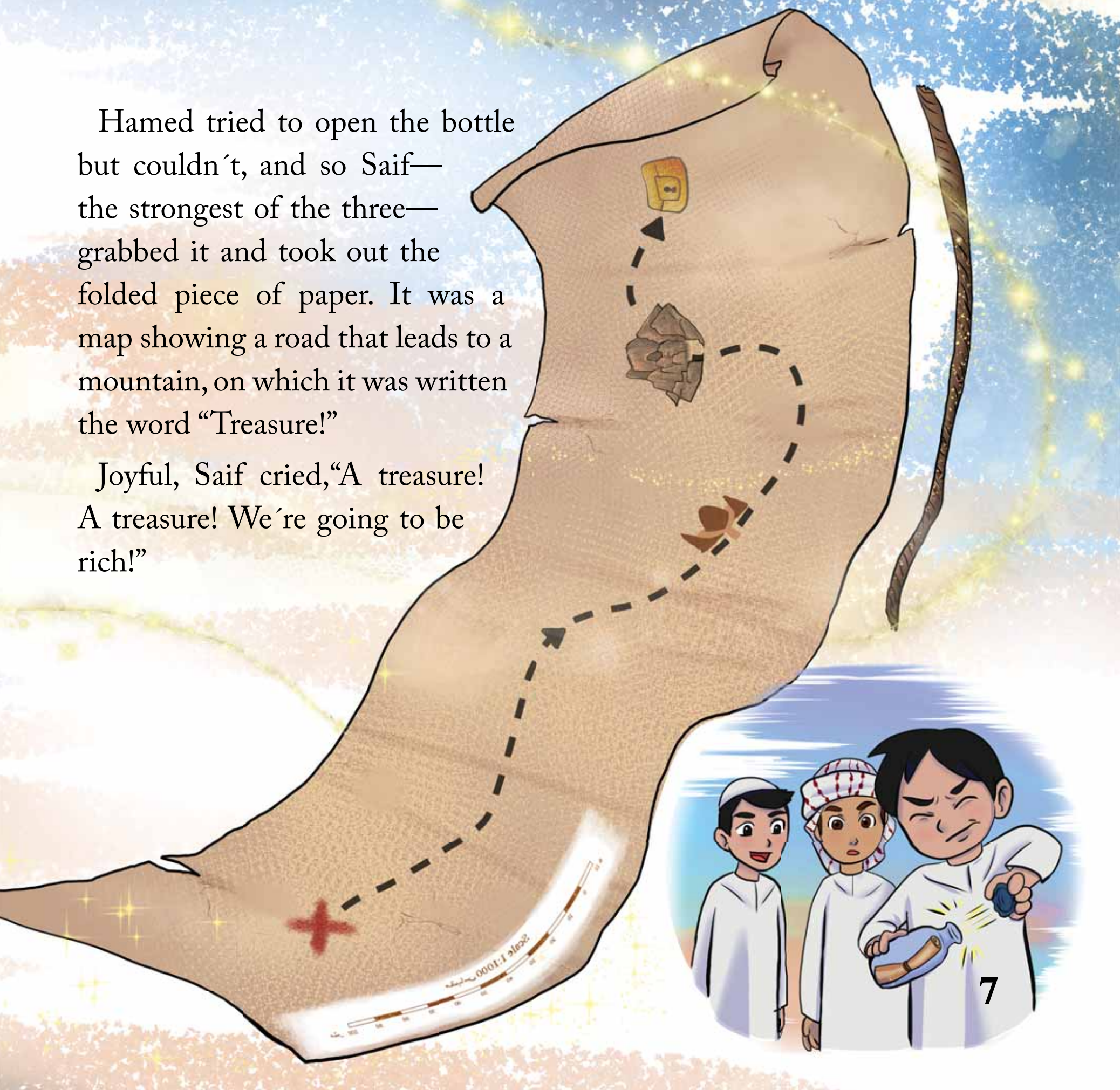
They began collecting the empty bottles.

Suddenly, Hamad saw a bottle containing a folded piece of paper. Picking it up, he waved the bottle at them, saying, “Look at this strange bottle; there’s a piece of paper inside it.”



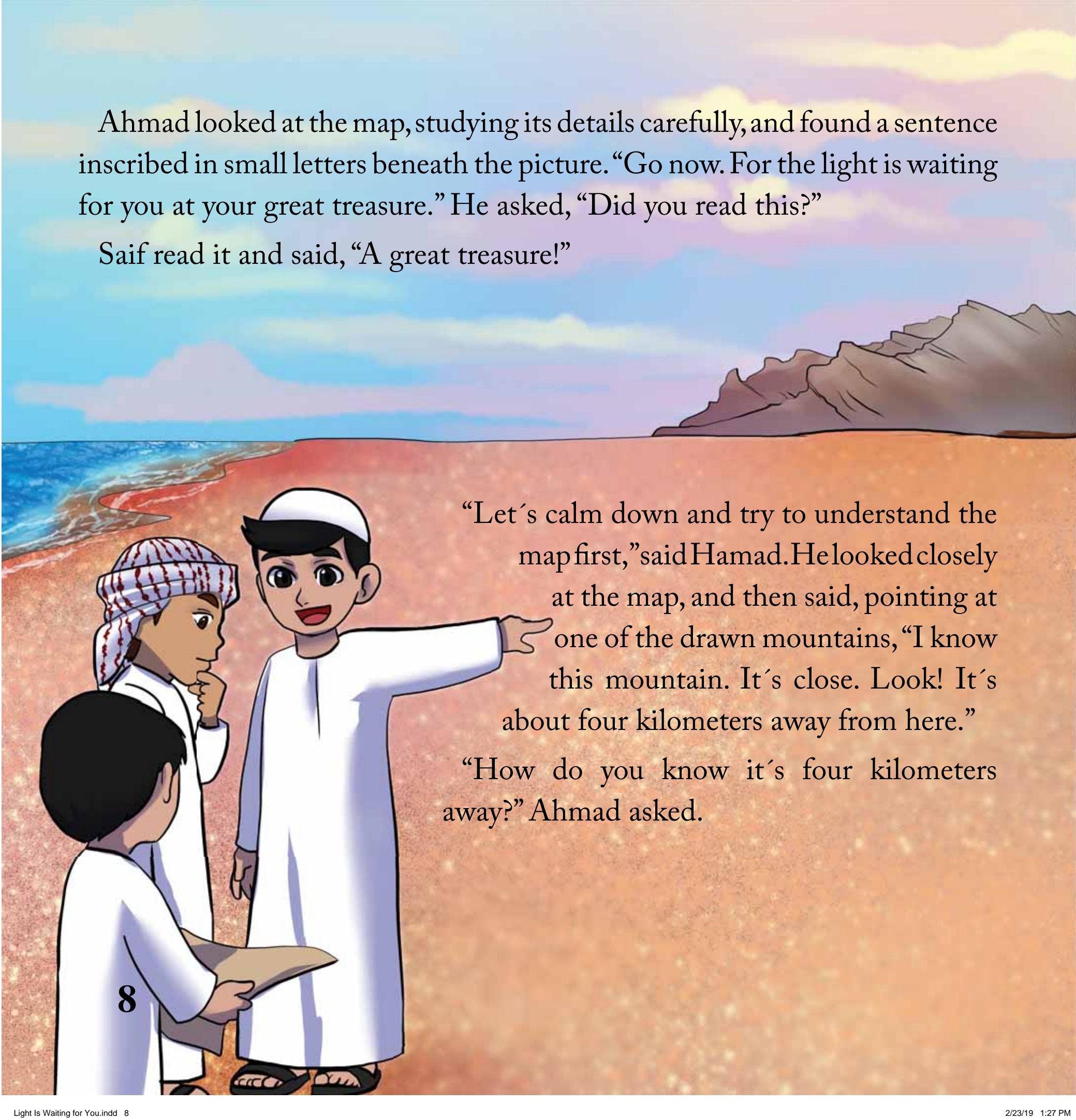
Hamed tried to open the bottle but couldn't, and so Saif—the strongest of the three—grabbed it and took out the folded piece of paper. It was a map showing a road that leads to a mountain, on which it was written the word "Treasure!"

Joyful, Saif cried, "A treasure! A treasure! We're going to be rich!"



Ahmad looked at the map, studying its details carefully, and found a sentence inscribed in small letters beneath the picture. “Go now. For the light is waiting for you at your great treasure.” He asked, “Did you read this?”

Saif read it and said, “A great treasure!”



“Let’s calm down and try to understand the map first,” said Hamad. He looked closely at the map, and then said, pointing at one of the drawn mountains, “I know this mountain. It’s close. Look! It’s about four kilometers away from here.”

“How do you know it’s four kilometers away?” Ahmad asked.

Pointing to the bottom of the map, Hamad answered, “Look at the corner of the map. There’s a drawing scale, which shows that each centimeter equals one thousand meters, which means that each centimeter equals one kilometer. And this distance is about four centimeters on the map, which means that the mountain is about four kilometers from here.”

“This is amazing, Hamad. You know so much!” Saif said, surprised.

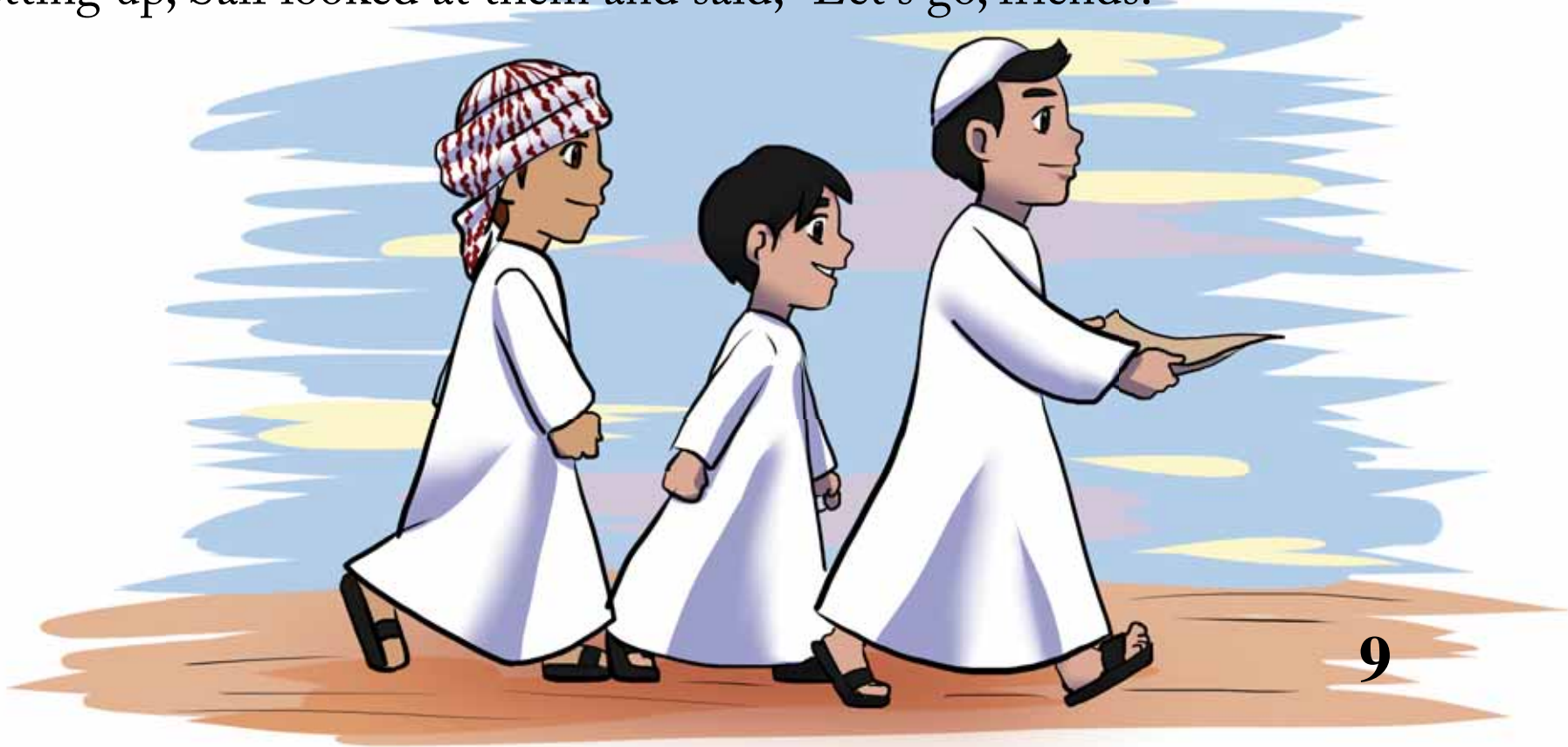
“Because I read a lot.”

“So the treasure is near,” said Ahmad. “Let’s go look for it.”

“It’s a long journey.” Hamad remarked.

Ahmad looked at him and said, “Don’t worry. Let’s go. Don’t waste our time.”

Getting up, Saif looked at them and said, “Let’s go, friends.”



(2)

They walked together along the beach, full of hope that they'd reach the great treasure as shown on the map. On their way, they came upon a group of fishermen, some mending their nets, others hauling provisions onto boats, indicating that they were preparing for a fishing trip.

Hamad exchanged greetings with the fishermen.

One old fisherman, solemn-looking, with a snow-white beard and eyes full of wisdom, called, "Boys." They turned to him, and he added, smiling, "Come here."

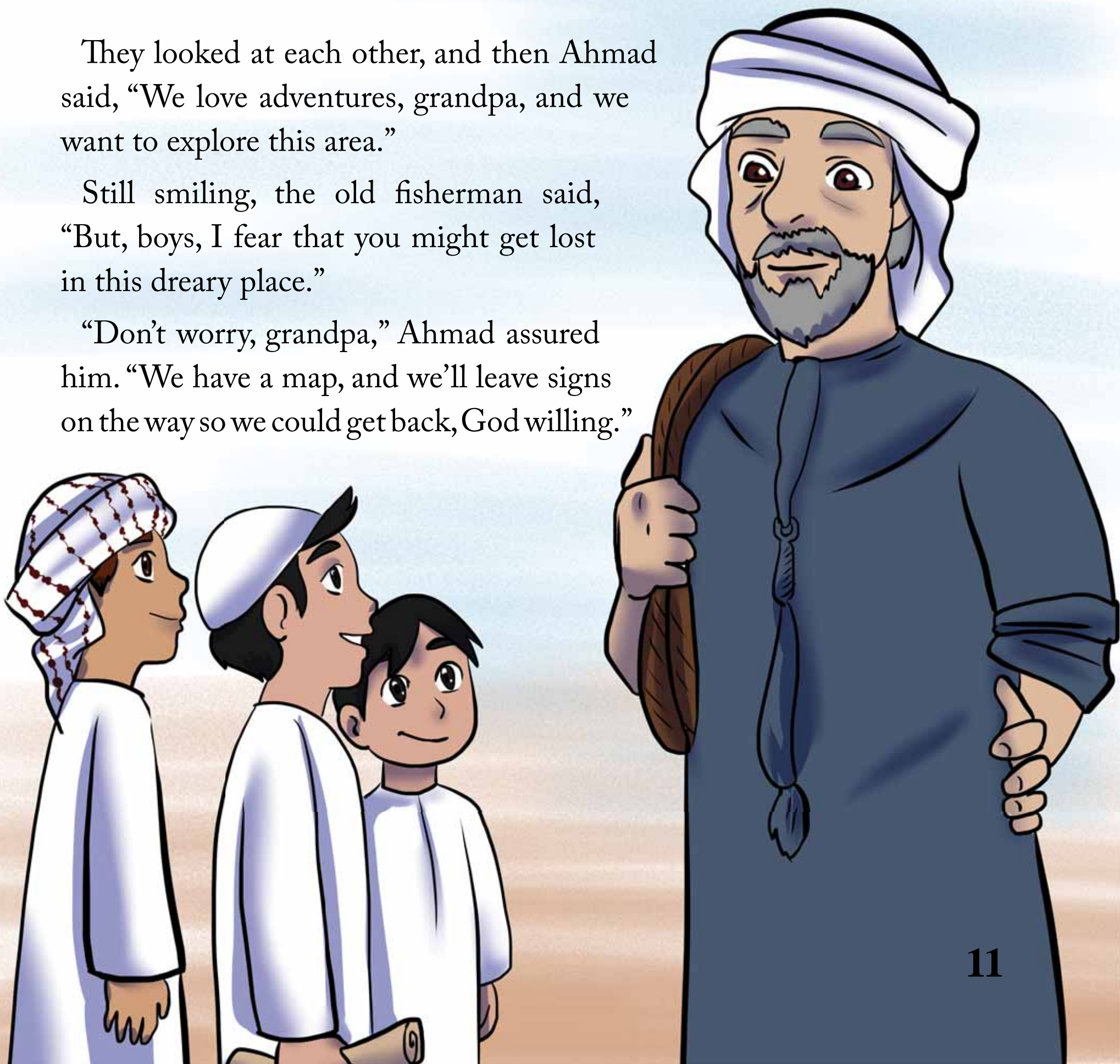
Exchanging looks of apprehension, the three boys walked towards him.

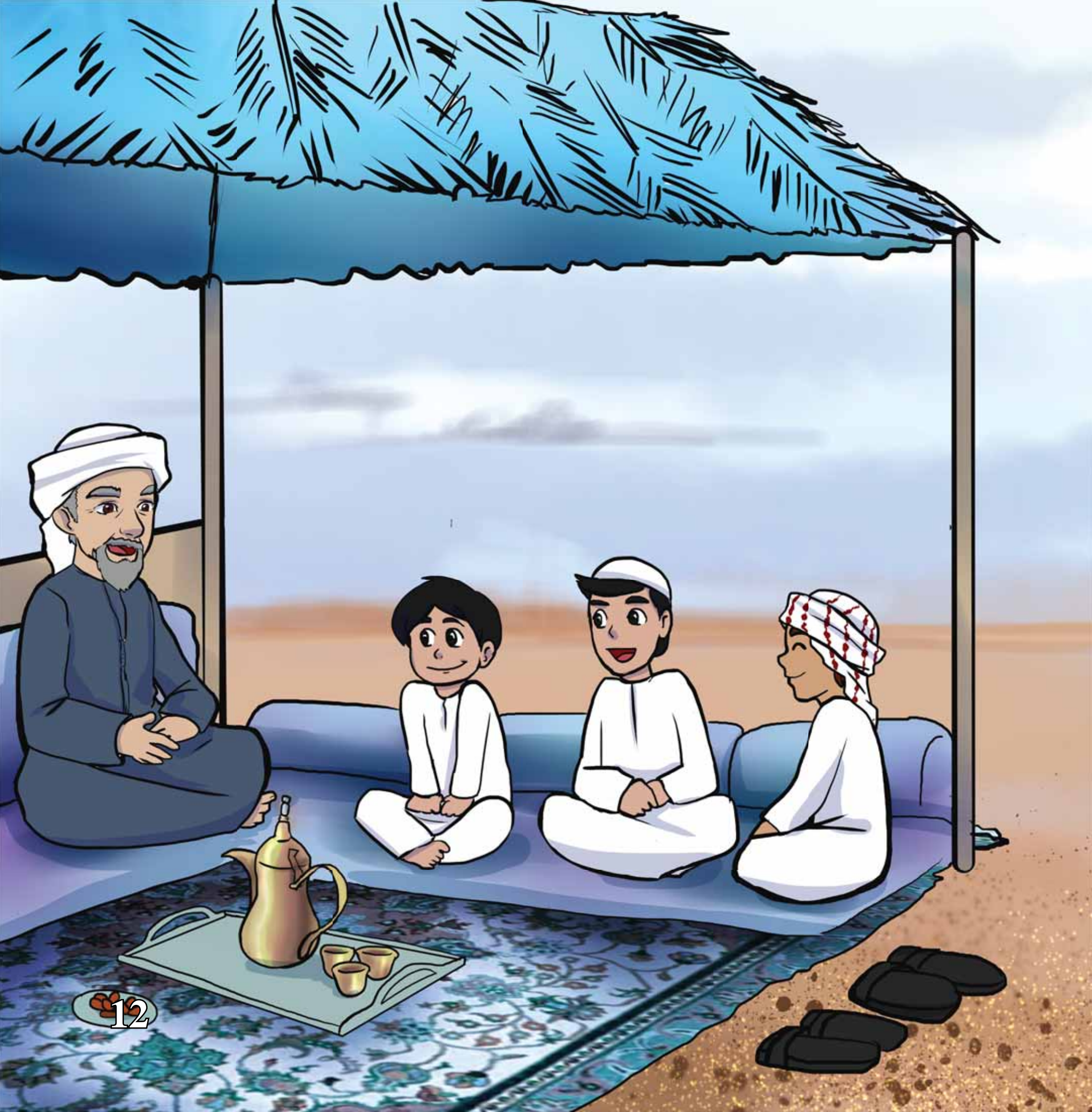
The man stood up and asked, "Where are you going? This is a mountainous area where nobody treads."

They looked at each other, and then Ahmad said, “We love adventures, grandpa, and we want to explore this area.”

Still smiling, the old fisherman said, “But, boys, I fear that you might get lost in this dreary place.”

“Don’t worry, grandpa,” Ahmad assured him. “We have a map, and we’ll leave signs on the way so we could get back, God willing.”





“Then you won’t leave without having had lunch with us,” the old fisherman insisted.

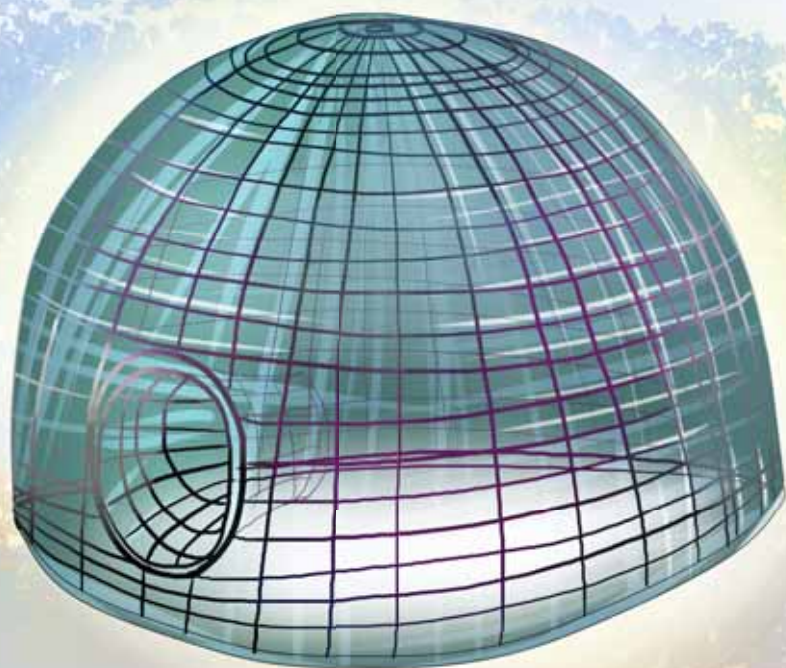
A bit abashed, Saif said, “Thank you, grandpa, but we have to keep going.”

“It’s not proper for you to leave without having had lunch.” He called, and someone came with coffee and poured for them, starting with the old man, who went on, “You will have greasy grouper fish. It’s God’s boon of the day, from the fishing trip that returned at dawn with a bountiful catch.”

Pleased, Saif cried, “I love greasy grouper fish! Thank you, grandpa.”

The three boys continued chatting with the old fisherman, who told them, “We’ll play a little game together until lunch is ready.”

Zealous, they agreed. “What kind of game, grandpa?” Hamad asked.



“I’ll ask a question,” he replied. “Whoever answers correctly will receive a gift. First question, who knows what a Karkour is?”

Ahmad answered quickly, “It’s a cage made of wires used for fishing; we drop it in the water, and when the fish enter they can’t get back out.”

Pleased, the old fisherman cried, “Well done, my son! Second question, what are Ghozoul?”

Hamad cried, “I know! They’re the fishing nets.”

“Correct!” The old man applauded. “How did you know?”

“My father told me a lot about our history and took me to many museums and taught me much about our old customs and crafts. I also read several books about our heritage.”

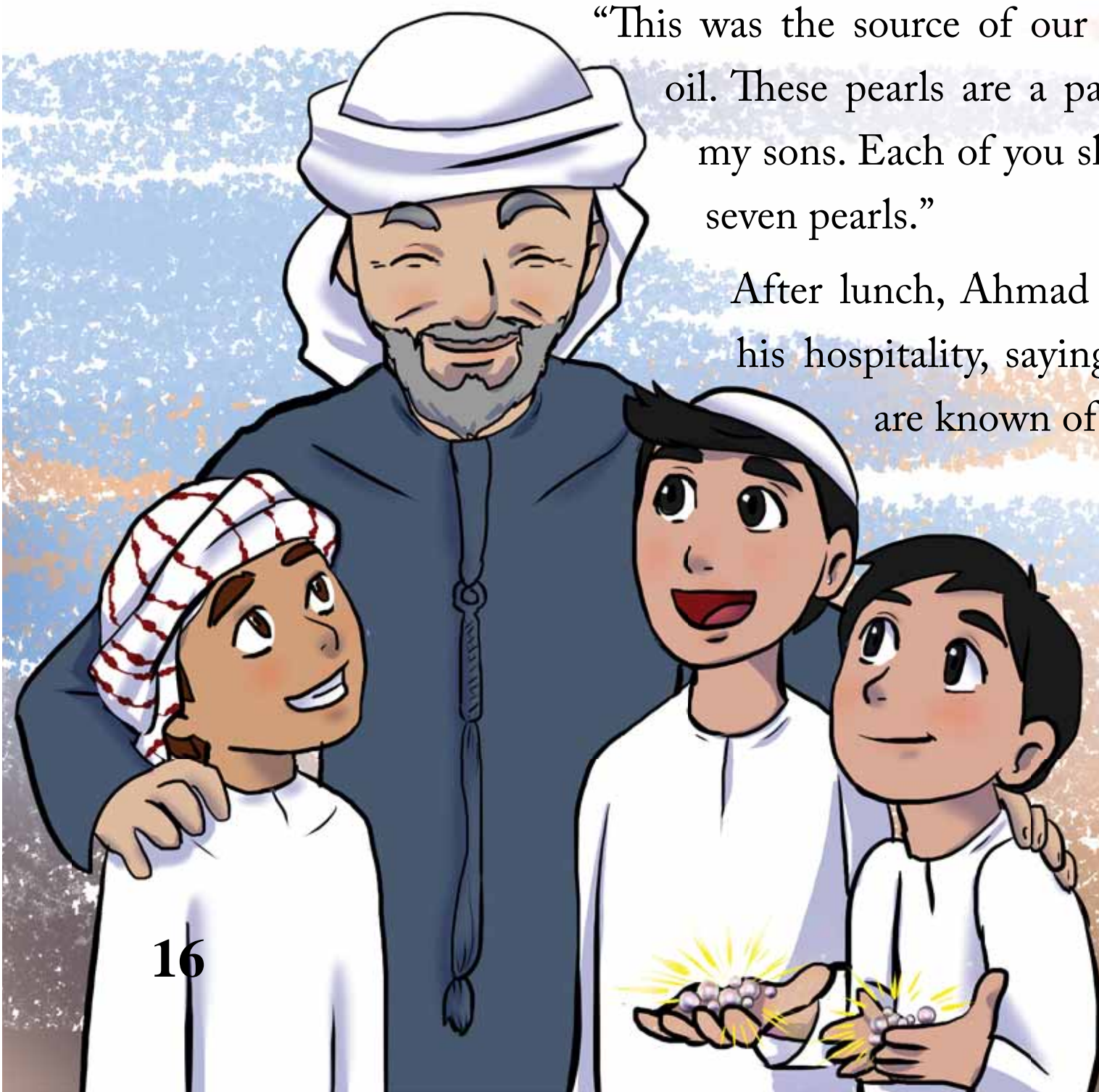
Regarding Saif, the old fisherman asked, “As for your question, my friend, do you know who a Noukhtha is?”

Confused, Saif thought a bit, and then he answered, pleased, “A noukhtha is the captain of a fishing boat. Am I right, grandpa?”

Happily, the old fisherman said, “Well done, my son. God protect you, you deserve the prize.”

The old man opened a black sack sitting next to him and took out a handful of pearls, and then he proceeded to give each one of them seven pearls, saying, “This was the source of our livelihood before oil. These pearls are a part of our history, my sons. Each of you should treasure his seven pearls.”

After lunch, Ahmad thanked him for his hospitality, saying that sea people are known of their generosity.



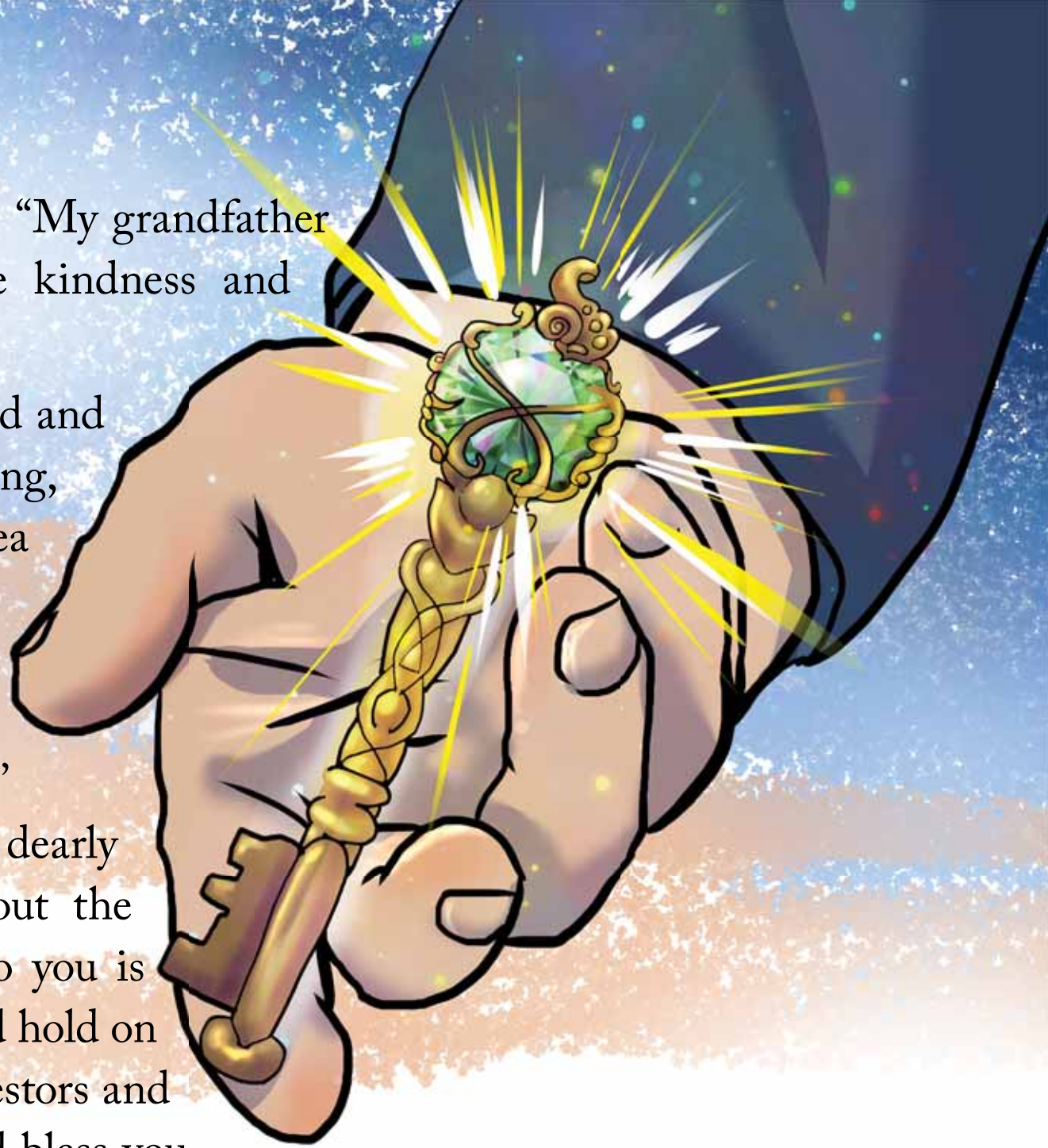
Quickly, Hamad added, “My grandfather told me a lot about the kindness and generosity of fisherman.”

The old fisherman smiled and patted their shoulders, saying, “This isn't the nature of sea people alone, boys, but the ethics, which we learned from our grandfathers, who lived on the Emirates' good earth, and we dearly cherished them throughout the generations. My advice to you is to keep to these ethics and hold on to the morals of your ancestors and be good role models. God bless you, and have a safe journey.”

When they turned to leave, the old fisherman called on Hamad, who went back to him. The old man produced an old key from his pocket, and said, “Keep this key with you, my young friend who loved to read.”

Surprised, Hamad asked, “What would I do with this key, grandpa?”

“One day you'll have need of it, so keep it with you.”



The sun was setting when they started out.

A bit frightened, Saif said, “Night is falling. They’ll get worried about us. Let’s go back home and return early in the morning to proceed.”

“Alright, then,” said Ahmad. “But don’t tell anyone. We shall meet after the Dawn Prayer.”



“I suggest that we bring our bicycles tomorrow,” said Hamad, “so we can go faster.”

They went back home, wondering about the mysterious treasure, dreaming of fulfilling all their out-of-reach dreams.



(3)

They started out after the Dawn Prayer at the mosque, each having brought his bicycle, guided by the map in their hands, until they reached a crossroads in the mountain path.

Ahmad stopped and said, “There are two roads, but the map shows only one!”

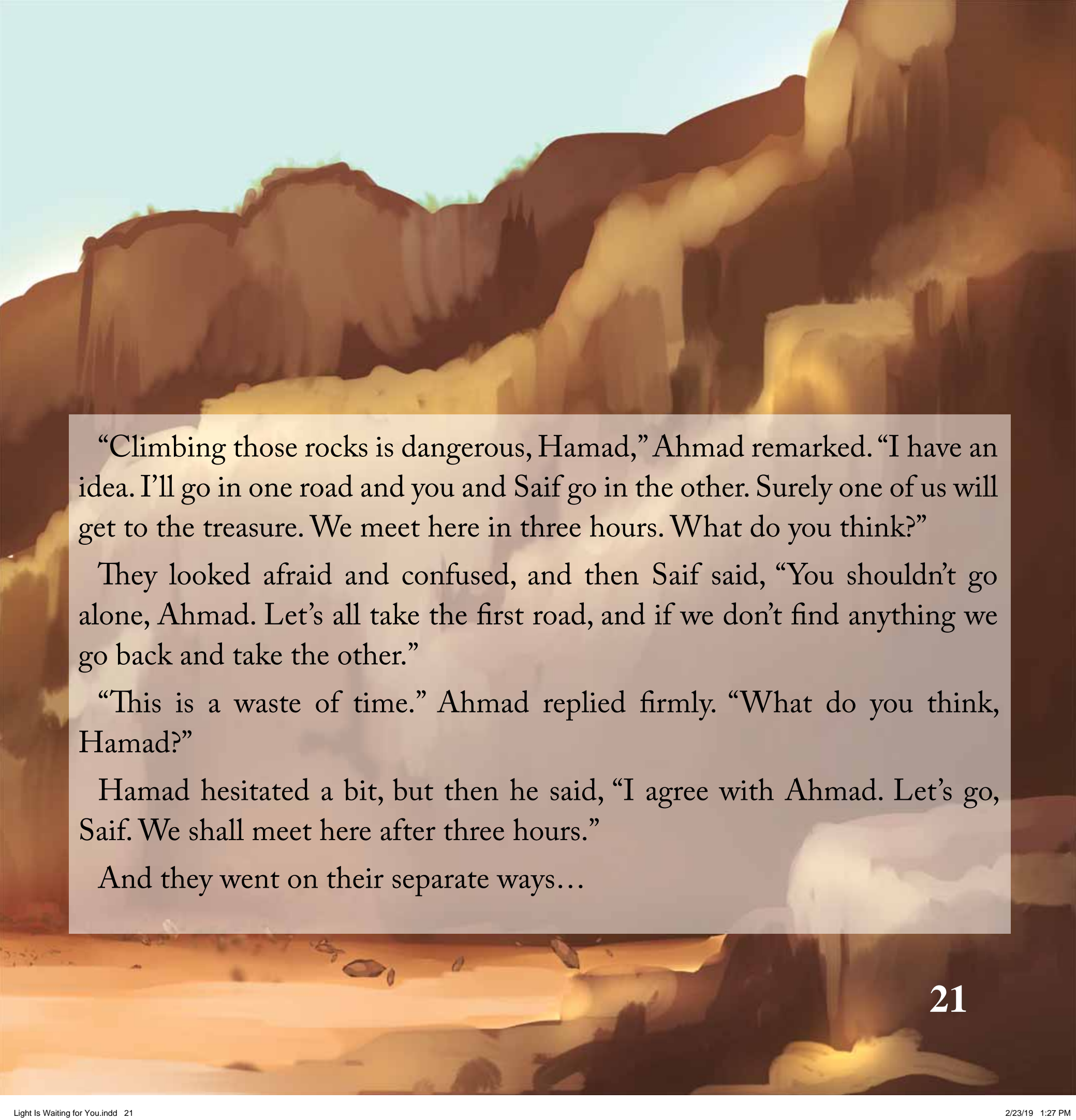
They got off their bicycles and looked at the map.

They realized that the road drawn on the map looked like it was blocked by huge stone boulders, whereas there were two forks in the mountain, unshown on the map.

Puzzled, Saif asked, “Now what?”

“We climb the rocks and leave our bicycles here.” said Hamad.





“Climbing those rocks is dangerous, Hamad,” Ahmad remarked. “I have an idea. I’ll go in one road and you and Saif go in the other. Surely one of us will get to the treasure. We meet here in three hours. What do you think?”

They looked afraid and confused, and then Saif said, “You shouldn’t go alone, Ahmad. Let’s all take the first road, and if we don’t find anything we go back and take the other.”

“This is a waste of time.” Ahmad replied firmly. “What do you think, Hamad?”

Hamad hesitated a bit, but then he said, “I agree with Ahmad. Let’s go, Saif. We shall meet here after three hours.”

And they went on their separate ways...

(4)

They followed each their paths, foreheads sweating under the hot sun.

An hour passed, and still the road went on and on in the heart of the mountain, endless. Scared and desperate, Saif said, “I want to go home. I’m afraid, Hamad.”

Hamad was resolved. “We won’t go back before we find it, Saif,” he replied firmly.


“But this road has no end, Hamad!”

“Don’t worry. We mustn’t give up on our goal just because we’re a little late to achieving it.”

“But I fear that we might get lost in the desert and mountains.”

“Don’t be afraid. It’s just the one road. We’ll go back the same way, God willing.”





Holding a copy of the map, Ahmad walked quickly. It felt that he was getting closer to the treasure. The road started to narrow gradually, until at last he reached a small hole that wouldn't let in more than one person at a time, without the bicycle.

He looked at his watch and realized that only an hour and a half have passed; and so he decided to continue on, leaving his bicycle behind by the hole.

He crossed, and found himself in a bigger, wider road, with a mountain at the end that looked like the one on the map.

Suddenly, he was startled by the sound of footsteps. He turned around...and saw Hamad and Saif coming out from a small hole next to his. They all cheered and embraced each other.

“Thank God we’re together again!” Ahmad said.

“Thank God, my friend,” said Hamad. “What shall we do now?”

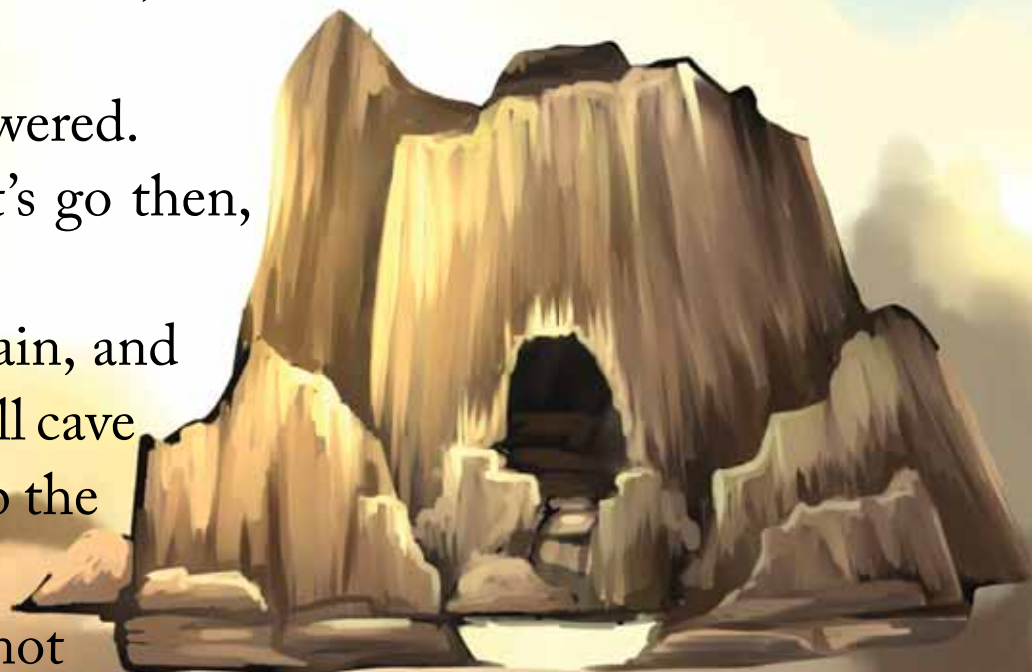
Saif pointed at the mountain, and said, “Doesn’t this mountain look like the one on the map?”

“Yes. I think it does!” Ahmad answered.

Ardently, Hamad prompted, “Let’s go then, before it gets dark.”

They hurried towards the mountain, and when they arrived, they found a small cave in the middle, one they had to climb the rocks in order to reach it.

“No” said Saif. “I’m tired and cannot climb!”





“Come on, you lazy!” Ahmad said, grabbing his hand, and together they climbed until they reached the cave.

The cave was dark except for a spot of light coming through a hole in the wall that lit something which looked like a chest.

“It’s the treasure! The treasure!” Hamad exclaimed happily.

They entered the cave, their eyes fixed upon the chest.

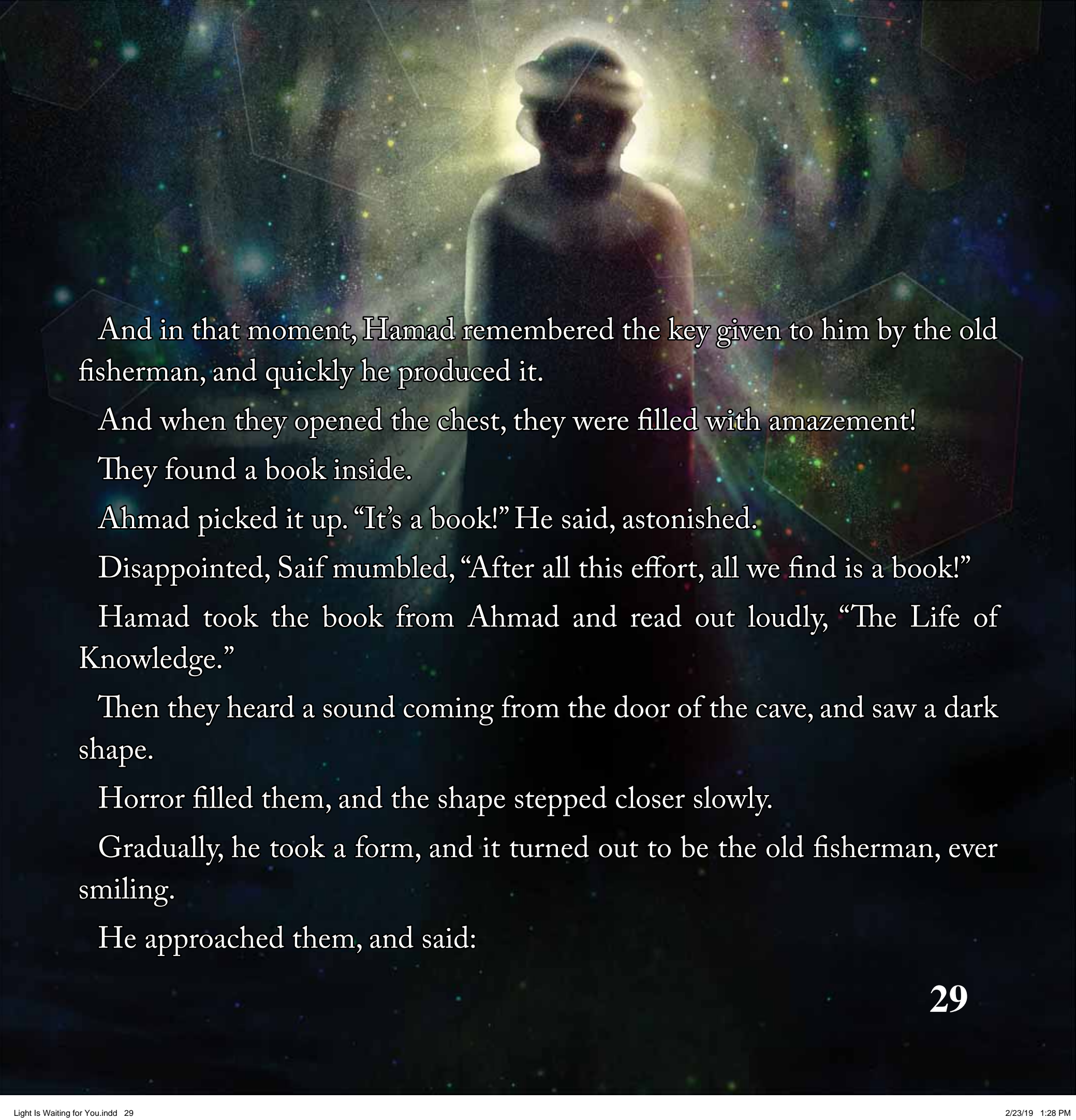
Ahmad reached out to open it, murmuring, “In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate.”

But the chest wouldn’t open.

“Looks like it’s locked,” said Saif.







And in that moment, Hamad remembered the key given to him by the old fisherman, and quickly he produced it.

And when they opened the chest, they were filled with amazement!
They found a book inside.

Ahmad picked it up. “It’s a book!” He said, astonished.

Disappointed, Saif mumbled, “After all this effort, all we find is a book!”

Hamad took the book from Ahmad and read out loudly, “The Life of Knowledge.”

Then they heard a sound coming from the door of the cave, and saw a dark shape.

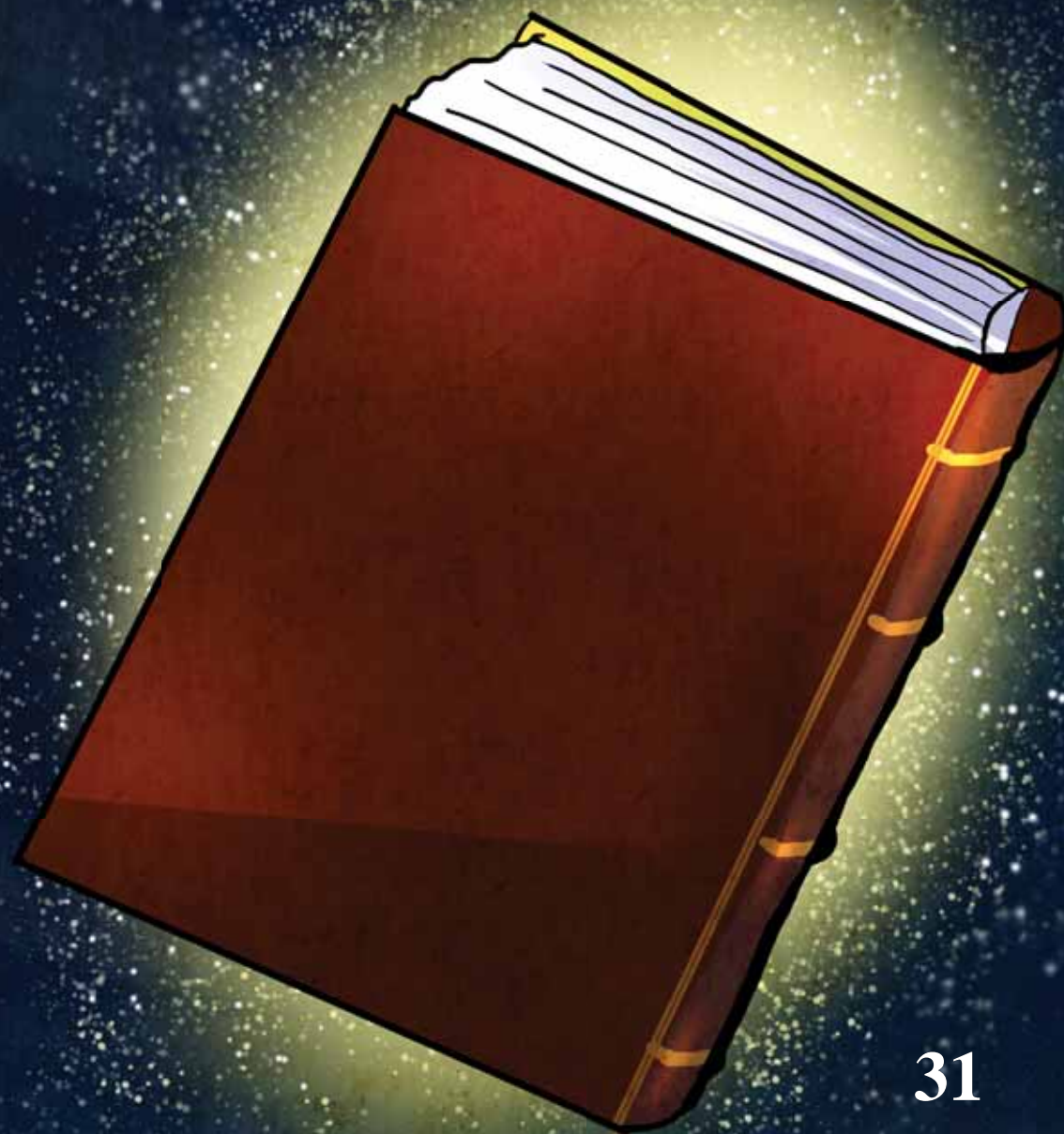
Horror filled them, and the shape stepped closer slowly.

Gradually, he took a form, and it turned out to be the old fisherman, ever smiling.

He approached them, and said:



“The book is the real treasure, my sons. Knowledge is what builds your minds. I knew you’d find my precious treasure. It’s yours. Make the best of it. Read it attentively and you shall get your share of the real treasure in its entirety, undivided. It’s knowledge!”



Dr. Shamma Bint Mohamed Bin Khaled AL Nahyan

- Born in Al Ain in Abu Dhabi, UAE.
- B.A. in Islamic studies and history.
- Masters in “Professional Fulfillment of Women in the UAE.”
- PhD in “Political and Social Security in the UAE.”
- CEO of Sheikh Mohamed ben Khaled Al Nahyan Institutions for Culture and Education, where she greatly contributes to enriching the cultural life, especially that concerning women and children.
- Visiting professor at the HTC Al Ain Women’s College.
- Founded the Shamma Council for Thought and Knowledge in Al Ain in 1997.

Bibliography:

- Working Women and Professional Fulfillment in the UAE.
- Political and Social Security in the UAE.
- The Challenges of Cultural Identity: Contemplations of the World of Reading and Knowledge Production.
- Reading Is a Life Heritage (A lecture on the biggest reading lesson, included in the 2015 Guinness World Record).
- She also writes a monthly article for the Al-Ittihad newspaper.

Awards:

- Watany Al-Emarat Award (Basmat Fekr).
- Arabian Lady Knights for Humanitarian Work.
- Exceptional Human Being Decoration.
- Khalifa Educational Award.
- Sayedaty Award, UAE, for Merit and Creativity.
- Emirates Airlines Festival Award in Arts.
- Mohamed ben Rashid Award in Arabic Language.
- Inspiring Arabian Woman Award.



الدار المصرية اللبنانية

16 عبد الخالق ثروت القاهرة.

تليفون: 202 23910250 + فاكس: 202 23909618 +

ص. ب 2022

E-mail: info@almesriah.com www.almesriah.com

جميع الحقوق محفوظة

الطبعة الأولى: 2018 م

آل نهيان، شما بنت محمد بن خالد

العزير وشترك / شما بنت محمد بن خالد آل نهيان - ط 1 - القاهرة

الدار المصرية اللبنانية 2018

32 ص: 27 صم.

تسلك: 5 - 184 - 795 - 977 - 978

1- تمهيدي الأقال. 2- القصص العربية

1- العزير. 813.02

رقم الإصدار: 2018/7973