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**Translating for Children:
Issues of Dual Readership and
Taboo-breaking Topics**

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Abstract

Translations of children's literature have historically been perceived as an inferior and peripheral type of literature; this is encouraged by the assumption that children's knowledge of the world, reading abilities, comprehension and experience in life are not as advanced as for adults. Therefore, it is common practice to conjecture that translations aimed at children do not require a great deal of effort and consideration.

The present study aims to point up the significance and intricacies of children's literature translation, along with the different debates between translation scholars as to what challenges and strategies should be borne in the translator's mind when writing for young readers, with a particular focus on taboo-breaking topics, the ambivalence of dual readership, and the domestication vs foreignization discourse. Before developing these notions, it was necessary to better understand children's literature, as it is a broad term involving all literary forms intended for children, teenagers, and sometimes even younger adults. On that account, this paper pays special attention to middle childhood, considering it the most significant and sensitive stage. Finally, results are drawn using a literature review of the debates mentioned above, a children's story named *Ibn Battuta Maana* as a case study and an interview with the latter's writer in order to answer lingering questions and in an attempt to reduce the gaps in this the field of children's literature translation and attribute a higher value to it.

Keywords: Children's literature, Taboo, Translation strategies, Translation challenges

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Introduction

One of the most well-established roles of translators is mediating between the source and target audience, breaking separation and fostering connectedness across cultures. This role is more strongly felt and is more challenging in the translation of children's literature, as translators open this magical gate for children to venture and experience the different literary masterpieces from various cultures and places; such as Aladdin's adventures in the glimmering and bustling Arabian Desert kingdom, Harry Potter's enchanting wizard lifestyle in Great Britain and The Adventures of Tom Sawyer along the Mississippi Rivers. For young readers who do not understand foreign languages, translations are the only way for them to enter into contact with these foreign pieces of literature and cultures.

In this context, Richard Bamberger, a major Austrian representative of postwar critics of children's literature, states that "the literary quality of translated children's books is on average much better than the average of children's literature in a given country." (Bamberger, 1978) He encourages cultural exchange through translations, stating that there is more demand than supply in this genre, which is "demonstrated by the fact that the percentage of translations on lists of recommended children's books is much higher than the percentage of translations in the number of children's books produced."

However, this mediation is not as neutral as the term might suggest, as translators are standing in an unstable middle between the source and target audience, a fragile spot where social forces impose themselves, especially those related to taboo and censorship, as well as issues related to the double audience of children and grownups. Surely, the mediating role is still

there, but for the most part, the translator shapes the source text in a way that is suitable for the target audience. While this applies for both young and adult readers, and translating for children is not in any way more demanding or serious, however, from a translator's point of view, often the creative, playful, but also careful use of language offers an additional challenge in that it requires a special treatment for the text to fit in the imaginative world of the child.

First and foremost, we must determine more accurately the category in question, for childhood is a long and general phase, and there are various types of literature and topics aimed at different age ranges of childhood. Although all stages of childhood are considered important in human development and have significant contributions to personality, more recent theorists have recognized the important role that middle childhood plays in the development of cognitive skills, personality, motivation, and interpersonal relationships. Therefore, in this research, this complex yet significant stage is going to be our main focus. However, the limits of this stage, where it starts and where it ends, are very malleable and easily influenced culturally by practices, institutions and laws that make up a society, and they differ from one theorist to another. So, when does middle childhood start and end? Why is it considered the most important stage of childhood? How do writers and translators choose age ratings?

This paper aims to provide a better understanding of the aforementioned challenges of translating for children, namely those related to deviations from the source text, which are caused by:

- Cultural references and the translator's dilemma between foreignization and domestication.

- Dual readership and the pressure that affects the translator with the involvement of adults as a second audience and what they may consider to be taboo for children.

This paper also works toward finding middle ground in the translators and writers' experience with children literature in order to answer the following questions:

- How does dual readership affect the translation experience?
- Is this an opportunity for the translator to rely on this mediator (the older reader)? Since the latter can also be considered as a second translator, as she/he is in a position to explain to the child and gloss over for them.
- Is it an even greater challenge since the translator has to “please” both the older and younger ends of the audience?
- How are translations aimed at children influenced by factors such as taboo-breaking topics and cultural references?
- Should the translator opt for domestication and shape the text in a way suitable for the target audience? Or use foreignization to bring the child into contact with other cultures?

I. I. Literature Review:

1. Definition of middle childhood:

Sigmund Freud refers to middle childhood as the "Latency period" (Freud, 1923), which begins at the age of six and concludes with puberty. As children get older, they internalize society's rules and ideals, as a result, they begin to build their superego, which serves as society's conscience. If a kid does not grow properly and the superego does not mature sufficiently, the individual is more likely to commit antisocial behaviour.

According to Jean Piaget, middle childhood, which he refers to as the "Concrete Operational Stage", occurs between the ages of 7 and 11. During this stage, the child starts to show appropriate use of logic, and his/her thought process becomes more mature and "adult-like." (Piaget, 1979) During this period, the child also acquires the ability to view things from another individual's perspective, even if they do not agree with that perspective. This is important in the context of children literature because, for instance, if you show a story to a child in the concrete operational stage, they can understand the characters' thoughts and have the capacity for empathy and understanding of their feelings, they can also entertain possibilities for the future of the characters as well as their own, and are fascinated with what they can be.

Kohlberg (1969) expanded on Piaget's work by investigating how our moral thinking evolves as we mature. He was curious about how people judge what is right and what is wrong. Kohlberg claimed that humans learn moral ideals via active thinking and reasoning, much as Piaget believed that children's cognitive development follows particular patterns.

Kohlberg is known for his study on moral development through what is called the Heinz dilemma, which is a moral situation to see how children would respond. Heinz dilemma is a story about a woman in Europe who was in a near-death situation due to a rare type of cancer, but there was one druggist in town who had discovered a drug that could potentially save her life. The drug was expensive as it is, as it cost 200\$, but the druggist was charging ten times this price. Heinz, the sick woman's husband, put together all his savings and money he borrowed from every person he knew but only managed to gather 1000\$. He explained the situation to the druggist, but the latter refused to sell him the drug for that price. Later, Heinz broke into the druggist's store and stole the drug for his wife. The question to children was: "Should Heinz have done that?" And the results are as follows:

Preconventional Morality (young children)

Table 12.1.1: Lawrence Kohlberg's Levels of Moral Reasoning

Stage	Description
Stage 1	Focus is on self-interest and punishment is avoided. The man shouldn't steal the drug, as he may get caught and go to jail.
Stage 2	Rewards are sought. A person at this level will argue that the man should steal the drug because he does not want to lose his wife who takes care of him.

Conventional Morality (older children, adolescents, most adults)

Stage	Description
Stage 3	Focus is on how situational outcomes impact others and wanting to please and be accepted. The man should steal the drug because that is what good husbands do.
Stage 4	People make decisions based on laws or formalized rules. The man should obey the law because stealing is a crime.

Post Conventional Morality (rare in adolescents, a few adults)

Stage	Description
Stage 5	Individuals employ abstract reasoning to justify behaviors. The man should steal the drug because laws can be unjust and you have to consider the whole situation.
Stage 6	Moral behavior is based on self-chosen ethical principles. The man should steal the drug because life is more important than property.

Erik Erikson also states that middle childhood occurs between the ages of 6 and 11. In this period, the kid learns the ideals of his or her society, develops moral beliefs, and understands cultural and individual distinctions. Erikson says that the job for caregivers and others in the child's environment is to identify and respond appropriately to this period by nurturing and

supporting the child's developing cognitive skills, as well as offering assistance by being sensitive to many issues, they can also help by celebrating cultural diversity and attempting to develop cultural awareness and sensitivity of all children. These treatments appear to encourage fewer negative stereotypes of peers belonging to minority groups. (Erik Erikson, 1950)

2. The issue of Dual Readership:

Because children have not been around as long as adults, it is acceptable to assume that they are readers with fewer cultural references. Because they are newer to this place, they have accumulated significantly fewer international cultural aspects than the adults. In view of this, Tiina Puurtinen (1998) points out:

Special characteristics of the child readers, their comprehension and reading abilities, experience of life and knowledge of the world must be borne in mind so as not to present them with overly difficult, uninteresting books that may alienate them from reading.

In addition, the wide array of attempts to define children's literature winds up reinforcing the adult's presence in the different processes involved in the production and translation of this type of literature. The basics of translation are often the same whether the translator's audience is adults or youngsters; the translator's job is to figure out what matters and how to keep it. When translating for children, however, the translator is dealing with a dual audience; parents are typically present, and there is always some sort of mediating happening. Because, for instance, it is not the six-year-old who is going to be in the bookstore and give their money or their credit card to buy the book, and it is not the six-year-old who is going to be in the judging panels, or

who chooses what goes into the libraries and what does not.

Emer O'Sullivan (1991) presents a list of factors to consider when translating children's books, which can lead to changes in the structural aspects of a text; the factors are the “interplay of picture and words in picture book, cultural references, playful use of language (...) and the potential of double audience.”

She also differentiates at least two sorts of implied readers, the young reader and adult reader, and she raises the question on what happens in such cases of stories with multiple recipients in translation:

The adult figure practically mediates all steps taken in the production of children's books until their arrival in the hands of the intended recipient. Writing, translating, publishing, reviewing and recommending are all performed by adults. Librarians manage the books and teachers are responsible for their use in the classroom, reading them and promoting the encouragement for students to read them. Parents and relatives are often the ones who purchase the books, but can also play the role of readers and censors. Paradoxically, without the adult in this process there would not be children's literature. (O'Sullivan, 2013)

One of the world's most frequently translated authors, Hans Christian Andersen (2013), was fully aware of his dual readership too. He says, “I seize on an idea for grown-ups and then tell the story to the little ones while always remembering that mother or father often listen in, and you must also give them something for their minds.”

Professor Jo Lampert from La Trobe University's School of Education argues that there are many personalities that come between the birth of a book and its arrival to the hands of the young reader. She states that "children's books are heavily mediated in a way that adult books are not," because "there's the author, but there is the publisher, there's the editor, there's the publicist, there's the librarian, there's the parent and there's the teacher."

Mary Hoffman (1990) is also aware of this double audience issue, but the secondary audience she directs her attention to is the publishers. In this context, she states that "British publishers are becoming increasingly careful about how they portray American books to English children... When they do purchase them, they alter everything from the spelling to the culture." And she explains that this procedure is financially motivated to "the many adults who mediate the books between the writer and reader."

Thomson-Wohlgemuth (2004) also admits to the fact that "the significant role of the publishers in this selection process is evident. Not only did they have to consider the general quality of a book (like any other publisher in the world), they also had to constantly take into account how a particular book would be judged 'higher up'."

On the other hand, Riitta Oittinen (1993) is, for the most part, concerned with the child reader; she affirms that it is relatively essential to be loyal to the target language readers than to the original material. The Finnish translator also posits that children's literature is no less significant than other categories:

Works of literature and whole literature genres acquire different meanings and are redefined again and again. It might, therefore, well be that today's adult literature is tomorrow's children's literature.

3. The debate of Domestication vs Foreignization:

Riitta Oittinen (2000) explores how the norms and values of a certain culture influence translations of children's books, as well as the norms and values that lay latent in the translator's personal child image. She states that "translation for children refers to translating for a certain audience and respecting this audience through taking the audience's will and abilities into consideration." Oittinen took a subtle stance in the debate between foreignization and domestication; she points out the delicate nature of the concept of ethics in the context of children's literature and concludes that all translating for children inevitably becomes an activity guilty of domestication.

Similarly, American translation theorist, Lawrence Venuti (1995), argues that rewriting is an ineluctable aspect of translation and states that translation is:

An inevitable domestication, wherein the foreign text is inscribed with linguistic and cultural values that are intelligible to specific domestic constituencies. This process of inscription operates at every stage in the production, circulation, and reception of the translation... translation is instrumental in shaping domestic attitudes towards foreign countries, attaching esteem or stigma to specific ethnicities, races, and nationalities, able to foster respect for cultural difference or hatred based on ethnocentrism, racism, or patriotism.

Similar to Oittinen, Wollstonecraft (1989), revealing her translation techniques, states that she pays close attention to the child reader's possible reaction. She openly confesses that her translation is guilty of domestication. So she adds within the preface of her translation of Christian Gotthilf Salzmann's *Elements of Morality for the Use of Children*, as cited by Marilyn Butler in the second volume of *The Works of Mary Wollstonecraft*:

I term it a translation, though I do not pretend to assert that it is a literal one; on the contrary, beside making it an English story, I have made some additions, and altered many parts of it, not only to give it the spirit of an original, but to avoid introducing any German customs or local opinions. My reason for naturalizing it must be obvious - I did not wish to puzzle children by pointing out modifications of manners, when the grand principles of morality were to be fixed on a broad basis.

Göte Klingberg (1986) devotes the greatest attention to the topic of whether cultural references in the source text may be modified to fit in the target culture. He tends to demand the preservation of original references in his overly prescriptive style. He argues that "removal of peculiarities of the foreign culture or change of cultural elements for such elements which belong to the culture of the target language will not further readers' knowledge of and interest in the foreign culture." Klingberg remains flexible in this topic but specifically rejects a type of deviations: purification and abridgement: Purification involves deleting what adults in the target culture may consider as taboo for children, and abridgements which render the source text shorter by removing some details or less important information. This type of change, according to him, distorts the meaning of the original text.

Mary Howitt (2016), who learned Danish specifically to translate to Hans Christian Andersen's writings, but despite her dedication and respect for him as the original writer, she was similarly concerned with the young reader above all else; in her translation of one of Andersen's works, she added a poem for the young readers in the preface, as cited by Wilhelm, in an attempt to inspire confidence in them, which Andersen himself was pleased about and approved of. Howitt begins her translation with the following message:

"To English Children"

This little book comes from the hand,

Dear Children, of a friend -

Throughout the kindred German land,

Tis loved from end to end,

'Tis loved when sternest winter chills;

When summer gilds the vine;

From Russia to the Tyrol hills;

From the Black Sea to the Rhine.

The decision between foreignizing and domesticating translation techniques in children's literature is frequently related to educational standards. Most translators consider it necessary that the source material should be tailored to the target culture. These changes were founded on the premise that the young reader's language and literary development, as well as his or her understanding of the world in general, were insufficient to ensure a sufficient level of recognizability and empathy, which are two qualities that are regarded as essential for children's literature. However, a growing number of translators attempt to keep a degree of foreignness in

their translations out of respect for the original material and in order to expose children to other cultures.

II. Methodology:

1. Scope of research

Before anything else, I had to define a target age group which is young readers, because children's literature is a diverse field in terms of focus and methodology. Therefore, my target was the most significant and sensitive stage of childhood, which is middle childhood (7 to 12) according to experts such as Sigmund Freud, Jean Piaget, Erik Erikson and others. Next, I created a thesis statement with a clear position: the extent of the impact of the double audience and taboo-breaking topics in children's literature on the translator and how it affects the translation experience.

2. Gathering data

Then I developed a hypothesis to create a literature review that is anchored to the main themes of this paper: (1) Significance of middle childhood, (2) Translating for children, (3) Challenges of taboo and dual readership. After finding sources by eminent translation scholars, the likes of Riitta Oittinen, Emer O'Sullivan and Lawrence Venuti which most closely pertain to my topic and position. I discovered that most of the books concerned with translating for children tackle several challenges related to this type of literature in general, including children's imperfect linguistic competence, challenges of translating personal names and onomatopoeias (noises and sound effects) etc.

On that account, I selected citations related to topics of dual readership and cultural references in the context of translating children's literature. Therefore, a qualitative analysis of literature is appropriate in this paper to examine previous texts related to the importance of

middle childhood, children's literature and its translation, challenges of taboo and dual readership and how these aspects the translation experience. And as language and communication professor Klaus Krippendorff (2013) postulates, "all reading of texts is qualitative, even when certain characteristics of a text are later converted into numbers."

3. Evaluating sources:

After gathering data, I found that the sources contribute to a debate. My next step was to address the gap in the existing research, which is whether dual readership should be taken into account by the translator, as well as finding answers to the ongoing discourse of domestication vs foreignization of cultural references in children's literature.

4. Addressing the gap

In an attempt to reduce the gaps and give more practicality to my research, I chose the children's story "*Ibn Battuta Maana*" by Elarbi Benjelloun as a case study. This story is an imaginary setting of the renowned traveler Ibn Battuta and a group of children from the present time. The Moroccan explorer recounts his adventures in different countries to the kids, and naturally, the story is filled with numerous traditions from Africa, the Middle East and South Asia. This makes it home to many cultural references, and it is one of the reasons why I selected it as a case study, along with the fact that it is aimed at children from 9 to 12 years old and the significant status that the writer Elarbi Benjelloun holds in this field.

Additionally, I requested an interview with children stories writer Mr Elarbi Benjelloun. With the aim of getting answers to questions analogous to challenges of children literature, his

own experience with dual readership and cultural references, as well as the expectations he has from translators who work on his publications.

III. Data Analysis and Findings:

1. Target age group

Developmental levels are an important consideration, “Professor Lampert draws a sharp distinction between books for very young children, junior fiction and young adult fiction.” And the common pattern identified in existing research in stages of childhood is that the phase from 7 to 12 years old is agreed upon to be middle childhood, it plays a huge role in the child’s perception of morality, empathy, right and wrong, which are elements reinforced by adults who, in order to protect children, serve as mediators between children and the real world. Sigmund Freud (2018) states that “the objects of the taboo are many: they aim at (...) safeguarding children and common people generally.”

2. Case study

As mentioned earlier, “*Ibn Battuta Maana*” is filled with cultural references and would require some effort and adaptation from the translator:

2.1. Taboo-breaking topics:

غَيْرَ أَنْ صِهْرِي وَالِدَ زَوْجَتِي، لَمْ يُرِدْ أَنْ
يَصْحَبَنِي، فَتَخَاصَمْنَا، بَلْ تَشَاجَرْنَا (تَضَارَبْنَا)
وَتَرَكَتُهُ غَاضِبًا، فَتَبِعْتُهُ بِنْتُهُ، ثُمَّ تَزَوَّجْتُ أُخْرَى
مِنْ (فَاسٍ) نُرَافِقُنَا (تَصْحَبُنَا) فِي هَذِهِ الرَّحْلَةِ !

According to Ibn Battuta’s journey, the traveller got “married at least 10 times.” Although polygamy was common back then and is still legal and practised nowadays in many

parts of the world, it is banned in the United States and is considered as “a topic that is not spoken out loud about very much due in real life to its illicit nature... it is still very much a taboo to practice today – not to mention that it is still illegal in all 50 states.” Therefore, translations of this story would require domestication if the target audience is English-speaking children, potentially young American readers.

On that account, the translated work has to keep the idea of the second marriage of Ibn Battuta, without any hints of polygamy, so instead of saying:

But my father-in-law refused to accompany me; we argued and even quarrelled. I left him angrily, and his daughter, my wife, followed him. So I married another woman in Fez to accompany me on the rest of the journey.

I opted for the following translation:

But my father-in-law refused to accompany me, and we had an argument, which then turned into a squabble. So I left in a fury, but his daughter went with him. I continued my journey alone until I reached Fez, where I met another woman and married her, and she accompanied me on this journey.

2.2. Brutal images:

- إِنَّ الْمَرَأَةَ الْهِنْدِيَّةَ الَّتِي تُحْرَقُ نَفْسَهَا بَعْدَ
زَوْجِهَا، يُحْرَزُ (يَنَالُ وَيَحْصُلُ) أَهْلُهَا شَرْقًا
رَفِيعًا بَيْنَ الْأَسْرِ، لِأَنَّهَا وَفِيَّةٌ لِزَوْجِهَا، تَرْفُضُ
الْعَيْشَ بِدُونِهِ . وَهَذِهِ عَادَاتٌ سَيِّئَةٌ يُمَارَسُونَهَا فِي
بَلَدِهِمْ !

Another case that requires the translator's intervention is this part of the story, where Ibn Battuta retells what he witnessed in India of "odd" traditions. This practice in India, according to Dr Sophie Gilmartin (1997), is called the Sati or Suttee; it is a ritual during which a widow sacrifices herself by sitting atop her deceased husband's funeral pyre. There were many instances in which this practice was prohibited in India between the 15th and 18th centuries. The British were one of the resilient dissidents of the Sati, considering it a cruel and brutal practice, and made it illegal in 1829.

A word-for-word translation would be as follows:

The Indian woman, who burns herself alive after her husband's death, earns her family great consideration among people because she is loyal to her husband and refuses to live without him. This is a bad tradition practised in India.

Since the translated work is written for young readers, my translation included words and expressions which are less shocking than those in the original text, such as "sacrifice" instead of "burn to death", without any drastic changes in the idea of the source text, especially because this

concerns a cultural reference, which is considered an important asset of the original work, and many scholars argue that such items must be maintained in the translation.

The result is as follows:

In India, the woman who sacrifices herself after losing her husband earns her family great consideration among people for her fidelity to her husband and refusal to live without him. This is; indeed, a bad tradition practised in India.

2.3. Inappropriateness:

أَوَانِي الدَّهَبِ وَالْفِضَّةِ، وَلِكُلِّ وَاحِدٍ مِنْهُمْ عُكَّازٌ
يَعْتَمِدُ عَلَيْهِ فِي الْمَشْيِ، وَيَقُولُونَ هُوَ الرَّجُلُ

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الثَّالِثَةُ . وَالْحَرِيرُ عِنْدَهُمْ كَثِيرٌ جِدًّا، لِأَنَّ الدُّودَ

The third case concerns potential inappropriateness in the translation; choosing between a literal translation and adaptation was a complicated decision. The problem lies in the expression “الرجل الثالثة”. This, if translated literally, could be interpreted by the reader as a sexual connotation. One could argue that children are too ingenuous to misunderstand it. However, this

is one of the main issues of this paper; children literature involves adult readers as well. As mentioned before, the older end of the readership is the ones who go into bookstores to purchase books for the younger end. This indirectly influences the translation experience; if the translator is concerned about the adult customer's reaction to seeing such expression in the translated work, he/she would plump for a different metaphor or simply omit the problematic expression altogether.

3. Interview

In order to find answers to the lingering questions in the existing academic conversation, as well as those related to the story "*Ibn Battuta Maana*", I had the honour to have a remote interview with UNESCO prize-winning writer Elarbi Benjelloun, whose stories for children have been adopted in education by several European states and world organizations.

Mr Benjelloun and I addressed issues of dual readership and adults' involvement in children's literature and how it affects the writing experience and potentially the translation experience, for the translator is also a writer.

Note that the following is my translation of the interview; the latter was originally conducted in Arabic:

- Thank you once again for this opportunity; I am greatly honoured. I have a few questions regarding the topic of writing for children and its challenges, which I would like you to answer on the basis of your experience.

- Thank you for contacting me. I will answer your questions to the best of my ability.
- What are the challenges you face when writing literature aimed at children, which are different from those of other literary genres? And how do you deal with these challenges?
- At first, I used to write for children without distinguishing between childhood stages, but as I got older, and after reading books about children's psychology and education, it dawned on me that there are many children who read my publications, not one child. And that every stage of childhood is characterized by different intellectual, psychological and linguistic characteristics, which should be taken into account in writing to children. As a result, I feel that I am no longer challenged because I have had the tools of creative writing for children, and thanks to my great love for this innocent and fun genre.
- Do you take into account the issue of censorship and adults' involvement in children's literature when writing stories? Especially the story of "*Ibn Battuta Maana*", which is loaded with various cultural references that some might consider inappropriate for children?
- Actually, I do not, whatever it is, wherever it comes from. However, I believe that when writing for the child, I have to write about topics that interest and concern him/her and that we should not give children everything, or else they will have nothing to look forward to when they grow up. Regarding my work of Ibn Battuta, it contains subjects suitable for the child, which I picked very carefully from the traveller's long journey. Speaking of that, the director of an Arab

magazine asked me for a collection of stories for his children, and I brought him some of my stories. About a month later, I called him, and he told me he did not like my stories, content and form. I asked him, "did I write them to you or to your kids?" to which he replied: "I read them to check if they are suitable for them or not." I told him that the stories were meant for the little ones to enjoy, not grownups. A few weeks after that, he called me, asking for more stories because his kids enjoyed them and were tempted to read more. That's why, if there is any censorship that I keep in mind, it is the child's.

- So the involvement of adults, whether they are parents, teachers, does not affect your writing experience in any way.
- I have nothing to do with adults. I gather young readers' notes and I take them into consideration because my work is mainly directed at them, and from them, I draw positive and negative observations when I organize reading workshops.
- How do you define the target age group in your work? For example, 9 to 12 for *Ibn Battuta Maana*.
- I believe that each childhood stage has its own characteristics. So when I want to write for the first phase, for example, which is from two to five years old, I choose for it a subject that is appropriate, and then I "unload" the subject into the right technical and artistic form, using the language, the narrative, the characters and the story, and so on for the rest of the stages.
- Since taboo subjects vary from one culture to another, do you think that the age group you chose may be different after translation, for example?

- I write what is appropriate for children of their age, and I do not think about what is allowed and what is prohibited. Because naturally, I am used to writing child-friendly content after over 40 years in this field. Regarding translation, I believe that the translator must preserve the content as much as possible, as it is an intellectual responsibility of his. But if he wants to comment, he has that right, either between parentheses, at the end of the page, or at the end of the translated work, he could say, for example: "This is what the author wrote in the original text. In my opinion, he should not have touched on this point, so I made some changes..." or something along the lines.
- Do you read translations of your works? What do you think of them? Do you see that the translators did your original work justice?
- Actually, I never read translations of my works, for the simple reason that I do not master other languages, and secondly, I consider the translator to be often doing his best in translation, he is correct most of the time, and is wrong a few times because there are words, phrases, or names, that are hard to translate in the exact sense, and that's why the translator and I should both be content with the "rough translation".
- Do you have any fears or aspirations related to the quality of the translation of your works?
- Not really, I would not evaluate the translations. I consider the translation; however it is, to be a contribution to the widespread of culture, giving the original writer a stronger presence.

IV. Discussion

It is evident that children are not going to be consuming the book on their own, in one way or another; adults are going to be involved; they are either reading for the children, reading with them or buying the book for them. Whether this inclusion affects the translation process, the translators must be aware that different readers are involved in the textual structure of the work and how they should approach these particular readers. According to the academic conversation, all translations for children are inevitably guilty of domestication because children must be protected against culturally unfamiliar or morally unbecoming elements.

Experts agree that children in the middle stage have the capacity to feel empathy and understanding of their feelings, to internalize society's rules and ideals, their moral thinking has evolved, and they can judge what is right and what is wrong. This is significant in the context of children literature; Jan Van Coillie and Walter Verschueren (2006) see that the child must have “a sufficient degree of recognizability and empathy, two features that were deemed of the utmost importance for children's books.”

This double audience affects the experience of the translator in many ways; scholars posit that publishers are becoming increasingly cautious about how they depict children's books to the intended audience, changing everything from spelling to culture. So, translators want to bring the child into contact with cultures and keep the appeal of otherness, and of the alien, they also attempt to respect the original text, so they deem necessary that degree of foreignness in their translations. However, domestication and foreignization should not be considered as opposite notions; the translator should make efforts aiming at attaining the equilibrium between the two

strategies. The adoption of the right balance between domestication and foreignization demonstrates ethical accountability to both the reader and the author.

As a result, the translator's strategy should combine these two polarities, and he may assume domestication and create modifications of the source material into the familiar target culture and make the children feel the foreign but not foreignness if he feels that this audience does have the necessary interpretive and cognitive skills to understand the non-native notions. Likewise, if the translator feels that a book rich in cultural-specific aspects allows youngsters to learn and expand their world knowledge, he may choose to keep as many cultural-specific items as possible in the original text. On the one hand, the strangeness and introduction of another place, time and culture should be regarded as positive qualities, especially in the child's world, where curiosity and keenness to learn more should be encouraged. On the other hand, the translator owes the young audience a certain amount of tailoring, considering the child's relatively delicate nature. Klingberg (1986), whom we mentioned before as a decided advocate of foreignization in children's literature, admits that "cultural context adaptation" is expedient for young readers of the target culture who have a different background than source text readers.

From the existing literature, we can also deduce that the child's environment has a responsibility to recognize and respond appropriately to this childhood stage by nurturing and supporting the child's developing cognitive skills, as well as offering assistance by being sensitive to a variety of issues, celebrating cultural diversity, and attempting to develop cultural awareness and sensitivity in all children. This shows that adults' involvement is inevitable in a child's experiences, including the reading experience.

Scholars and translators in the field of children literature such as Emer O'Sullivan, Riitta Oittinen, Hans Christian Andersen, and others agree that it is essential for the translator to be aware of the fact that the child is not going to be the only consumer of the translated work, and that the adult is going to be present in the different stops of the book's journey before it reaches the child, some even took a step further and stated that without dual readership, there would be no children's literature.

According to Benjelloun, even without the adults' involvement, the translator should be able to write responsibly; write what is appropriate for children of their age and try to preserve the original content as much as possible, and to relieve some pressure, Benjelloun says that he is not a harsh judge of translations, as they are a contribution to original writer's prominence.

From the existing research and the information gathered from the interview, we understand that the primary role of translators is to stay close to the source text and convey a foreign text of literary merit to the target audience of young readers, but similarly, there is a bigger concern for children's ability to enjoy the presence of cultural intertextuality. Benjelloun is of the same mind as previous research, as he is mainly concerned with the child's response to his work.

Conclusion

Experts have combined various efforts to accomplish the best for the child in order to develop childhood and assure a sound cultural sense and healthy upbringing. Among the tools that have contributed to this is what is known as children's literature, a vast area that encompasses the sum of values and principles that scholars and researchers have frequently sought.

Writers, translators, publishers and guardians stand in an unfavourable position between the source and target audience, where political norms enforce themselves, especially regarding taboo and censorship, along with the creativity, liveliness, but also caution and forethought in the language used in this type of literature, for the latter as it requires special treatment for the material to suit the creative world of our young citizens.

This paper was designed to examine primarily the challenges involved in translating for children, specifically middle childhood, arguably the most significant and sensitive childhood stage. This susceptibility lays the foundation for protective means made by adults, including taboo and sensitivities, as well as the often issues related to the involvement of adults in this literary category to safeguard children in the interface of multiple cultures.

The goal of this research was to also offer better awareness of the identified problems of translating for children, primarily those associated with deviations from the original text produced by:

- Cultural references and the translator's choice between foreignization and domestication.
- Dual readership and the burden placed on the translator as a result of the inclusion of adults as a secondary audience.

Using a qualitative technique and in accordance with the study questions, I reached the following key findings:

The debate of domestication vs foreignization is never-ending; with advocates for each polarity, one team perceives domestication as a must in order to minimize the strangeness and protect children from taboo-breaking topics, sensitivities, and morally unbecoming items and references. The other team champions foreignization; in an attempt to help children understand the world, push them out of their comfort zone and help them learn cultures different from their own.

However, there aren't any unanimously agreed-upon rules on how to translate them effectively when it comes to culturally marked elements. This goes to show that the translator is allowed to manipulate the text in different ways, as he is a decision-maker and is able to seek the right strategy for every individual case of the text in hand. Thus, the concepts of domestication and foreignization should not be perceived as a dichotomy and can rather complement each other or be used sporadically throughout the translation.

Dual readership is an inevitable occurrence in children's literature; the latter is heavily mediated in a way that other literary genres are not and goes through many stopping places

before reaching the hands of the young reader. The latter, being a most important link in the chain of factors, pose an even greater obstacle for translators because literature intended to this category is marked with the challenge of parental authority, puberty problems, and the child's desire to prove his existence by experiencing whatever is considered taboo.

Being a writer himself, the translator is the first station in the book's journey and is therefore held accountable, equal to that of the original writer himself, if not even greater responsibility since he owes thorough consideration to the original author as well. The question that arose in this paper was whether this accountability towards these "enablers" affects the translator's experience.

This study aimed to answer this question through previous translators' trials, it concludes through a literature review, a case study and finally an interview that, despite translators and writers being mindful about how they portray children's books to the potential secondary audience, and making sure that their work makes it through the various "gatekeepers" (publishers to parents), their prime concern remains the child readers' potential response, and guaranteeing their enjoyment of the presence of cultural intertextuality.

At last, this cannot be more than an attempt, as it appears to be impossible to track down all the research done in the challenges of children's literature translation, a topic marked with great diversity in opinions, scopes and methodology. I also feel apologetic that I cannot do justice to all the titles and names mentioned in the bibliography. However, I believe it is a study

carrying decent implications and contributions and filling a critical gap in certain bones of contentions, namely issues of dual readership, the domestication vs foreignization debate and taboo-breaking topics in the context of children's literature.

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Appendices



صادر عن مكتب الأديبة د. سناء شعلان/ الأردن/ عمان

رسالة تخول استخدام مواد مشمولة بحقوق التأليف

أنا د. سناء كامل أحمد شعلان صاحبة حقوق التأليف والنشر المتعلقة بالمادة التالية: "صاحب القلب الذهبي".
أعطي إنني الصريح للسيد: علاء الدين أبو العلا
لاستخدام جزء أو أجزاء من هذه المادة المذكورة للفرض التالي: الترجمة
وذلك للفترة الزمنية المتفق عليها: حتى سبتمبر ٢٠٢١.
توقيع المانح:

واقبلوا فائق تقديري واحترامي،،

د. سناء الشعلان/ الأردن/ عمان

التوقيع والختم:



الأردن- عمان- الرمز البريدي ١١٩٤٢- ص.ب. ١٣١٨٦

صادر عن مكتب الأديبة د. سناء شعلان/ الأردن/ عمان: أستاذة الأدب الحديث في الجامعة الأردنية/ إعلامية وحقوقية في الشأن الإنساني، ممثلة منظمة النسوة العالمية في الأردن، ممثلة مؤسسة "جولدن دزرت Golden desert Foundation" البولندية في الشرق الأوسط، ممثلة منظمة السلام والصداقة التولية الدنماركية في الأردن،



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صاحب القلب الذهبي



3

سناء كامل أحمد شعلان

« إهداء »

إلى القائدِ الحكيمِ الشيخِ زايدِ بنِ سلطانِ آلِ نهيانِ
رحمهُ اللهُ

في خُصْمِ إِنْجَارَاتِكَ الواسِعَةِ و المَعْدَدَةِ بِنِيَتِ الْإِنْسَانِ و رَعِيَتِ الطُّفُولَةِ
و وَجْهَتِ لِكِي تَرَى جَائِزَتِي العُورِ و تَكُونُ زَهْرَةً فَوَاحِيَةً فِي حَقْلِ الطُّفُولَةِ
الإِمَارَاتِيَّةِ و العَرَبِيَّةِ ..

و مَا أَتَدَا أَصْرَ عَلَيَّ اسْتِمْرَارِ جَائِزَتِي وَفَاءً لِفِكْرِكَ و عِبْقَرِيَّتِكَ ، و أَدْعُو اللهُ
عَزَّ وَجَلَّ أَنْ يُطَيِّبَ اللهُ ثَرَاكَ ، و أَنْ يَتَعَمَّدَكَ فِي فَسِيحِ جَنَاتِهِ، و يَتَقَبَّلَكَ
مَعَ الصَّدِيقِينَ ..

إنَّه على كلِّ شيءٍ قديرٌ

فاطمة بنت هزاع بن زايد آل نهيان

تمت الطباعة بإشراف الهيئة العليا

لجوائز مسابقات أنجال
الشيخ هزاع بن زايد آل نهيان
لثقافة الطفل العربي



جائزة الشيخة فاطمة بنت هزاع بن زايد آل نهيان لثقافة الطفل العربي

جميع حقوق الطبع و النشر محفوظة لصالح الهيئة العليا
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الدورة العاشرة ٢٠٠٦ م

تأليف
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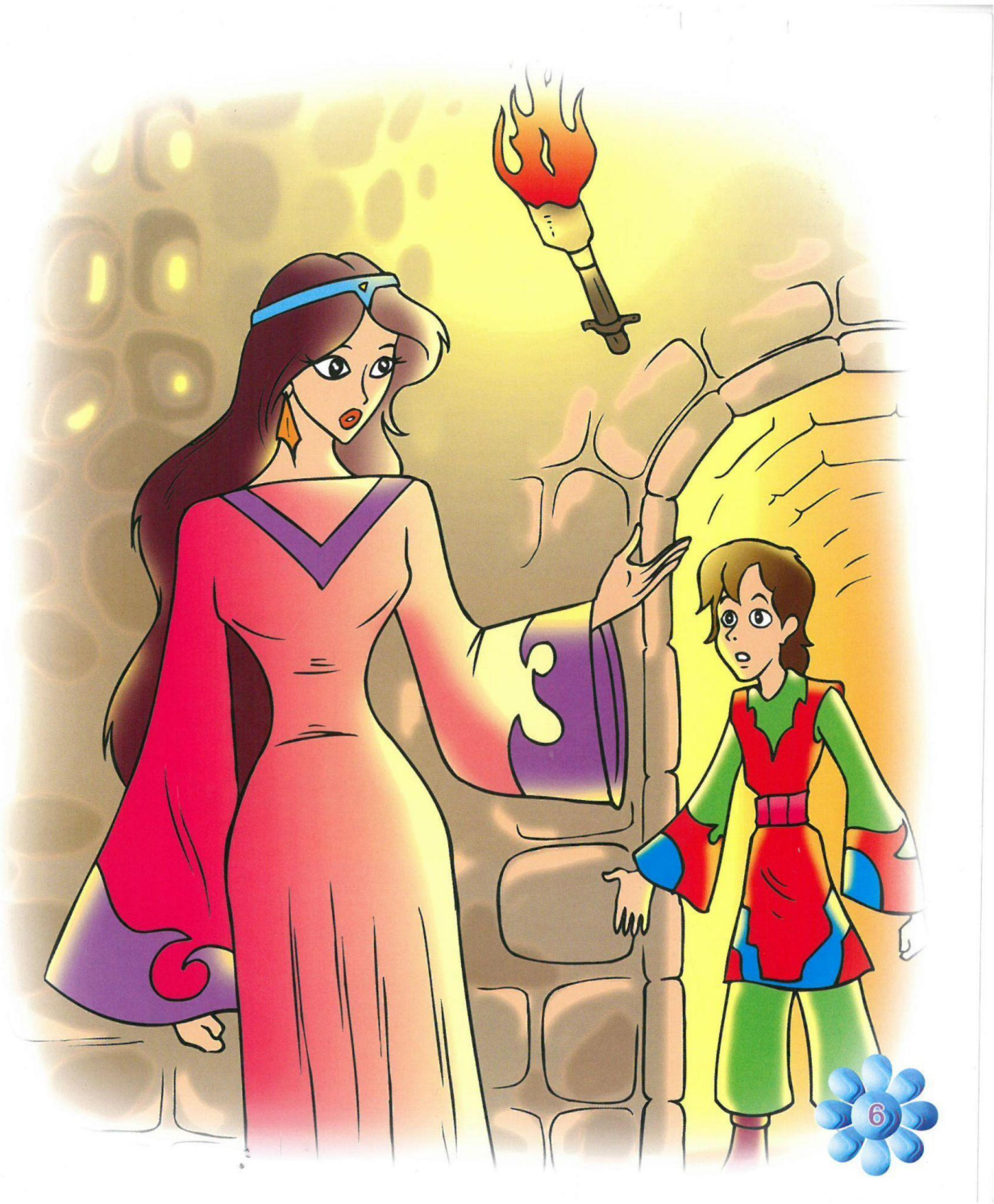
«كانت مملكة الشمس أسعد بلاد الدنيا، الكل فيها ينعم بالأمان والدفع والحب، والشمس تغمر الكل بأشعتها الذهبية التي تدغدغ القلوب الحزينة فتفرحها، وترد السعادة إلى الوجوه الذابلة، كانت شمساً عظيمة تشمل كل البشر، ولا تعرف فرقا بين مواطن أو آخر، إلى أن جاء ملك الظلام من مملكته البعيدة، جاء بجيش جرار من أصحاب الوجوه السوداء، والعيون المظلمة، والقلوب الميتة. أحاطت الشمس بعباءة المظلمة، وعاد بها إلى أرضه، وترك المملكة غارقة في الظلام والخوف والكرهية، واقتاد معه ملك المملكة الذي لم تحزن المملكة لفقدته بقدر ما حزننت لفقد الشمس التي تظلمهم بدفئها، وتغمرهم بأشعتها الذهبية..»

«ثم ماذا حدث..؟» قال الأمير الفتى شمس ذو العينين الشفافتين، والوجه الشاحب ذو الملامح الحزينة. تنهدت أمه الملكة شمس زاده، وقالت: «ثم ولدت أنت، كنت مثل باقي أطفال المملكة المولودين في زمن الشمس المسلوبة، بوجه شاحب، وملامح حزينة، وعينين شفافتين.»

«والشمس يا أمي؟ ماذا حدث لها؟» قال الأمير شمس بلهفة. قالت الملكة بأسى: «الشمس مازالت حبيسة في مملكة الظلام، حيث يسعد بها سكان تلك المملكة.»

سأل الأمير: «وهل ستبقى مملكتنا غارقة هكذا في الظلام؟» قالت الملكة التي تراقب المملكة الغارقة في الظلام من نافذة قصرها المصنوعة من الأبنوس والعاج، والمطعمة بالذهب والماس، والرعية التائهة في الظلام: «نعم ستبقى هكذا حتى تعاد الشمس المسلوبة، أتصدق أنني بت مثل باقي أفراد المملكة أحلم بالشمس تغمر وجهي وجسدي؟»





قال الأمير شمس بحزن: «وهل يعيشُ أبي الملكُ هناك في الأسرِ والذلِّ؟»
قالت الملكةُ: «نعم يعيشُ أسيراً ذليلاً، وقد أصيبتُ عيناهُ بالعمى من طولِ بقاءه في
الظلام، وأصبحَ بوجهٍ شاحب، وقلبٍ ميّت».

قال الأميرُ شمسُ بحرقَةٍ: «ألا يمكنُ يا أمي أن نُساعده؟»
قالت الملكةُ بحزنٍ بادٍ على قسَماتها الشاحبة: «فقط إذا استعدنا الشمسَ المسلووبة،
عندها سوفَ تعودُ السعادةُ إلى الوجوهِ الحزينة، وتضحكُ الثغورُ، وتندفقُ الحياةُ في
العيونِ الشفافة».

كان المعلمُ الأكبرُ وحجّةُ العلمِ يسمعُ حوارَ الملكةِ وابنها الأميرِ اليافع، تدخّل قائلاً:
«الأسطورة تقول إنَّ الشمسَ ستعودُ إلى مملكةِ الشمسِ في عربةٍ من البلورِ يجرّها
فارسٌ له قلبٌ من الذهب».

قال الأميرُ شمسُ باستغرابٍ ودَهْشَةٍ: قلبٌ من الذهب؟! كيف يمكنُ للإنسانِ أن
يكونَ له قلبٌ من الذهب؟!».

قال المعلمُ الأكبرُ: «لا أعرفُ لسؤالِكِ إجابةً، إجاباتُ أسئلتك عند صاحبِ القلبِ
الذهبي، هو الحُلمُ الأكبرُ، وهو من سيعيدُ الشمسَ المسلووبة».

- «كيف أجده؟!» قال الأميرُ شمسُ بلهفة.

- «ابحثُ عنه» قال المعلمُ الأكبرُ بلا مُبالاةٍ.

«أين؟» سألَ الأميرُ

«في المَمْلَكَةِ» أجابَ المعلمُ الأكبرُ.

مرةً أخرى سألَ الأميرُ شمسُ: «كيفَ أعرفُه؟»

«ستعرفُه بقلبك» أجابَ المعلمُ الأكبرُ.

وغادرَ المكانَ مُردّداً: «بالقلبِ نعرفُ الحقائق».





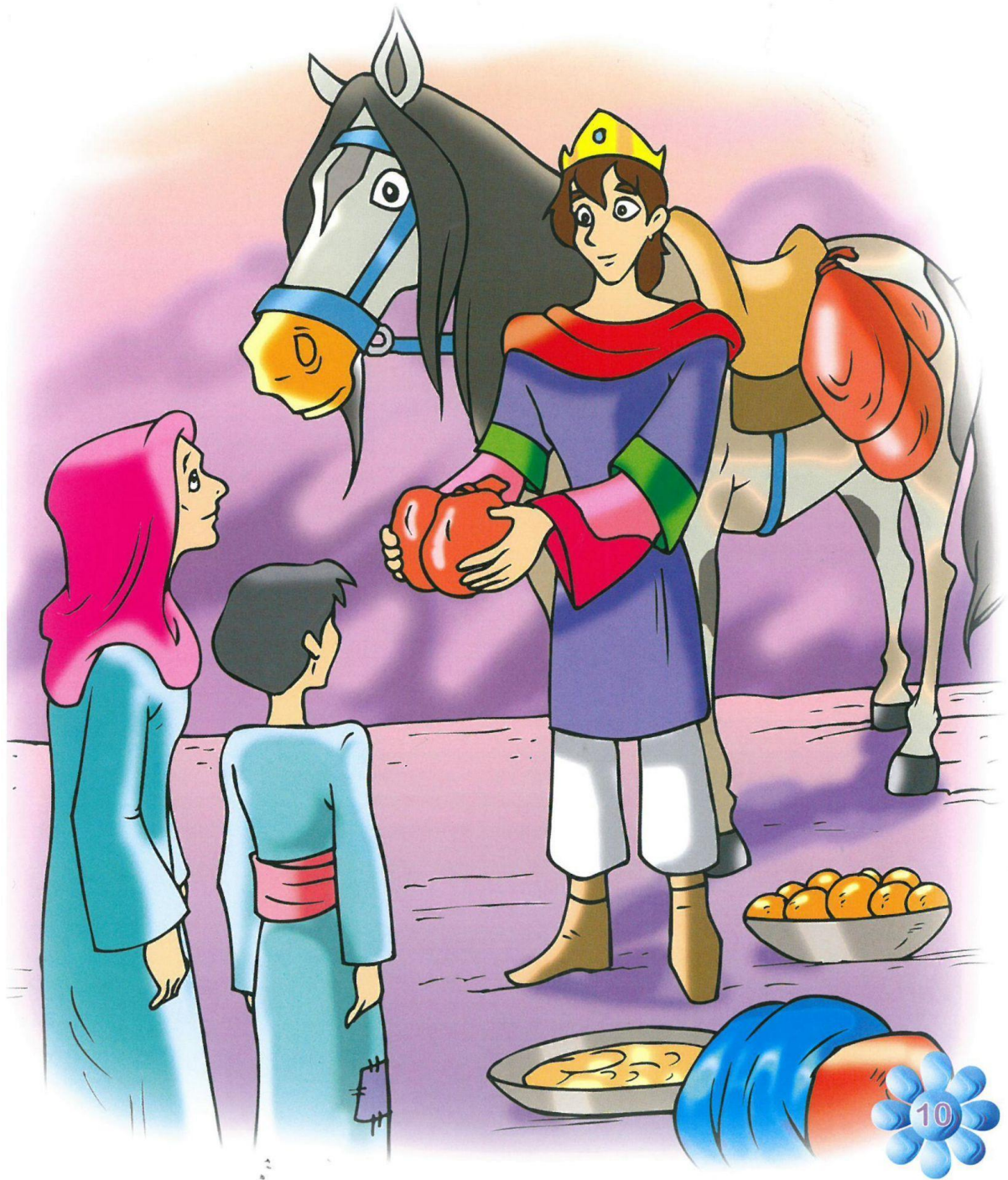
صَمَتَ الأميرُ شمس، وأخذَ يفكرُ في كلماتِ المَعْلَمِ الأكبر، وتَسَاءَلَ أَنِّي لِإنسانٍ أن يملكَ قلباً من ذهبٍ؟! لأيامٍ لم يأكلُ من الطَّعامِ اللذيذِ الذي يقدِّمُ له، واحترَفَ هَوَايَةَ مراقبةِ الأهالي من نافذته، لكنَّهُ لم يَسْتَطِعْ أن يَرى من مكانه الشَّاهِقَ البعيدِ سوى الظلامِ.

فَكَرَّ الأميرُ ثم فكرَ، وردَّدتِ الرِّيحُ قائلةً: «الأميرُ شمس حيران». لأيامٍ طويلةٍ فكرَ الأميرُ في هويَّةِ صَاحِبِ القلبِ الذهبيِّ، ولكنَّهُ لم يَهتدِ إلى مَطْلَبِهِ، وأخيراً قرَّرَ أن يتجوَّلَ في مَمْلَكَتِهِ الكَبيرةِ الغارقةِ في الظلامِ؛ ليجدَ صَاحِبَ القلبِ الذهبيِّ.

ارتدى الأميرُ تاجَهُ الذهبيَّ ذا الجواهرِ المَاسيِّ، وحملَ صولجانهُ الذهبيِّ، ولبسَ ملابسَهُ الثمينةَ، وانتعلَ حذاءَهُ الذهبيِّ، وركبَ حصانهُ الأبلقَ الأصيلَ، وحزمَ معه الكثيرَ من المالِ والجواهرِ والطَّعامِ والفاكهةِ، وانطلقَ في رحلتهِ من الجَهلِ إلى المَعْرِفَةِ، بحثاً عن صَاحِبِ القلبِ الذهبيِّ، كانتَ رحلةً طويلةً ومُخيفَةً، فالمملكةُ لم ترَ الشمسَ منذَ سنواتٍ، والأشجارُ جافةٌ، والطَّرقاتُ زلقةٌ، والجوُّ باردٌ، والأرضُ بُورٌ، والرعيَّةُ تعيشُ في حزنٍ وخوفٍ، ولا تعرفُ شيئاً من الطَّعامِ اللذيذِ واللباسِ الفَاحِرِ الذي يعرفه في قِصره المَنيعِ، من هُنا كانتِ الرُويَّةُ أفضلَ، استَطاعَ أخيراً أن يَرى وجوهَ رعيتهِ الغارقةِ في الحُزنِ والظلامِ والخوفِ.

شعرَ الأميرُ بحزنٍ كبيرٍ على رعيتهِ البائسةِ، وتمنَّى لو أَنَّهُ يَسْتَطِيعُ مَسَاعِدَتَهَا، تمنَّى ذلكَ من كلِّ قلبه، الذي سَمِعَ وجيهِه المَضطَّرَبِ، وشعرَ به يتفطرُ حزناً على الرعيَّةِ الغارقةِ في الظلامِ، وردَّدتِ الرِّيحُ «أميرُ البلادِ بدأ يشعرُ بأحزانِ الرعيَّةِ».





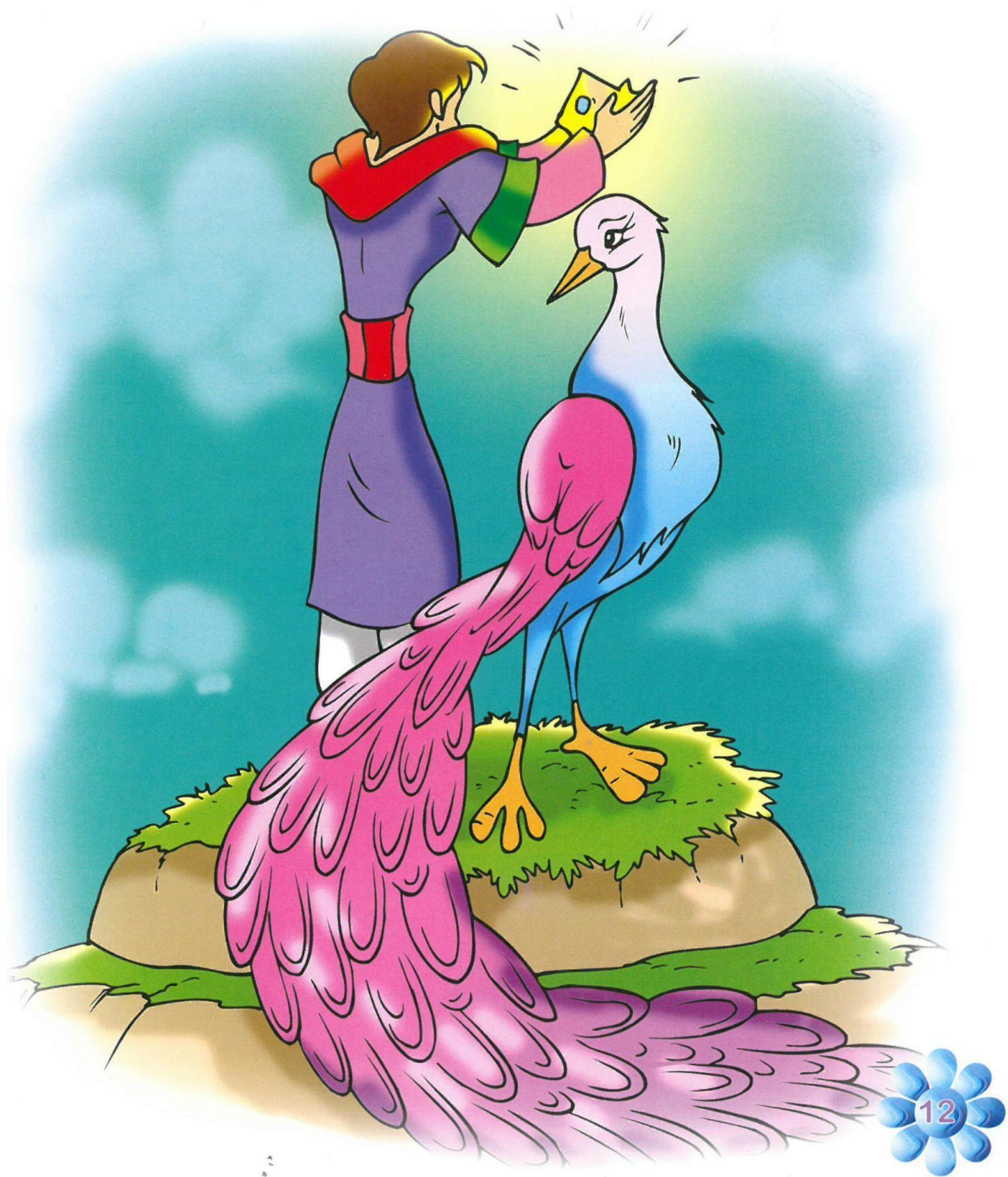
قرر الأمير أن يذهب إلى جبل الحكمة حيث تعيش سيده الحكمة والدهور؛ ليسألها عن صاحب القلب الذهبي، وعن مكان وجوده.
كانت الطريق طويلة وشاقة جداً، ولكن الأمير شمس كان مُصمماً على أن يجد صاحب القلب الذهبي؛ ليحرر مملكته من الظلام، ويُعيد الشمس المسلوقة.

سار الأمير طويلاً في مملكته، لم يقترب أحد من الرعية منه، شعر أنه وحيد بين شعبه، كانت المباني المظلمة كثيرة، ولكن السجون كانت أشدها سواداً، تساءل عن سبب كثرة السجون، قال في نفسه: «لابد أنها تضم المجرمين»، لكن الرياح صفرت في طول البلاد وعرضها قائلة: «الأمير شمس خائف... الأمير شمس خائف، لأن في سجنه آلاف الأبرياء، وفي مملكته آلاف الجياع».

ابتسم الأمير شمس وقد لمعت فكرة في خاطره، وقال: «لن أخاف بعد الآن، ولن يجوع أحد في مملكتي بعد الآن».

وعندها أمر أن تفتح السجون؛ ليخرج منها كل الأبرياء.
ثم طفق يوزع كل ما يحمل من ثروة وجواهر على الفقراء والجياع، فأكل كل الجياع، وفرح الأطفال لأول مرة منذ رحيل الشمس، ودعت الأمهات للأمير شمس بطول العمر والبقاء.





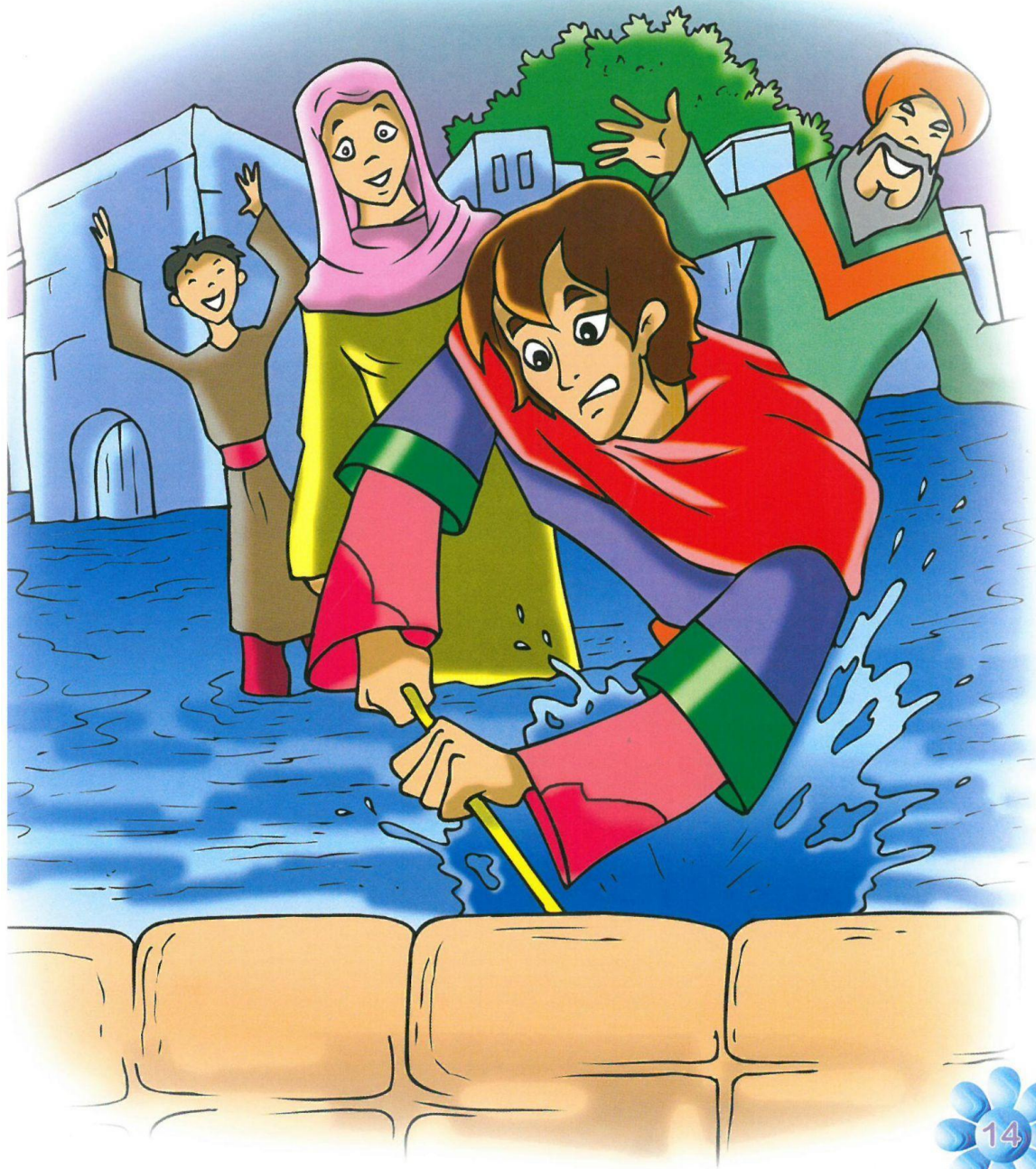
في تلك الليلة لم يتذكر أحد الملك الأسير الذي رحل مع شمسِه ومع ظلمه، بل حتى أنهم شعروا أن سواد هذه الليلة أقل من سواد الليالي السابقة، ولأول مرة منذ بداية رحلة الأمير تابعتُه العيونُ بالحبِّ، ورددتُ الريحُ فرحةً: «الرعيةُ تحبُّ الأميرَ شمسَ»، فرددتُ الرعيةُ قولها من بعدها.

تابع الأميرُ مسيرته في الطريق فوجد طاووساً حزيناً، منتوف الريش، سأله الأميرُ عن خطبه، فأجاب الطاووسُ قائلاً: «يا مولاي أنا ملك الطيور، ولكنني أضعتُ بسبب الظلامِ تاجي، ومن يومها هجرتني الطيورُ، وأنا في حاجة إلى تاج يُعيدُ سعادتِي إليَّ». ففكر الأميرُ شمس في ما سمع، وقال في نفسه: «ما أجهل هذه الطيور التي لا تنقاد إلا لتاج أصم»، ولكنه شعر بوجوب مُساعدة الطاووس الحزين، وحدث نفسه من جديد قائلاً: «أنا لستُ في حاجة إلى التاج، لأنَّ حبَّ الرعية هو التاج الحقيقي».

خلع الأميرُ شمس تاجه الذهبي ذا الجواهر الماسي، ووضعهُ فوق رأس الطاووس الذي سرعان ما تجمعت حوله سائر الطيور الحمقى التي تبهرُ بلمعان الجواهر، ولا تهتمُّ الرأس التي تحمل التاج.

وتابع الأميرُ شمسُ طريقه دون تاج أو طعام أو مال، وأخيراً وصلَ إلى أرض بُور غارقة في الماء، كان أهلها حيارى حزينين، سأل الأميرُ باهتمام عن مصدر الماء الذي يُغرق الأرض، فقال كبيرهم: «يا مولاي الأمير شمس، سدُّ المدينة معطوبٌ منذ سنوات، وهو يسمُح بتسرُّب الماء الذي يُغرق الأرض والمزروعات».



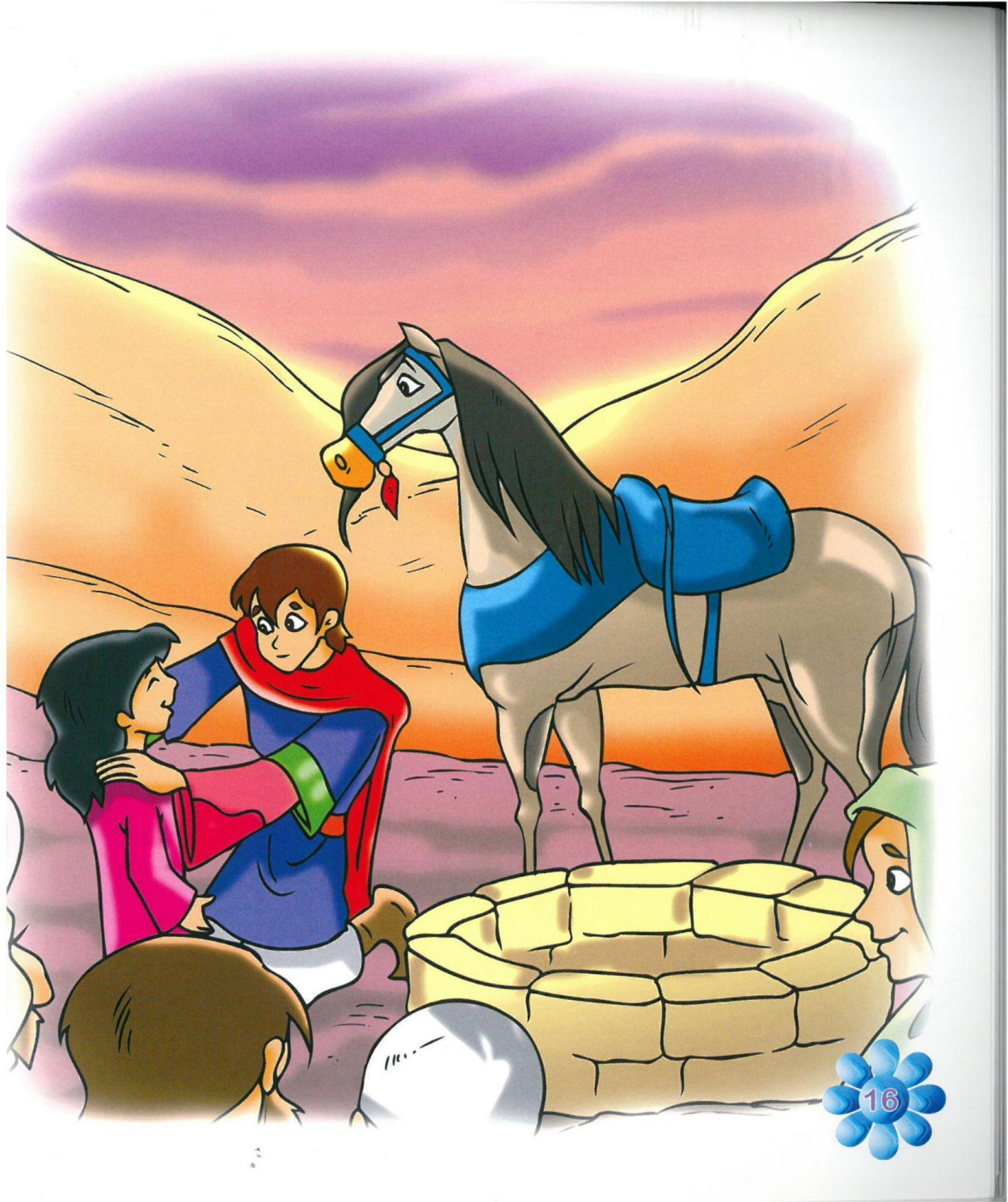


قال الأمير شمس باستغراب: «ولماذا لا تُصلحونه؟». قال الرجل: «حاولنا كثيراً، ولكن السدّ تنقصه قطعة خشبية سحرية بحجم معين لتُغلقه، ونحن لم نجدّها حتى الآن».

سارع الأمير شمس بإلقاء نظرة على الثغرة الموجودة في السدّ، فوجدّها تماماً بمقدار صولجان، فكر قليلاً، وقال في نفسه: «لست في حاجة إلى الصولجان، حبّ الرعية هو الصولجان». ثم دفع الصولجان في مكان الثغرة، فسُدّت تماماً، وتوقف تدفق الماء، وعمّ التفاؤل المكان، وغمرت السعادة الفلاحين، ودعّوا لأمرهم الحاني بالتوفيق، ورددت الرياح: «الأمير شمس بدون مالٍ أو تاجٍ أو صولجان، ولكنه صاحب قلب كبير».

وبعد تطواف طويل وشاق وصل الأمير إلى بئر الأُمّيات، كان قد سمع عنها طويلاً وهو طفل، كانت بئراً تتحقّق عندها الأُمّيات قبل سرقة الشمس، كانت البئر مهدّمة الفوهة، متهاكّة الجدران، العيون حولها تحلّم بأُمّياتها، ألقى الأمير نظرة في البئر، وتمنّى لو أن أُمّيته تتحقّق في إيجاد صاحب القلب الذهبي، ورددت البئر أُمّيته، لكن أحد المرابطين في المكان قال له بيأس: «لا فائدة من المحاولة، لأنّ ملك الظلام قد سحر المكان، وألقى بلعنته على ماء البئر». قال الأمير شمس: «يا له من شرير! حتى الأحلام سرقتها، ألا توجد طريقة لفك لعنته عن هذه البئر؟» قال الرجل بيأس: «توجد طريقة، ولكنها بعيدة المنال»، قال الأمير بلهفة «وما هي هذه الطريقة؟». قال الرجل: «إذا انغمست دماء ملكية في هذه البئر، وحققت أُمّية أول مُتمنٍ في المكان، عندها ستزول اللعنة».





«وتنتهي المُشكلة بهذه الطريقة؟» قال الأمير براحة.
قال الرجل: «نعم.. ولكن على المتبرع بهذه التضحية أن يعرف أن كل أحلامه ستضيع،
ولن يعود من حقه أن يتمنى».

«وإذا تمنى ماذا سيحدث؟» قال الأمير بوجل.
أجاب الرجل: «سوف يُصبح رماداً مُتطيراً».

صمت الأمير للحظات، وشعر بحزن، لأنه لن يستطيع أن يتمنى بعد الآن، وداخله شيء
من الخوف، ولكنه سارع إلى خنجره فجرح نفسه، وانزلق دمه في البئر، التي بدأت
تضج بالحياة، عندها سمع طفلة تقول مشيرة إلى حصانه المفضل عنده الذي يركبه:
«ما أجمل هذا الحصان! أتمنى الحصول عليه». على الفور قدم الأمير حصانه المفضل
للصغيرة التي تمت الحصول عليه، لكي يفك اللعنة التي تكبل البئر، وعجب من لؤم
عدوه الذي سرق الأمنيات وجعلها ممنوعة، وشعر باشتياق شديد للشمس، وبحث
عنها في السماء، ولكنه لم يجدها. وصرخ بأعلى صوته: «أيها الرعية، احلمي، تمني،
الأحلام مسموحة، الأمنيات مسموحة».

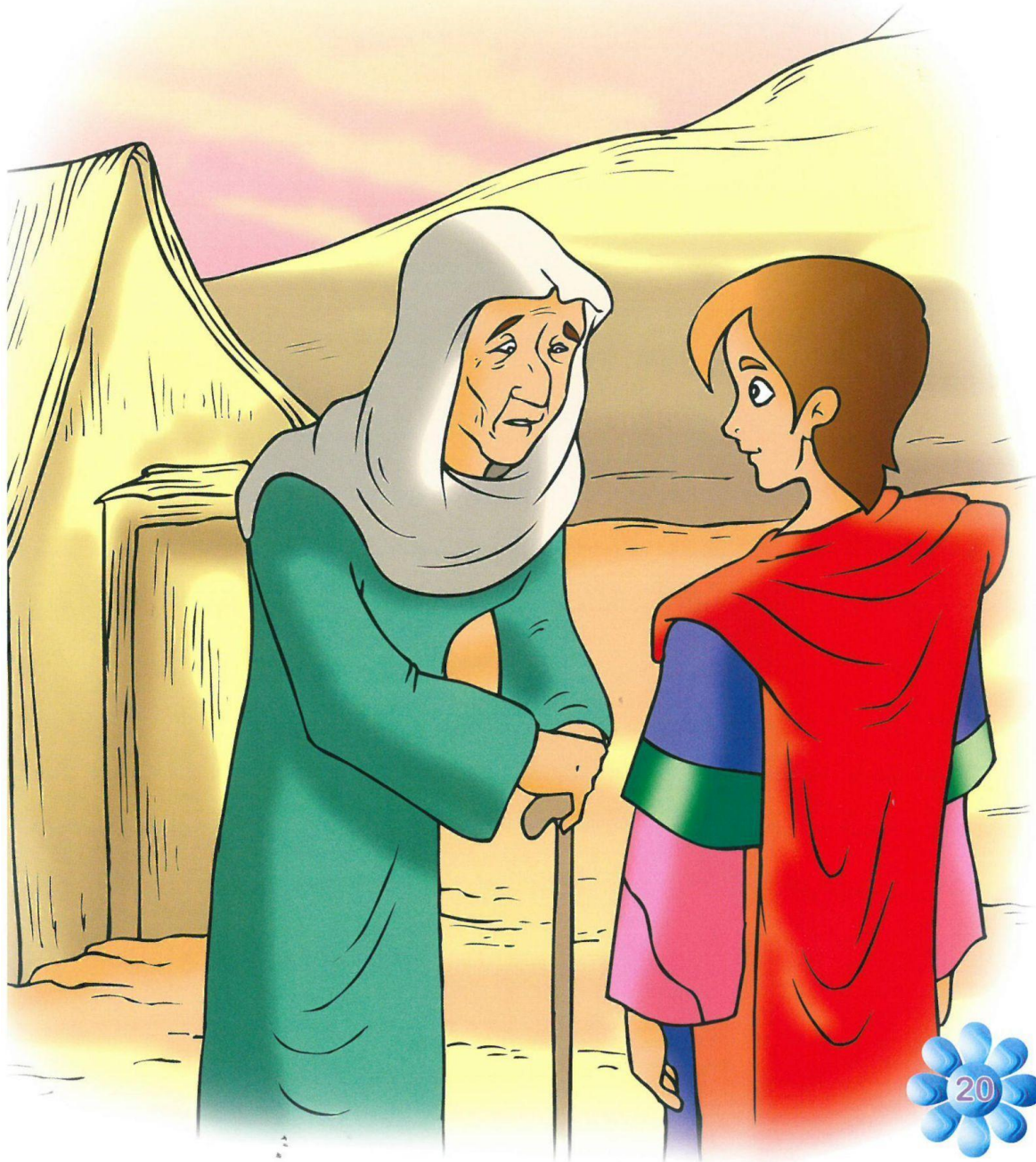
وغادر الأمير البئر وهي تضج بالأمنيات، وقد رحلت اللعنة عنها، وكاد يتمنى، ولكنه
تذكر الموت الذي ينتظره عند ذلك، أنزلت دمعان من عينيه الشافيتين، ومسحهما
سريعاً، وشعر بالاعتزاز بنفسه؛ لأنه اشترى لرعيته هذه البئر بثمن مرتفع، ألا وهو
أمنيته.





ورددت الريح بأسى: «ممنوع على الأمير أن يحلم». فرددت الرعية بحزن وحب: «حتى ولو لم يحلم الأمير الطيب فنحن نحلم أن تتحقق أمنياته» واستجاب البئر لأمنية الرعية في أن تتحقق أمنية أميرها. وتابع الأمير طريقه، كان متعباً وجائعاً وفقيراً، ومن دون تاج أو صولجان أو حصان أو حتى أمنيات، ولكنه كان يشعر بالسعادة، ومُصمَّم على أن يجد صاحب القلب الذهبي، وكان ينتظر بلهفة أن يصل إلى ملتقى النهرين السحريين اللذين يفيضان عسلاً ولبناً لينعم بشيء من الطعام الذي حُرِمَ منه منذ زمن طويل. وأخيراً وصل إلى مَجْمَعِ النهرين المنشودين، لكن المفاجأة السيئة كانت في انتظاره، لقد جفَّ النهران تماماً، وبات كل ما حولهما جافاً وميتاً، وعلى ضفاف النهرين الجافين انتشرت البيوت القشبية التي يسكنها الفقراء، الذين خابت آمالهم في أن يجدوا اللبن والعسل، وشعر أنه أيضاً من أولئك الذين خابت آمالهم، وأدرك لأول مرة في حياته معنى كلمة خيبة أمل، وأشفق على الرعية التي تعيش خيبات أمل كثيرة. استقبله الفقراء بحفاوة على الرغم من فقرهم، فقد كانت الريح قد حملت لهم أخبار عطفه وحُنه على الفقراء، وهاله مدى نحف الفقراء والمعوزين، حدث كثيراً منهم، وطال حديثه مع أكبرهم سناً، كانت عجوزاً يناديها الكل باسم الجدة، كانت السنين قد حفرت على وجهها الطيب عشرات الخطوط، التي تُوحي بتقدم السن، كانت ممن يحفظون القصص، ويروونها على مسمع الجياع كي ينسوا جوعهم.





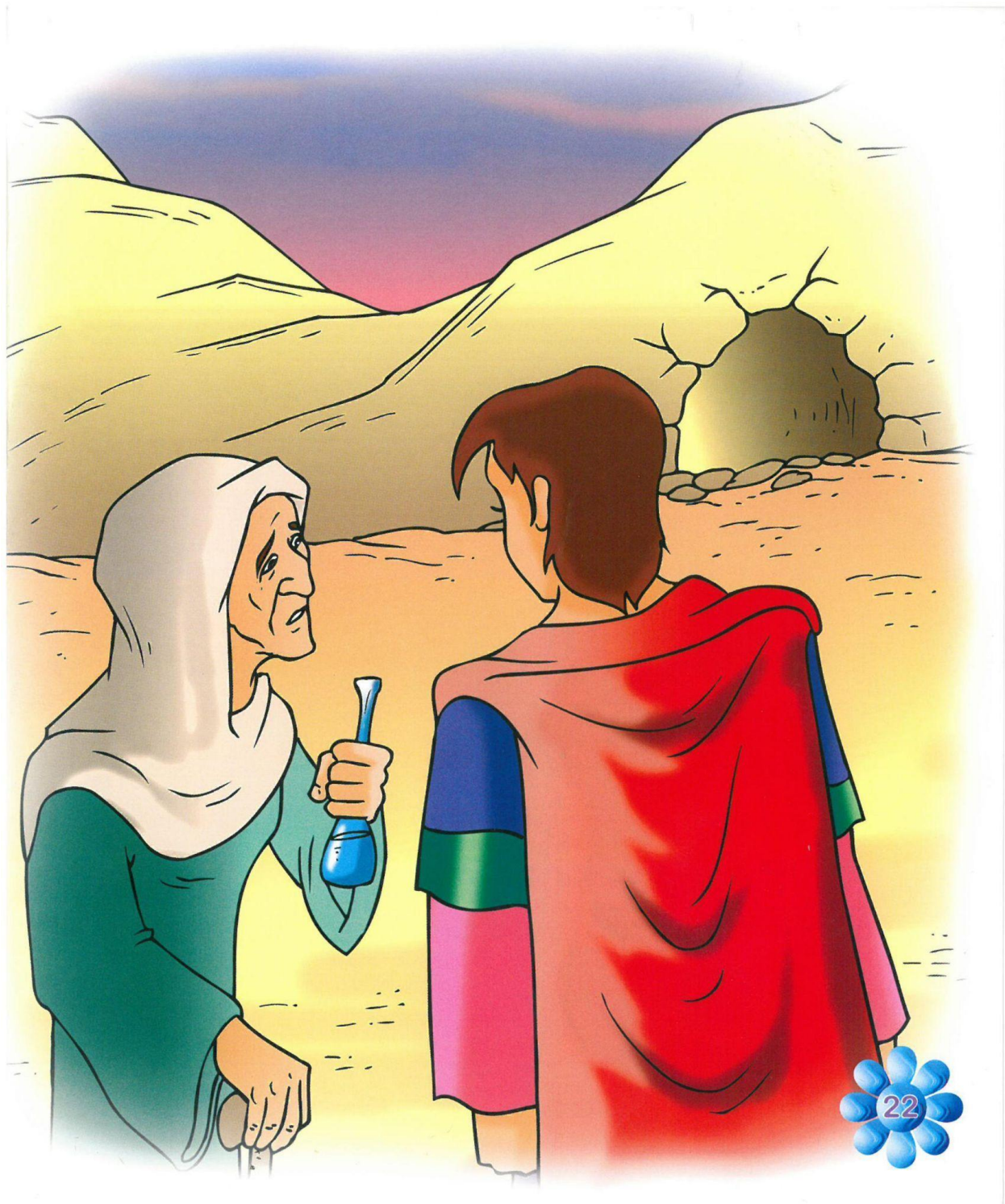
والحقيقة أن الأمير شمس نسي جوعه وهو يسمع واحدة من هذه القصص التي تحكي عن السعادة التي عرفها سكان المملكة، قبل أن تُسرق شمسهم العزیزة، حدّثته طويلاً عن تلك الشمس، وعن أشعتها الذهبية، وعن دفئها، حتى أنه كاد يتمنى أن يراها، لكنه توقّف عن التمني خوفاً من أن يتحوّل إلى رمادٍ مُتطاير.

تنهّدت العجوز ثم قالت: «إنها حزينة لأنها عمّا قليل سوف تنسى كل قصصها التي تُحبّها، ولن تستطيع سرد قصص الشمس التي اشتاقت إليها، وتتمنى الموت تحت سناها المقدّس، استغرب الأمير من هذا القول، وسألها لماذا تقول هذا الكلام؟ فقالت له: «يا مولاي الشاب، لقد طال انتظارنا لعودة الشمس، كما طال انتظارنا لظهور صاحب القلب الذهبي، ولكن دون فائدة، ودون بارقة أمل، والجوع قد اشتدّ بنا، وقد قررت أن أحلّ مشكلة النهيرين».

قال الأمير شمس: «وكيف السبيل إلى ذلك؟»

قالت العجوز: «هذان النهران يُسميان نهرا النسيان، ويقال أنهما ينبعان من لب الأرض، حيث كان مولد الشمس بين الحرارة والضغط، وهذان النهران مُحْتَبَسَان منذ أن غابت الشمس، وقد أخبرني جدي لأبي أن هناك أسطورة تقول إن توقّف تدفق النهيرين يعني انتشار نسيان الواجب بين البشر، ومن طريف الأمر أن هذا التوقّف لا ينتهي إلا إذا سار أحدهم إلى لب الأرض، ونذر ذاكرته عندهما، عندئذ سينسى هو كل ماضيه، ويتدفق النهران من جديد».





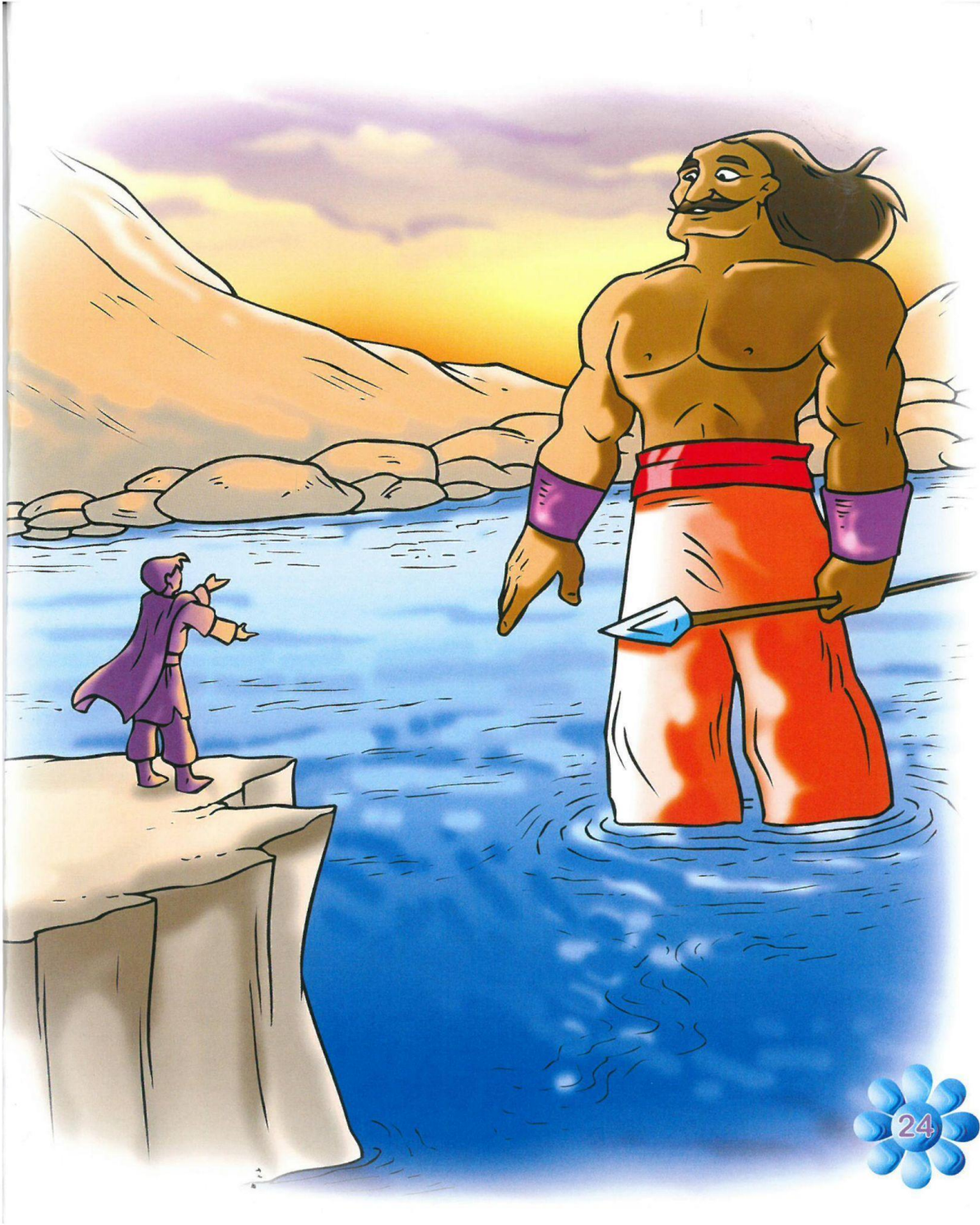
قال الأمير: «وهل أنت على استعداد للتضحية بذاكرتك من أجل الآخرين؟». ابتسمت العجوز، وقالت: يا بني يجب على شخص ما أن يضحى من أجل رعيته، وإن لم أعلم الصغار التضحية، وأنا السيدة الكبيرة القدوة، فمن سيفعل؟». شعر الأمير بالخجل من نفسه، وشعر بالوضاعة أمام العجوز التي تقدم نفسها بكل بطولة لأجل الوطن، وقرر أن يقوم هو بهذه التضحية، لكنه حزن لأنه سوف ينسى كل ماضيه، ولكن كان يكفيه أن يتذكر أن عنده مهمة واحدة، وهي أن يجد صاحب القلب الذهبي.

في اليوم المقرر كان الكل مجتمعين، وكان في مقدمتهم العجوز التي أرشدت الأمير إلى الفجوة التي تقود إلى منبع النهرين، اقتربت العجوز من الأمير وسط بكاء المودعين، وقالت له بحب وعطف ظاهرين: «هذه الزجاجة يابني فيها ترياق سحري عندما تشربه سوف تختصر المسافات التي في غمضة عين، وتكون سريعاً في لب الأرض، هناك ستجد حارس النهرين، أبلغه تحية أهل الأرض، وأعلمه عن نيتك بنذر ماضيك وذاكرتك في سبيل تدفق النهرين».

«سأفعل» قال الأمير الذي تأثر بكلام العجوز، وتجمع الأهالي لوداعه.

شرب الأمير الترياق السحري، وبلمحة عين كان في لب الأرض، هناك كان النهران مختنقين بعسلهما ولبنهما، والقرب منهما كان يقف حارس النهر، كان كتلة مائية ذات نسيم عليل، ابتسامته كانت مريحة، قال الأمير: «أنا جئت كي أهبك ذاكرتي كي ترسل نهري اللبن والعسل من جديد». ابتسم حارس النهرين، وقال: «أنا أحيي بك شجاعتك، ولكن قبل أن آخذ ذاكرتك، قل لي أين تريد أن أوصلك بعد أن تُعطيني نذرك؟».





قال الأمير بصوتٍ كبيرٍ: «أنا كنتُ في طريقي إلى سيِّدة الحكمة والدهور». قال حارسُ النهرين: «نحنُ الآن لا يفصلنا عنها إلا غابةٌ التيه، ستجدُ نفسك فيها، لكنك ستكونُ قد نسيتَ عندها كلَّ شيءٍ، حتى أنك لن تذكرَ من تكون». قال الأميرُ بتأثرٍ: «وشعبي؟! وصاحبُ القلبِ الذهبيِّ؟ ماذا بشأنهما؟». قال حارسُ النهرين: «ستسألهما أيضاً».

صمتَ الأميرُ الحزينُ للحظاتٍ، فعاجلهُ حارسُ النهرين بالقول: «لقد اعتدتُ أن أعطي كلَّ مَنْ يأتي إليَّ واهباً ذاكرته هديةً، وهي أن يهدرَ كلَّ من النهرين بعبارةٍ يختارُها، فما هُما الجملتين اللتين تريدُ أن يهدرَ بهما النهرين؟». قال الأميرُ بحماسٍ وقد وجدَ حلاً لمشكلة النسيان: «أريدُ أن يهدرَ أحدُ النهرين بعبارةٍ: صاحبُ القلبِ الذهبيِّ، وأريدُ أن يهدرَ الآخرُ بعبارةٍ: الشمسُ المسلوبةُ». تعجَّب حارسُ النهرين من هذين الاختيارين، وقال: «لماذا اخترتَ هاتين العبارتين؟».

قال الأميرُ: كي لا تُنسيني التضحية الواجبَ الذي جئتُ من أجله». بعد لحظاتٍ قدَّم الأميرُ ذاكرته نذراً لحارسِ النهرين، وتاه في دُنياٍ أخرى ليسَ فيها ذاكرته، وبعدَ احتباسٍ طويلٍ تفجَّرَ النهرانُ لبناً وعسلاً، واحتفلَ أهلُ المملكةِ بانتهاءِ عهدِ الجوعِ، وإن بقيتِ الشمسُ مسلوبةً، وبقوا يشتاقون لدفتها، وإن بقي الظلامُ مُخيماً، وإن بقي جنودُ الظلامِ يُغيرونَ على خيراتِ المكانِ ويسلبونها من وقتٍ إلى آخرٍ، إلا أن الكلَّ بقي في انتظارِ صاحبِ القلبِ الذهبيِّ، واستمرَّ النهرانُ يهدرانِ بعبارتَي: «صاحبُ القلبِ الذهبيِّ، والشمسُ المسلوبةُ».





حَاوَلَ جُنُودَ الظَّلَامِ أَنْ يَمْنَعُوا النَّهْرِينَ مِنْ تَرْدِيدِ عِبَارَتَيْهِمَا الْجَمِيلَتَيْنِ، وَلَكِنَّ النَّهْرِينَ ابْتَلَعَا كُلَّ مَنْ اقْتَرَبَ مِنْهُمَا مِنَ الْأَعْدَاءِ، وَبَاتَتِ الْأَرْضُ وَالْأَهَالِي وَحَتَّى الرَّيْحُ تَرَدَّدَ: «صَاحِبُ الْقَلْبِ الذَّهَبِيِّ، وَالشَّمْسُ الْمَسْلُوبَةُ»، وَفِي بَعْضِ الْأَحْيَانِ ضَبَطَ الْجُنُودُ أَنْفُسَهُمْ يُرَدِّدُونَ دُونَ وَعِي أَوْ قَصْدًا: «صَاحِبُ الْقَلْبِ الذَّهَبِيِّ، وَالشَّمْسُ الْمَسْلُوبَةُ»، وَتَسَاءَلَ مَلِكُ الظَّلَامِ عَنْ صَاحِبِ الْقَلْبِ الذَّهَبِيِّ، وَسَأَلَ هَلْ يُمْكِنُ أَنْ يَشْتَرِيَ قَلْبَهُ؟ فَرَدَّدَتِ الرَّيْحُ صَاحِبَةً غَاضِبَةً: «لَا يُمْكِنُ ذَلِكَ، فَالْقُلُوبُ الذَّهَبِيَّةُ لَا تُبَاعُ أَبَدًا».

أَمَّا الْأَمِيرُ شَمْسٌ فَقَدْ كَانَ هَائِمًا عَلَى وَجْهِهِ ضَائِعًا فِي غَابَةِ التِّيِّهِ، قَضَى الْكَثِيرَ مِنَ الْأَيَّامِ فِيهَا يَسِيرٌ وَحِيدًا لَا يَعْرِفُ لَهُ أَسْمٌ أَوْ هَدَفٌ أَوْ غَايَةٌ، كَانَ يُحَاوِلُ أَنْ يَجِدَ بَشَرًا يَعْرِفُ اسْمًا لَهُ وَلِهَذِهِ الْمَتَاهَةُ الَّتِي هُوَ فِيهَا، وَيَعْرِفُ لِمَاذَا هُوَ فِيهَا هُنَا، وَلَكِنَّ مِنْ دُونَ فَائِدَةٍ، هَدِيرُ النَّهْرِينَ وَصَوْتُ الرَّيْحِ هُمَا الْوَحِيدَانِ اللَّذَانِ كَانَا مَعَهُ فِي هَذِهِ الْمَتَاهَةِ، لَقَدْ رَدَّدَا عَلَى مَسْمَعِيهِ جُمْلَتَيْهِمَا آلَافَ الْمَرَّاتِ، حَتَّى أَدْرَكَ مِنْ جَدِيدٍ مَا سَبَّبَ وَجُودَهُ فِي هَذَا الْمَكَانِ.

اعْتَادَ الْأَمِيرُ أَنْ يَجْلِسَ إِلَى جَانِبِ النَّهْرِينَ اللَّذِينَ يَقْطَعَانِ بِهَدِيرِهِمَا مَتَاهَةَ الْغَابَةِ، وَكَانَ دَائِمَ التَّفَكِيرِ فِي طَرِيقِ تَخْرُجِهِ مِنْ مَتَاهَتِهِ، وَتَدْلُهُ عَلَى طَرِيقِ سَيِّدَةِ الدَّهُورِ، لَكِنَّ دُونَ فَائِدَةٍ.





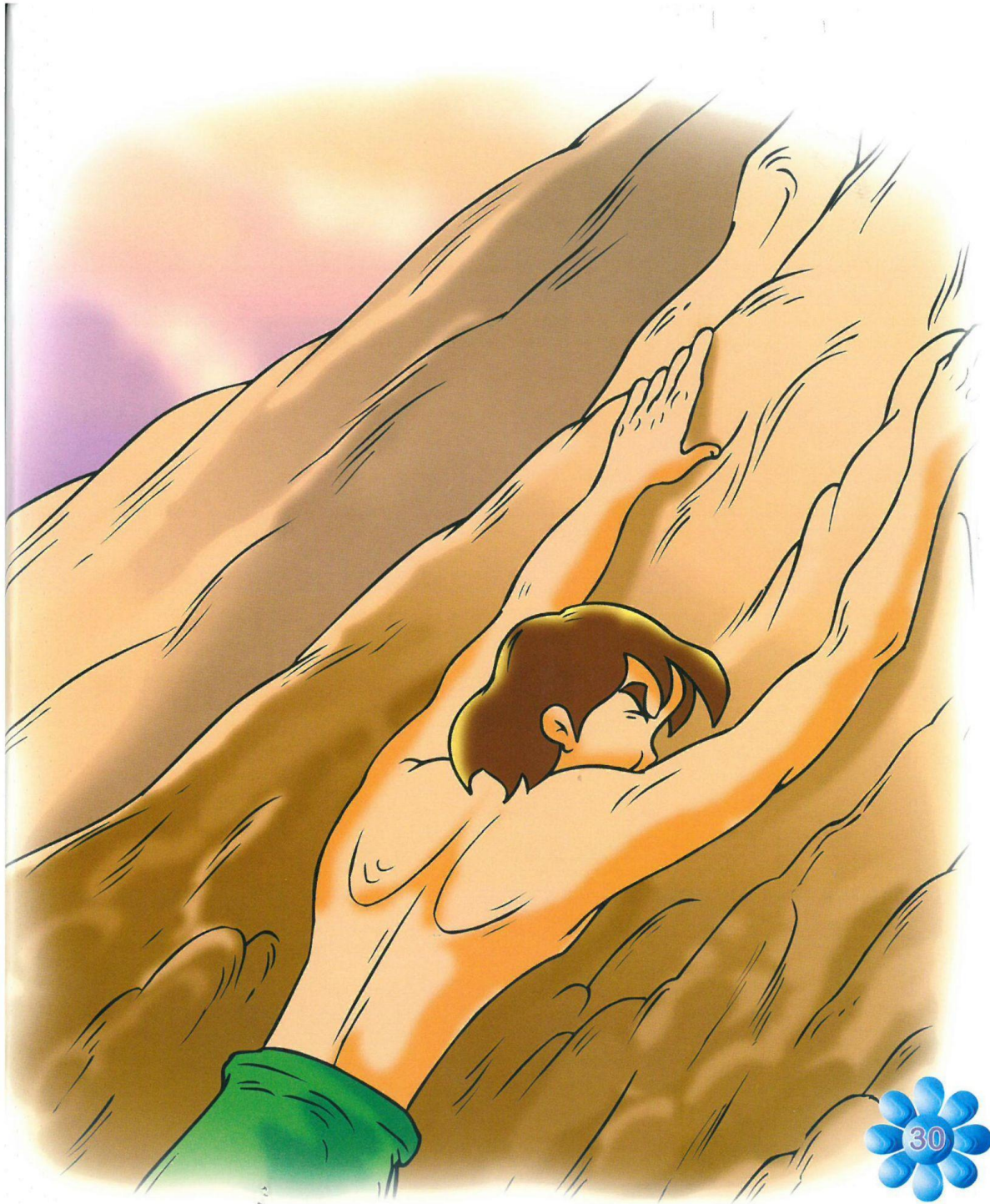
إلى أن جاء اليوم الذي لاحظ فيه أن هناك صوت آخر يُشارك النهرين والرياح نشيدَهُما الذي لا ينقطع، تتبع الصوت، وبعد جهد وصل إلى مصدره، لقد كان صوت رجل قد تجاوز الخمسين من عمره، أشيب الشعر، طويل اللحية، عاري الجسد تماماً، كان من الواضح أنه يُردد كلماته بعد صمت طويل، كانت آثار الوحدة والوحشة بادية عليه، بصعوبة استطاع الأمير أن يقترب منه، وأن يجعله يأنس إليه بعد طول وحشة .

عرف الأمير بعد جهدٍ سرّ هذا الرجل الوحيد العاري، فقد كانت هذه الغابة المتأهة هي المنفى الذي يُوتى إليه بالثوار على الظلام والوجوه المخيفة، كان جنود الظلام يأتون بهم إلى هنا ويتركونهم طعاماً سائغاً للوحدة والخوف والعري .
تصنّع الأمير الابتسام، وقال : « لماذا العري؟ » .

قال الرجل العري : « هم يتركوننا هنا للموت، لذا يسلبون منا كل شيء حتى ثيابنا .
« هل أنت متواجدٌ كثيراً في هذا المكان؟ » سأل الأمير .
أجاب الرجل : « نعم، لكننا في كثيرٍ من الأوقات نضيع من جديدٍ عن بعضنا البعض . »

قال الأمير : « إلى متى هذا الضياع؟ » .
قال الرجل بنبرةٍ حالمة : « إلى أن يأتي أميرٌ طيبٌ يكسو عُرِينا، وينظّم صفوفنا، ويقودنا في طريق الشمس . »
قال الأمير : « أرجو أن يكون هذا قريباً . »





ثم ابتسم الأمير وقال: نعم سيكون قريباً، فأنا في طريقي للبحث عن صاحب القلب الذهبي، وحتى عودتي من مقابلة سيده الحكمة اسمح لي أن أقدم لك أول بشائر عودة الشمس المسلوقة، سأقدم لك ملابس الفأخرة، وهدائي الذهبي». «ماذا عنك يا سيدي؟» سأل الرجل، قال الأمير: «دعني أشارككم العري في درب استعادة الشمس».

وأخيراً أصبح الأمير شمس عارياً من كل شيء، بعد أن بذل في سبيل هدفه المال والجواهر والملابس والحصان والذاكرة والأمنيات، وبات الطريق أمامه واضحاً بعد مساعدة الرجل له، وعند أول الطريق لقمّة الجبل قال الرجل للأمير: «إلى هنا وتنتهي رفقتنا، عليك أن تكمل الطريق وحدك، أنا لا أملك أي شيء لأهديه لك، ويعز علي أن أراك عارياً حافياً، ولكن أقبل مني هذه العُشبة السحرية التي أرجو أن تستفيد منها».

كانت عشبة صفراء ذات زهرة حمراء لها رائحة نفاذة، تأملها الأمير، ثم شمها، وسأل الرجل: «لماذا تستعمل؟».

أجاب الرجل: «من يأكل منها يستطيع طوال يومه أن يكلم الحيوانات بلسانها، وأن يفهم لغتها، هذه النبتة مما تنتج هذه الغابة الملعونة، أرجو أن تفيدك في رحلتك». ابتلع الأمير شمس هدية الرجل، وانطلق في رحلته عارياً حتى من ملابسه، كان التسلق إلى أعلى متعباً ومخيفاً ولولا أنه كان يفهم لغة الحيوانات لألقى بنفسه من عل بسبب الأفاعي التي كان يُصادفها في طريقه.





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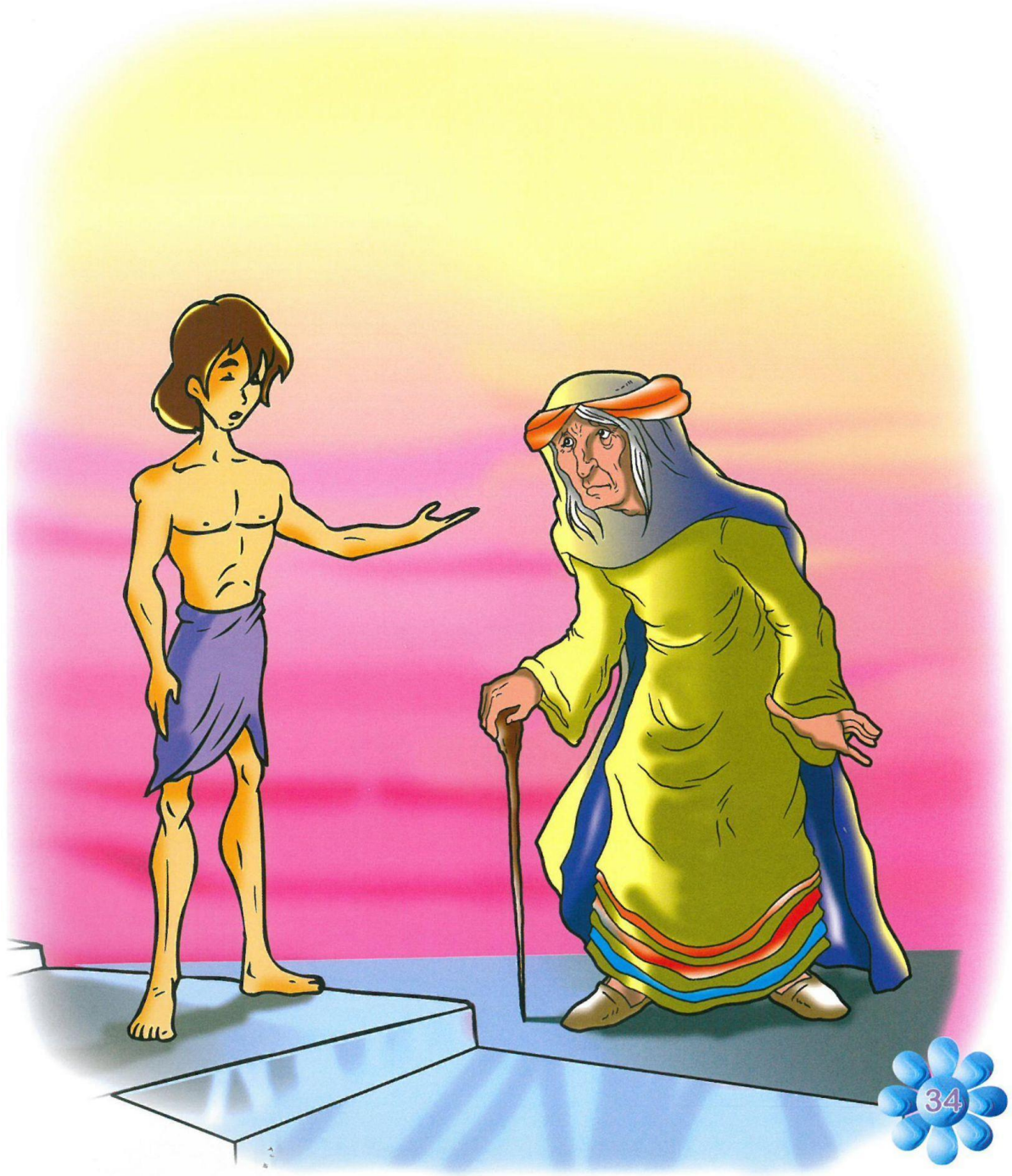
لكنّه كان يأنسُ بها عندما يسمّعها تشجّعهُ، وتدلهُ على الطريق، وتُشاركُ النهرين نَشيدَهُما الذي يُسمَعُ من بعيد، فهي أيضاً اشتاقت للشمسِ المسلوبة، وباتت تتمنّى التمدّد والتلوي في وهجها الأسطوريّ.

وأخيراً؛ وصل الأميرُ إلى قَمّةِ جبل سيّدة الحكمة والدّهور، وعلى بَوابة الكهف الذي تسكنه وجد وحشاً رهيباً يحرسُ المكان، كان وحشاً ضخماً بجسد أخضر مشعور، وملامح مخيفة، وشعر مُجعّد، ورائحة مُنتنة، كان خليطاً عجيباً من البشر والحيوان. رُعب الأميرُ عندما رآه ولكنه تمالك نفسه، ورجاه أن يسمح له بدخول الكهف، ولكن الوحش زمجر قائلاً: «لا يُسمح لأحد بالدخول دون أن يقدم لي هدية». ففكر الأميرُ قليلاً وقال بحزنٍ وانكسارٍ: «ولكنني لا أملك شيئاً، أنا كما ترى لا أملك حتى ملابس أو حذاء».

صمتَ الوحش قليلاً ثم تفرّسَ في وجه الأمير، وقال: «ولكنك تملك عينين شفافتين، سأقبل بهما مقابل سَمَاحي لك بالدخول إلى سيّدة الحكمة والدّهور». قال الأميرُ بحزنٍ: «ولكن كيف سأرى رَعِيّتي دون عَينين؟». زمجر الوحشُ قائلاً: «تستطيع أن تراها بقلبك إن شئت». ففكر الأميرُ شمس قليلاً، وقال في نفسه: «أنا لستُ في حاجةٍ إلى عَينين؛ لأنّ حبّ الرعيّة هو العَينان».

قدّم الأميرُ شمس عينيه عن طيب خاطر إلى الوحش الذي سمح له بالدخول إلى الكهف حيث تعيش سيّدة الحكمة والدّهور.





وأخيراً وصل الأمير شمس لمبتغاه، كان المكان بارداً، شم بأنفه رائحة النعناع البري، كان يقف دون أن يعلم أمام سيّدة الحكمة والدّهور، كانت كبيرة جداً عمرها يتجاوز ألف عام، قسّماتها غائرة في وجهها، ولكن بريق عينيها يشي بوجهها، تلبس عشرات الأثواب المختلفة اللون، وتسير ببطء وهُدوء، وتعيش في كنفها آلاف المخلوقات.

أشفقت سيّدة الدّهور على الأمير شمس الذي يقف أمامها هزياً جائعاً فقيراً عارياً حافياً أعمى العينين، لكن حب الرعية يسكن قلبه، قالت له بنبرة حنّية كلها حب: «هل طلبت مُقابلتي أيها الشاب الصّغير؟».

فرح الأمير الصّغير لسماع صوت سيّدة الدّهور، وقال بلهفة كبيرة: «نعم يا سيّدي، أريد أن أسألك عن فتى يملك قلباً من ذهب، تقول الأسطورة أنه سيعيد الشمس المسلوّبة إلى مملكتي، كيف الطريق إليه؟»

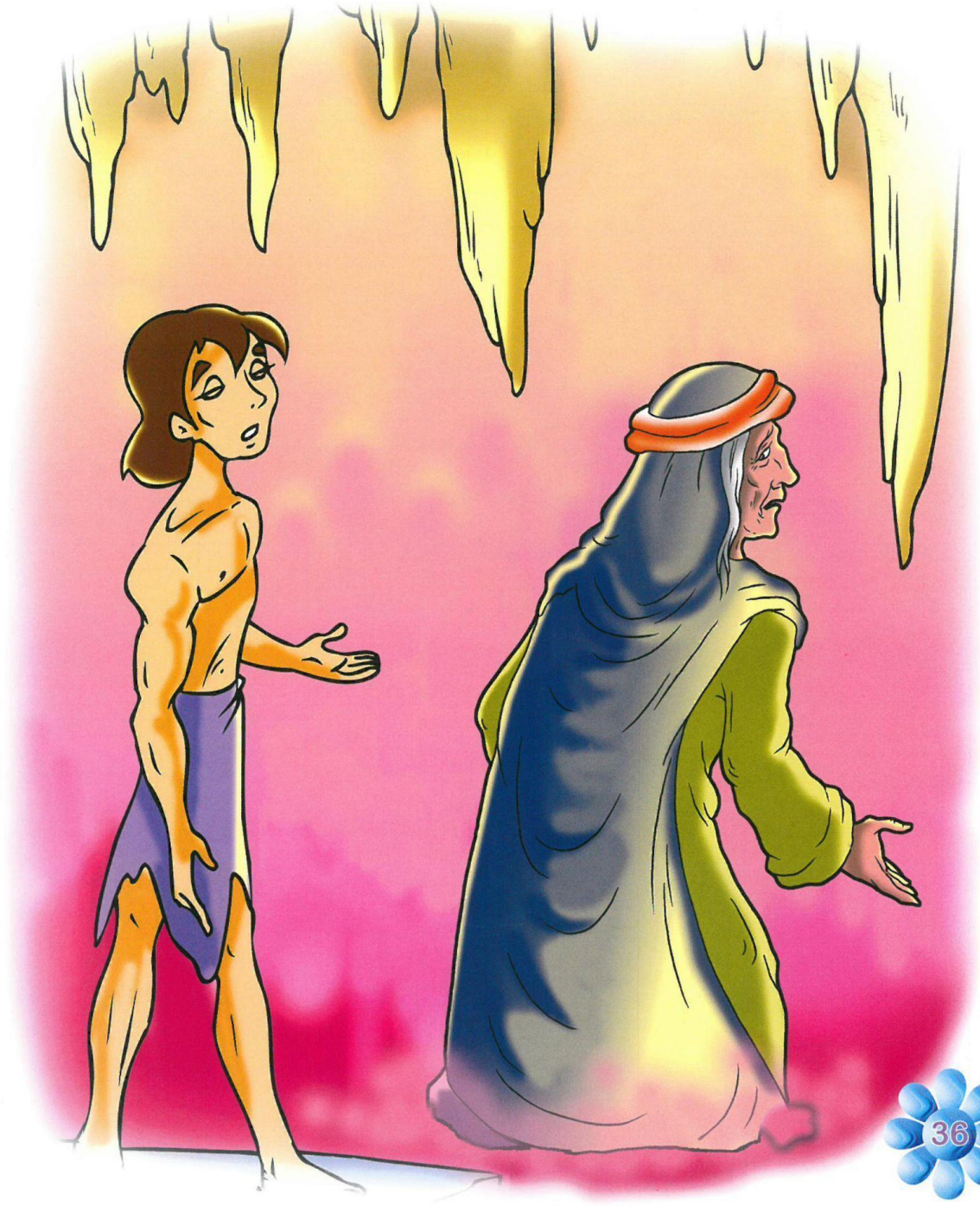
صمتت سيّدة الدّهور وقالت بصوت عميق هادئ: «إذن أنت تسأل عن صاحب القلب الذهبي؟»

قال الأمير بلهفة وانكسار: «نعم يا سيّدي الجليلة، هل يُمكنك مُساعدتي في الوصول إليه؟»

«أما زلت لا تعرف الطريق إليه؟» سألت سيّدة الحكمة والدّهور بتعجب.

أوماً الأمير بالنفي برأسه، قالت سيّدة الحكمة والدّهور: «هل أحضرت لي هدية؟ أنا لا أجيب عن أيّ سؤال إذا لم أحصل على هدية».



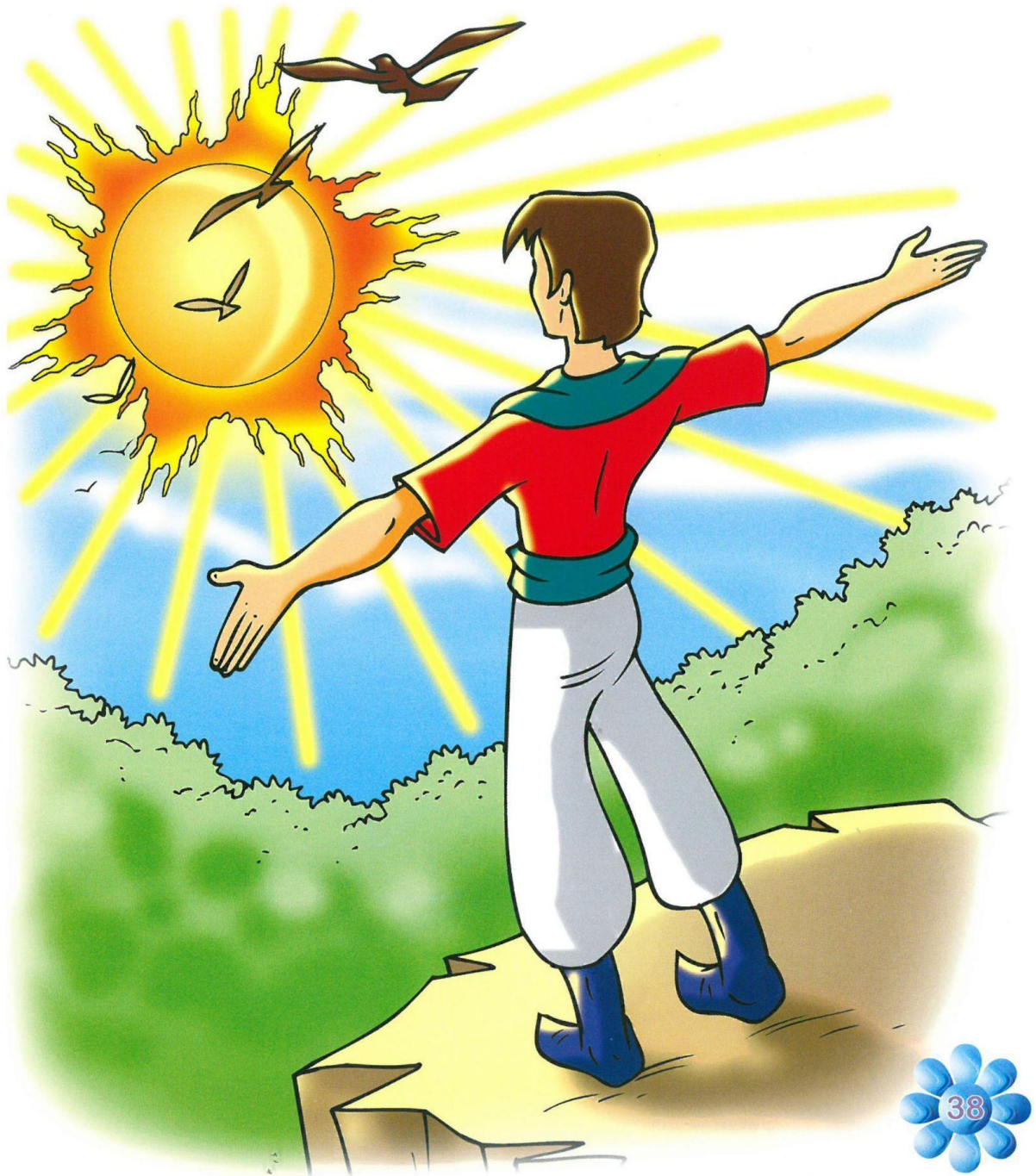


قال الأمير بخرج: «أنا لا أملك أي شيء الآن يا سيدي الجليلة، فهل يمكنك أن تساعدني دون مقابل؟»
قالت سيده الدهور بغضب: «بل تملك قلباً، أعطه لي، وأنا أجيب عن سؤالك مقابل ذلك».

فكر الأمير قليلاً، وشعر بحزن عميق لأنه سيعطيها قلبه الذي يحب رعيته، ولكنه استجمع شجاعته، وقال: «تستطيعين أن تأخذه يا سيدي». واستعد للألم.
مرت الدقائق رهيباً في انتظار أن تأخذ سيده الدهور قلبه، ولكن ذلك لم يحدث، بل ابتمت السيدة الجليلة، ومدت يدها الحانية إليه، وقالت «يا أمير الصغير الطيب، الفتى الذي يضحى بكل شيء من أجل رعيته هو دون شك من يملك قلباً من الذهب، القلوب لا تُصنع من الذهب، ولكنها تُصيح من ذهب بحب الناس، أنت تحتاج فقط إلى حب الناس ومعونتهم كي تعيد الشمس المسلوبة. الشمس تُعاد بالحب، فقط بالحب، هل سمعتني أيها الأمير الطيب؟ قل لرعاياك أن الحب والتعاون هما من سيعيدان الشمس المسلوبة».

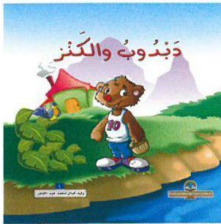
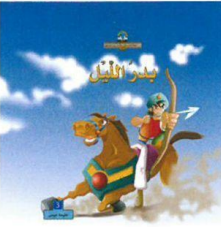
عاد الأمير شمس إلى مملكته الغارقة في الظلام، كان فقيراً جائعاً عارياً حافياً أعمى، لكن القلوب تحبه، كان فخوراً لأنه يملك قلباً من ذهب.





حَشَدَ جيشاً ليسَ من الفُرسَانِ بل من المُحِبِّينَ، المُستَعِدِّينَ لِبَدْلِ أرواحِهِم من أَجْلِ
الشمسِ التي طَالَ غيَابُهَا، كَانَ المحبُّونَ كُثُرًا، قَطَعُوا الصَّحَارَى، رَدَدَتِ المَمْلَكَةُ من
الخليجِ إِلَى المُحيطِ صَدَاهُم، اجْتَازُوا الوُدْيَانَ، حَتَّى حَجَارَ الأَرْضَ كَانَتْ تُزغَرِدُ
لَهُم، انضَمَّتْ حَتَّى الحَيَوَانَاتِ إِلَى ثورتِهِم الشَّرِيفَةِ، هَاجَمُوا جَمِيعاً مَمْلَكَةَ الظَّلَامِ،
وَانتَصَرُوا عَلَى جيشِهَا الكَبِيرِ المُظْلِمِ؛ لأنَّهُم يَمْلِكُونَ قلوباً مُحِبَّةً، وَيَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّ اللّٰهَ
يَبَارِكُ ثورَةَ القلوبِ التي تَحِبُّ الشَّمْسَ، وَبَعْدَ حَرْبٍ طَوِيلَةٍ عَادُوا يَحْمِلُونَ الشَّمْسَ.
كَانَتْ شَمْساً دَافِئَةً تَلْمَسُ القلوبَ الحَزِينَةَ فَتَفْرُحُهَا، وَتَرُدُّ السَّعَادَةَ إِلَى الوَجْهِ الذَّابِلِ،
كَانَتْ شَمْساً عَظِيمَةً تَشْمَلُ كُلَّ البَشَرِ، وَلَا تَعْرِفُ فَرَقاً بَيْنَ مَوَاطِنٍ أَوْ آخَرَ، تَغْمُرُ
الوُجُوهَ بِالسَّعَادَةِ، وَتُضِيءُ القَسَمَاتِ المَظْلَمَةَ، وَتُدْغِدُ القلوبَ الحَزِينَةَ، فَتَضْحَكُ
طَوِيلًا سَعِيدَةً مُبْتَهَجَةً، وَمِنْ جَدِيدِ عَادَتِ مَمْلَكَةُ الشَّمْسِ أَسْعَدَ بِلَادِ الدُّنْيَا، الكُلَّ فِيهَا
يَنْعَمُ بِالأَمَانِ وَالدَّفْعِ وَالحُبِّ، وَالشَّمْسُ تَغْمُرُ الكُلَّ بِأشعَّتِهَا الذَّهَبِيَّةِ التي تُدْغِدُ
القلوبَ الحَزِينَةَ، يَحْكُمُهَا أَمِيرٌ أَعْمَى لَا يَمْلِكُ تَاجاً أَوْ صَوْلجاناً، وَلَكِنَّهُ يَمْلِكُ قلوبَ
رَعِيَّتِهِ، هُوَ أَعْمَى العَيْنِينَ لَكِنَّهُ يَرَعَى رَعِيَّتَهُ بِقَلْبِهِ الذَّهَبِيِّ الَّذِي يَتَّسِعُ لِكُلِّ رَعِيَّتِهِ.
وَبَقِيَّتِ الجَدَّاتِ تَحَدِّثُ الأَطْفَالَ عَنِ أَمِيرِ أَعْمَى لَهُ قَلْبٌ مِنْ ذَهَبٍ أَعَادَ الشَّمْسَ إِلَى
مَمْلَكَتِهِ، وَغَدَا كُلُّ أَطْفَالِ الدُّنْيَا التي سُرِقَتْ شَمْسُهَا يَحْلُمُونَ بِقَدُومِ الأَمِيرِ ذِي القَلْبِ
الذَّهَبِيِّ.





من إصداراتنا



الدورة السادسة - عام 2001 م

- 1- حكاية الصقر شاهين
- 2- المرأة الذكية
- 3- صانعة الأحلام
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- 5- مدينة من ثلج

الدورة الثامنة - عام 2003 م

- 1- الجزيرة الوليدة
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- 1- حينما تصالحت مع جدي
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- 1- أجمل إحساس
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- 1- دبوب و الكنز
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- 5- المشغل الصغير





جائزة الشيخة فاطمة بنت هزاع بن زايد آل نهيان لقصّة الطفل العربي

سلسلة قصة الطفل العربي

القصص الفائزة بجائزة

الشيخة فاطمة بنت هزاع بن زايد آل نهيان

لقصة الطفل العربي

الدورة العاشرة 2006 م

المرتبة الأولى

أجمل العصافير - عامر بخوش أحمد

المرتبة الثالثة (مناصفة)

حلم النملة دودي - هالة محمد طوسون عبد العزيز

المرتبة الثالثة (مناصفة)

صاحب القلب الذهبي - سناء كامل أحمد شعلان

Practical Part

Translation of SHAALAN Sanaa's children story: صاحب القلب الذهبي from Arabic to English

The Golden Heart

- “The Sun Kingdom was the most blissful country in the world, and its people felt safe, warm and loved. The sun drenched everyone with its golden rays, warming up the cold hearts and lighting up the gloomy faces. Not a single citizen was deprived from this glorious sunlight, until the Lord of Darkness turned up from his far kingdom, leading a huge army of ebony-faced soldiers, observing with beady-dark eyes, and rotten hearts. The Lord of Darkness covered the sun with his dark cloak and took it away, and left the Sun Kingdom drowning in darkness, fear and hatred. He drew The Sun Kingdom’s King away, whose absence has not saddened the kingdom as much as that of the sun warmth has....”
- “And then what happened?”

The young Prince, with clear eyes and sad, pale face, asked. His mother, the Queen, sighed and said:

- “And then you were born, and just like all the other kids who were born during this sunless era, you came to this world with a pale face, clear eyes and a sad look on your face.”
- “And the sun, mom. What happened to the sun?”

The Prince eagerly asked.

- “The sun is still trapped in the kingdom of darkness, and people there are pleased with its presence,” the Queen wistfully said.

The Prince asked her:

- “Is our kingdom going to remain in the dark forever?”

The Queen looked out of her palace window made of ebony and ivory, encrusted with gold and diamonds. She gazed upon her gloomy kingdom, and the citizens lost in the shadows and said:

- “Yes, it is, until the lost sun is restored. I have, just like all these people, been dreaming of the sun rays covering my face and body.”
- “How does my dad live there?” the Prince asked.
- “He is living in captivity and humiliation,” the Queen said. “His eyes have become blind, his face pale, and his heart cold, from staying in the shadows for too long.”
- “Can we not help him?” the Prince asked with sadness.
- “We can if we could restore the lost sun,” the Queen answered with a sad look crossing her pale face. “Only then will happiness prevail, and will colors return to clear eyes like yours.”

The great Master and teacher heard their conversation and finally intervened:

- “Legend has it that the sun will be brought back to the Sun Kingdom on a crystal chariot, led by a knight with a golden heart.”

- The Prince asked in astonishment:
- “A golden heart? How can someone have a heart of gold?”
- “I do not have an answer for your question, but the Golden Heart does. Our hopes and dreams rest on him, for it is he who is going to restore the lost sun.”
- “How do I find him?” The Prince wondered with bated breath.
- “You look for him.” the Master answered callously.
- “Where?”
- “In the kingdom.”
- “How do I recognize him?”
- “With your heart...” The Master answered. “With the heart we know the truth,” he repeated as he walked out of the room.

The Prince went silent as he contemplated the Master’s words and wondered how a person could possibly have a golden heart. He did not taste the savoury foods he was served for days and spent his time watching people from his palace window. But from such a great height, all he could see was darkness.

The Prince thought long and hard, and the winds whispered:

- “Prince Shams is in a daze.”

For a long time, the Prince thought of the identity of the Golden Heart to no avail. Then, he finally decided to roam his tenebrous kingdom to find the Golden Heart.

The Prince wore his golden and diamond-encrusted crown, wielded his golden scepter, put on his golden shoes, rode his black and white thoroughbred horse and packed a great deal of food, fruits, money and jewels. He embarked on a journey from ignorance to knowledge, a journey to find the Golden Heart. However, the journey was arduous and intimidating; the kingdom has not seen the sun in years, the trees are all withered and dry, the roads are slippery, the cold is relentless, the lands are fallow, and the people are afraid and distressed. They do not know of the luxuries that Prince Shams experiences in his palace. But here, the vision is clearer. He can now see the faces of his people twinkled in sadness and fear.

Prince Shams lamented his helpless people. If only he could lend his aid. He wished that wholeheartedly, and the winds whispered once again:

- “Prince Shams feels compassion for his people.”

Prince Shams decided to travel to Mount Lady of Wisdom, where a lady of aeons of wisdom lives, to ask her about the Golden Heart and where to find him.

It was a long and arduous endeavour, but Prince Shams was determined to find the Golden Heart, free his kingdom from darkness and restore the stolen sun.

He walked long through his kingdom. None of his people approached him, and a feeling of loneliness overwhelmed him. Most of the buildings were ill-lit. However, prisons were mainly pitch dark. Prince Shams wondered why there were so many prisons and thought:

- “There must be many criminals in my kingdom.”

But the winds whistled all around:

- “Prince Shams is afraid.. Afraid that his prisons encompass the innocent, as does his kingdom the hungry.”

Prince Shams smiled as an idea crossed his mind and said:

- “Never again will I be afraid, and never again will my people starve.”

Then he started distributing all his possessions of money and jewellery to the poor and the hungry. People were fed, children were happy for the first time since the sun was taken away, and their mothers prayed for Prince Shams and wished him long life and good luck.

On that night, no one remembered the captive king, whose sun and tyranny were gone withal. The people felt that this night was less dark than the previous ones, and for the first time since the beginning of the prince’s journey, loving glances followed him.

The wind vented happily:

- “The people love Prince Shams,” and everyone sang along.

Shams pursued his way until he found a peacock that looked very unhappy, and its feathers were plucked out.

- “What happened to you?” the Prince asked.

- “Your Grace, I myself am a king among birds. However, I had lost my crown because of the darkness, and all the birds have abandoned me since then. Now I am desperate for a crown that would bring me back my glory and happiness.”

Shams pondered the peacock’s words and thought:

- “How ignorant of the birds to let a mere crown decide their ruler!”

But he felt that he must help the peacock, and said:

- “I do not need my crown, what I need is people’s love!”

Shams took off his golden diamond-encrusted crown and placed it on the peacock’s head, and soon enough, the birds gathered around the peacock, dazzled by the shining stones and careless about the crown bearer.

The Prince journeyed on with no crown, food, and money, and he arrived upon a sunken land, and the locals looked lost and distressed. The Prince asked them about the source of the water, and their wisest man answered:

- “The city’s dam is broken, and water is leaking and sinking the land and crops.”

Surprised, Prince Shams said:

- “Then why not fix it?”

The man said:

- “We have tried, but we need a magical wooden piece of a specific size to seal the hole in the dam.”

The Prince was quick to look at the hole in the dam, and he found it to be precisely the size of his sceptre.

- “I do not need this scepter, what I need is people’s love.” Prince Shams thought as he jammed his sceptre into the hole and plugged it completely.

The leak stopped, hope returned, and farmers rejoiced and prayed for Prince Shams.

The winds soughed:

- “Prince Shams has no money, no crown and no scepter, but he has a big heart.”

Prince Shams continued his journey, and after an arduous voyage, he reached the Wishing Well, of which he had heard countless stories when he was a kid; a well which used to grant memories before the sun was stolen, but now its cover is shattered, and its walls are unsteady.

Prince Shams looked down the well and wished to find the Golden Heart. His wish echoed within the well’s walls, but then a local said to him:

- “It’s no use trying, the Lord of Darkness casted a spell upon this place, and cursed this well.”

- “How Evil!” Prince Shams said: “he even stole people’s dreams. Is there a way to break this curse?”
- “There is a way...” the man answered: “but it is far-fetched.”
- “What is it?”
- “If royal blood is spilled into this well, and the first wish is granted upon it... the curse will be lifted.”
- “And then the problem is solved.” Prince Shams sighed in relief.
- “Indeed...” the man interrupted. “But whoever makes this sacrifice has to be aware that their future wishes will not be granted, and they have no right to wish upon this well again.”
- “What happens if they try to wish again?”
- “To ashes they turn.”

Prince Shams went quiet for a while, he felt sad and afraid as he will never be able to wish again, but he quickly drew his dagger and cut himself. His blood spilt into the well, which started to look livelier than ever.

Suddenly, Shams heard a little girl:

- “What a beautiful horse! I wish I could have it.”

She was pointing at the Prince’s favourite horse. Shams did not think twice as he handed her the bridle. He thought of his enemy, the Lord of Darkness, and his despicable deed of stealing and preventing people’s wishes. Shams also thought of

the sun, felt an intense longing for its warmth and then shouted at the top of his lungs:

- “Dream, my people! Dream and wish! You are allowed to dream and wish!”

Prince Shams left the Wishing Well, hearing people’s wishes behind him. He had wishes of his own but remembered that it would cause his demise. Two teardrops fell from his clear eyes; he swiftly wiped them and felt proud of himself, for he bought the Wishing Well back with a hefty price, his wishes. Then the winds lamented:

- “The Prince is not allowed to dream.”

The people shouted back:

- “If the kind prince cannot wish, we shall wish for his dreams to come true!”

And the Wishing Well accepted their wish.

Prince Shams carried on his journey, tired, hungry and poor... he lost his crown, sceptre, horse and even his wishes, but he was happy, determined to find the Golden Heart, and he was eager to reach the magical place where rivers of honey and milk flow, for he has not in a long time.

He reached the desired place, and to his dismay, he found dried riverbeds, and everything around the once magical rivers had withered and died, and on their banks, straw huts were built by poor people whose hopes to find honey and milk

were crushed. He felt their misery, and he knew what it is like to be disenchanting for the first time in his life.

Despite their state, the poor people warmly welcomed Prince Shams as they caught wind of his kindness and sympathy toward others. Shams was struck by how skinny those people were and enjoyed chatting and connecting with them, especially their elder, an older woman whom everyone called Grandma, and age imprinted wrinkles upon her kind face. She knew countless stories, which she told the starving people to help them get over their hunger.

Even Prince Shams forgot about his hunger as he listened to one of her stories about the happiness those people once knew before the sun was stolen. She told Shams about this sun, its warmth, its golden rays. He was so fascinated that he almost wished to see it but quickly pulled himself together, so he does not turn into ashes.

- “I am very sad....” Grandma sighed, “I will soon forget all these stories that I love dearly, how I wish to recount them once again under the sunlight, and die peacefully in its warmth....”

Grandma’s words surprised Prince Shams, and he asked her why she would say such things.

She said:

- “We waited long enough for the sun’s return, to no avail, nor a glimmer of hope, and we cannot afford starving any longer... so I have decided to solve the rivers’ problem.”
- “How are you going to solve it?” Prince Shams asked.

Grandma said:

- “These two rivers are called the Forgetting Rivers, and it is said that their source is the earth’s core, where the sun was born from heat and pressure. My grandfather told my father that if the rivers were to dry out, it would be because people forgot their duties, hence the rivers’ name. And funny enough, the drought will not end unless somebody goes to the earth’s core, and gives up their memories there, they will forget all of their past, and the rivers will flow again.”
- “Are you willing to make this sacrifice?” Prince Shams asked.

Grandma smiled and said:

- “Somebody has to be, for the sake of these people, and if I do not teach them sacrifice as their elder, who else would?”

Prince Shams felt ashamed and low before this old lady, who is willing to give up everything for the sake of her people, and decided to make this sacrifice in her stead. He was upset because he would forget his past, but it was enough to remember his quest: finding the Golden Heart.

When the day came, everyone was present, fronted by the woman who showed Prince Shams the gap that leads into the two rivers source, then she approached him while the others were tearful, and said:

- “Take this bottle, child. There is a magical potion inside it, once you drink it you will reach the earth’s core in the blink of an eye. When you get there, you will find the two rivers Guardian, tell him that we, the people of the earth surface, send him greetings, and inform him of your intention to give up your past and memories for the sake of the two rivers.”
- “I will.” Prince Shams said as he was moved by Grandma’s words and all the people who gathered to say goodbye.

Prince Shams drank the magical potion, and in a heartbeat, he found himself in the earth’s core, and he noticed that two were blocked and constricted, and standing next to them was the Guardian, he was a water mass that emits a cool breeze, and his smile comforted Prince Shams who said:

- “I came to give you my memories. In exchange, you have to free the two rivers!”

The rivers Guardian smiled and said: “I salute your bravery. However, you have to tell me where you want to be sent after I take your memory.”

Prince Shams said:

- “I was on my way to find the Lady of Wisdom and Eons.”

- “The Labyrinth Forest separates us from her, I will send you there, but you will forget everything you know, you will not even remember who you are.”

Overwhelmed with emotion, Prince Shams asked:

- “What about my people? What about the Golden Heart?”
- “You will also forget everything about them, too.” the Guardian said.

Prince Shams went quiet for a moment until the Guardian said:

- “Usually, I offer those who give me their memories a present; I command the two rivers to repeat phrases of the giver’s choice. So, what are the two phrases that you want the rivers to repeat?”
- “The Golden Heart!” Prince Shams said excitedly, “and the stolen sun!”

The Guardian was surprised by this choice and asked Prince Shams:

- “Why did you choose these two phrases?”

Prince Shams said:

- “So that I do not forget the duty which brought me here.”

A few moments later, Prince Shams gave his memories to the Guardian, and the two rivers gushed forth with honey and milk, repeating the two phrases: “The Golden Heart!” and “The stolen sun!” as people celebrated the end of the hunger days.

The soldiers of Darkness tried to stop the rivers from repeating the phrases, but the rivers drowned any of them who dared to come close and carried on with their

song. The people and the wind sang along; even the Soldiers of Darkness unconsciously broke into song ever so often.

The Lord of Darkness wondered what this Golden Heart is and whether it is possible to buy it, but the winds vented loudly:

- “Impossible! Golden hearts are priceless!”

As for the Prince, he was adrift in the Labyrinth Forest, walking alone for several days, namelessly, aimlessly... looking for somebody who knows his name or a way out of this predicament. The sounds of water and wind were his only companions; he had heard the two phrases a thousand times before realizing the reason he ended up in that place.

The Prince had the habit of sitting by the two rivers that crossed the forest, always thinking of a way out that leads him to the Lady of Eons, but to no avail.

One day, he noticed another sound along the rivers and the wind; he traced it until he found an old, grey-haired, long-bearded man, stripped away from his clothes.

It appeared that he had been mumbling those words to himself after a long silence; signs of loneliness and desolation marked his face, the Prince could barely approach him and comfort him from his long solitude.

With great difficulty, the Prince understood the old man’s secret; the Labyrinth Forest was the exile of those who rebelled against the Lord of Darkness. His

soldiers dragged them to that place and left them under the clutches of loneliness, hunger and cold.

The Prince faked a smile and asked:

- “Where are your clothes?”
- “They left us here to die....” The old man said, “They took everything from us, even our clothes.”
- “Have you been here for a long time?”
- “Yes, but we still often lose one another in this place.”
- “How long are you going to stay here?”

The old man said desperately:

- “Until a kind-hearted prince arrives to cover our backs, and guides us towards the lost sun.”
- “I hope that day is near.” The prince smiled and said: “It must be near, for I am in a quest to find the Golden Heart, and until my return from meeting the Lady of Eons, I am bearing glad tidings in regards to the stolen sun, and giving you my fancy clothes and golden shoes.”
- “What about you, kind sir?” the old man asked.
- “I want to be in the same state of undress as my people in our journey to pursue the sun back.”

The Prince became stripped of everything he had; he had given his money, clothes, jewellery, horse, memories and wishes for the sake of his quest. His pathway has become more apparent with the old man's help, but on the first turn which leads to the mountain's peak, the man told Prince Shams:

- "This is where our companionship ends; you will have to continue on your own. It pains me to see you naked and barefoot, and I have nothing of value to give you except this magical flower which I hope will be of use to you."

The plant was yellow and had a strong smell. The Prince contemplated it, smelled it and then asked the old man:

- "What is it for?"

The man answered:

- "This plant grows in this cursed land, and it has magical powers as it grants whoever eats it the ability to speak to animals, I hope it is going to help you in your journey."

Prince Shams ate the plant and started the climbing adventure. It was a tiring and scary experience as snakes were all over the place, but they did not attempt to harm him because they could understand him and his motives. Instead, they encouraged him, showing him the right way and singing along with the two rivers, which can still be heard from that altitude since they also long for the sun and its glow.

At last, Prince Shams reached the peak of Mount Lady of Eons and Wisdom. There stood a colossal monster guarding the entrance of a cave in the mountain. It was a gigantic creature with a green and hairy body; its features were frightening, hair frizzy, and smell wicked. It was a strange combination of human and beast.

Prince Shams was scared at first but managed to get a hold of himself; he asked the monster to let him into the cave, the beast roared:

- “Nobody is allowed in unless they give me a present!”

Prince Shams thought for a while and said in a broken and shaky voice:

- “But I do not own anything; even my clothes are gone as you can see.”

The monster paused for a bit, grinned in the Prince’s face and then said:

- “But you have a pair of clear eyes; I will let you into Mount Wisdom in exchange for it.”

Prince Shams said sadly:

- “How am I supposed to see my people without my eyes?”
- “You can see them with your heart.” the monster replied angrily

Upon reflection, Prince Shams thought:

- “I do not need eyes; my people’s love shall be my vision.”

And with good grace, the Prince handed his eyes to the monster, which let him into the cave where Lady Wisdom and Eons lived.

At last, Prince Shams reached his goal. He felt cold in the cave, but there was a pleasant smell of wild mint inside. He stood there for a while, unaware that the Lady of Wisdom and Eons was standing before him; she was old, exceeding a thousand years, time had etched valleys along her face, but her eyes had a unique spark. It looked like she was wearing many dresses, one on top of the other. She trod slowly and lightly, and under her many sleeves lived different types of creatures.

The Lady of Wisdom and Eons felt sorry for Prince Shams, who was standing there, hollow-cheeked, hungry, poor, barefoot, naked and blind, but his love for his people remained in his heart, she asked him in a loving tone:

- “Did you request to meet me, young man?”

Prince Shams was delighted to hear her voice, he said excitedly:

- “Yes! I wanted to ask you about a person who has a golden heart. Legend has it that he is going to bring back the stolen sun to my kingdom, which way leads to him?”

The Lady went quiet for a bit and asked:

- “So you are asking about the golden heart....”
- “Yes, my lady! Can you help me reach him?” Prince Shams interrupted her.
- “So, you still do not know the way....”

Prince Shams shook his head.

- “Have you brought me a present?” The Lady asked. “I do not answer any questions before I get a present.”
- “I do not own anything, my lady. Can you help me for free?” Prince Shams asked with a sad look upon his face.
- “You still have a heart...” The lady said: “Give it to me and I shall answer your questions.”

Prince Shams thought about the lady’s proposal and then said:

- “You may have it, my lady.”

The Prince gathered his strength and prepared for the pain, and time slowly passed as he was waiting for the Lady of Eons to take his heart. However, it never happened. Instead, the lady smiled, extended her loving hand toward Prince Shams.

- “My little kind Prince, the person who sacrifices everything for his people is undoubtedly the person with a golden heart. Hearts are not made of gold, but they turn golden with the love of people, all you need is people’s love and support to bring back the stolen sun. Love will bring back the stolen sun, only love will. Did you understand, kind prince? Go and spread this message among your people.”

Prince Shams returned poor, hungry, barefoot, naked and blind to his dark kingdom. But he was loved by his people and proud to have a golden heart.

He assembled an army of not knights but devotees prepared to spend their lives for the long lost Sun. They were numerous, and they traversed deserts, their echoes reaching far and wide throughout the kingdom. They crossed valleys, and even stone clanked in chants for them. Animals, too, joined in their honourable march, all together attacking the Kingdom of Darkness, vanquishing its vast dark army, thanks to their loving hearts, and to the knowledge that God blesses the revolution of hearts that love the Sun. After a long war, they returned victorious with the Sun in hand.

It was a warm sun; it drenched everyone with its golden rays, warming up the cold hearts and lighting gloomy faces. Not a single citizen was deprived of this glorious sunlight, and once again, the Sun Kingdom was the most blissful country in the world, where people felt safe, warm and loved. Ruled by a prince, who did not own a crown or a sceptre, but he had his people's unconditional love and a golden heart, one big enough to embrace every single person in his kingdom.

Grandmothers recounted wonderful stories of a blind prince with a golden heart, who brought back the stolen sun to the kingdom, his story spread far and wide, and all the children whose kingdom has lost its sun dream of finding the golden heart.

The End
