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The Central Figures

The Báb

Volume One



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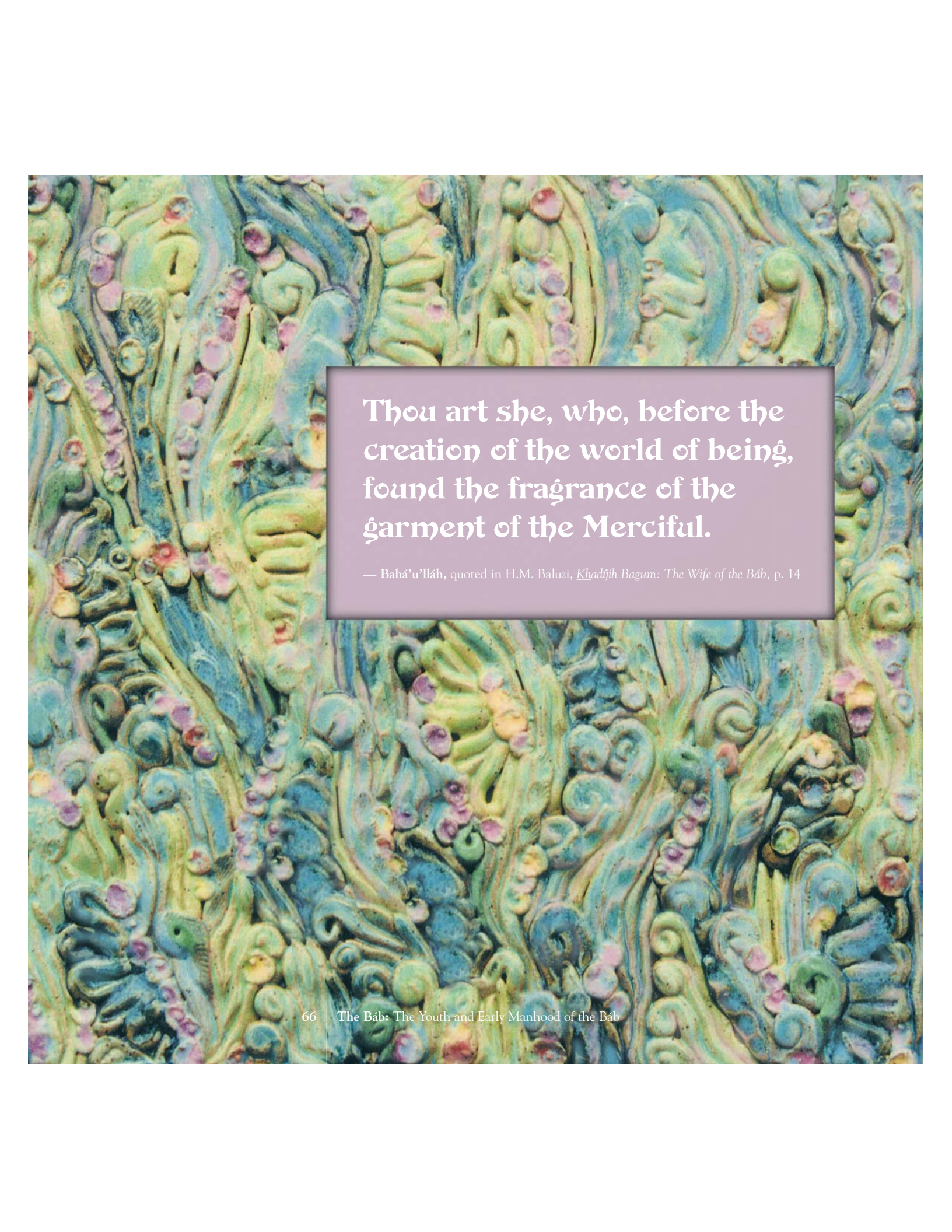
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Thou art she, who, before the
creation of the world of being,
found the fragrance of the
garment of the Merciful.

— Bahá'u'lláh, quoted in H.M. Baluzi, *Khadjih Bagum: The Wife of the Báb*, p. 14

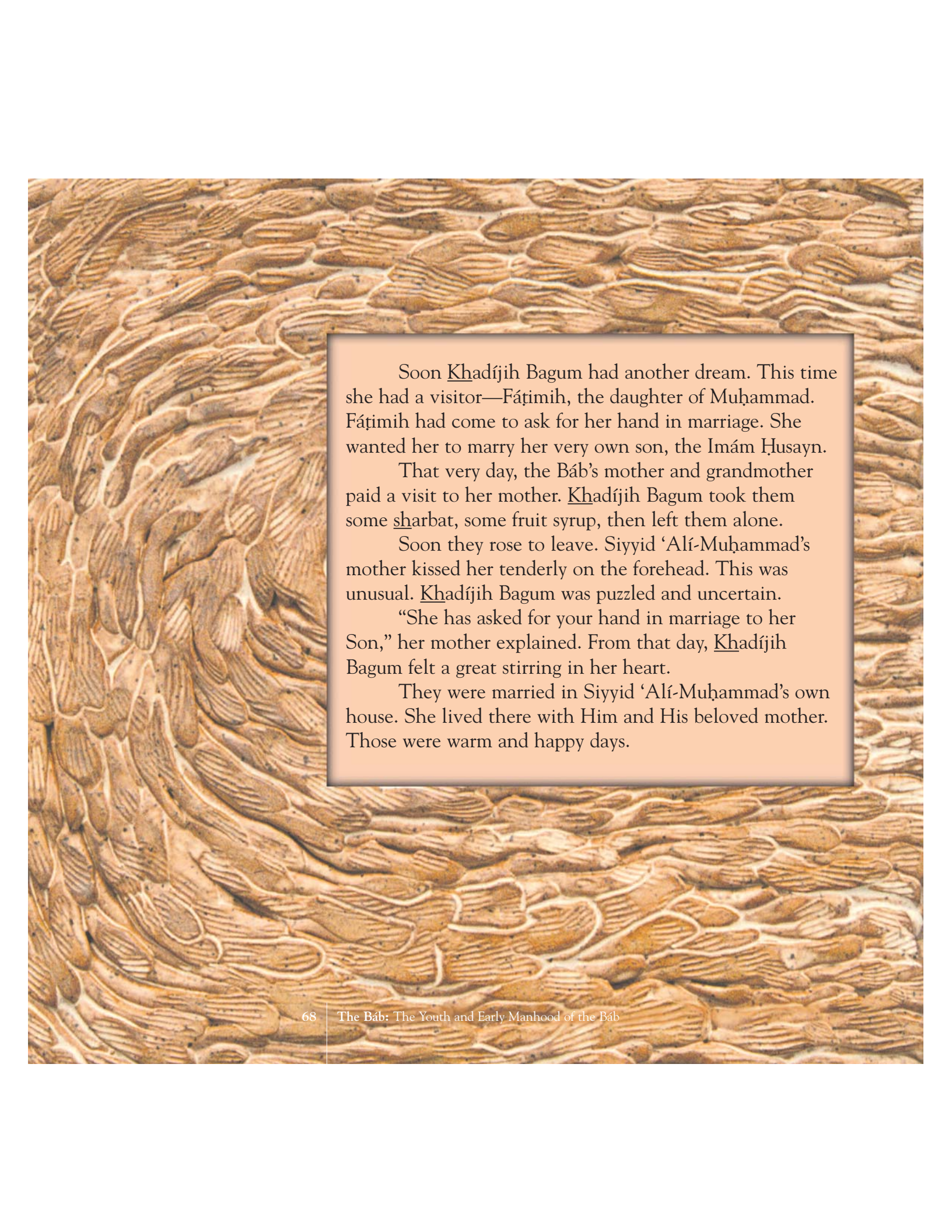


Dreams of Faith

Written by Jean Gould • Illustrated by Cindy Pacileo

Khadíjih Bagum thought she knew her young cousin, Siyyid ‘Alí-Muḥammad. She knew Him long before He was the Báb. They had lived next door to each other in Shíráz for many years.

When they were both in their early twenties, she began to dream of Him. Once, Khadíjih Bagum saw Siyyid ‘Alí-Muḥammad standing in a green plain. Flowers surrounded Him. He wore a labbádih, an outer coat, embroidered in gold thread. The thread formed golden words from the Qur’án. He faced Mecca and He prayed. He was always praying.



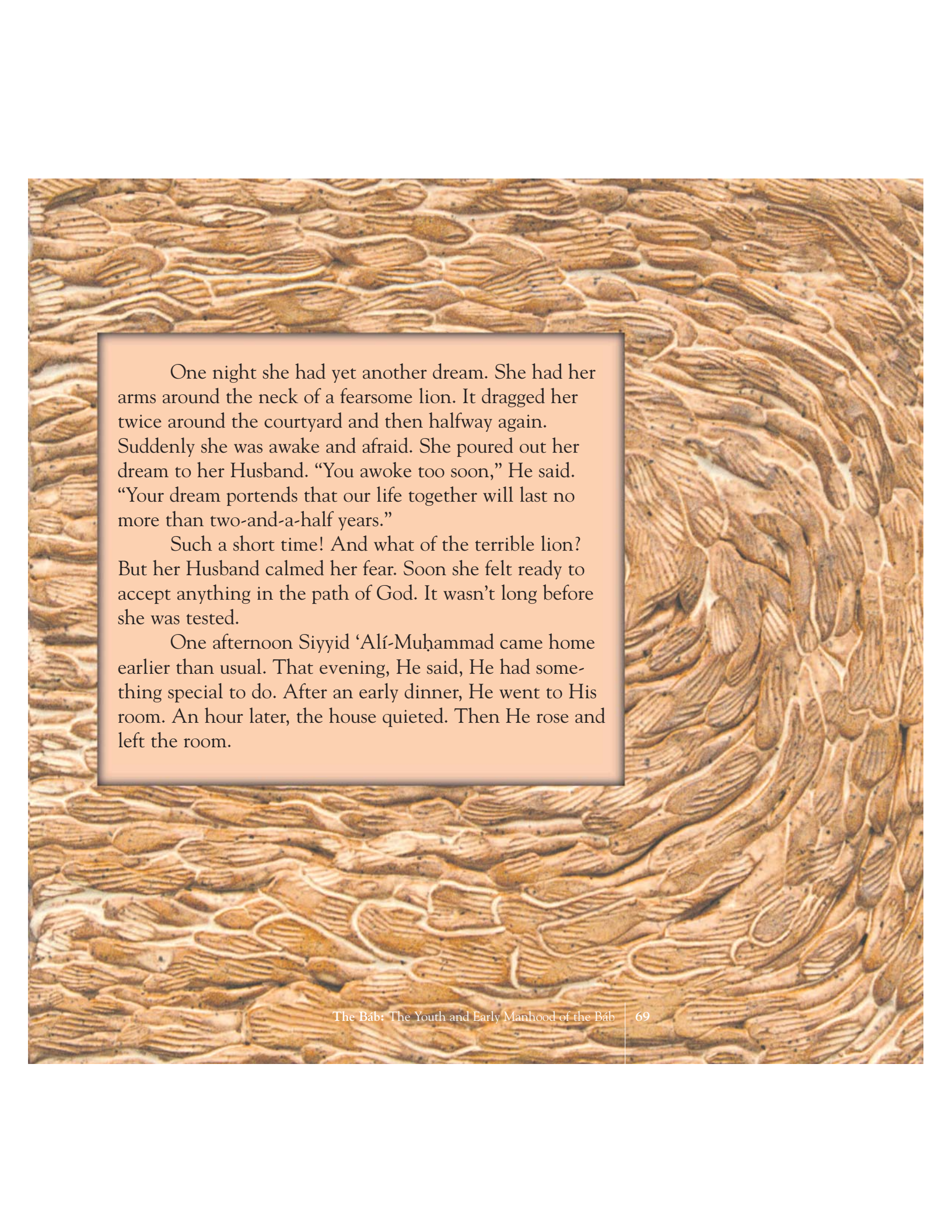
Soon Khadíjih Bagum had another dream. This time she had a visitor—Fátimih, the daughter of Muḥammad. Fátimih had come to ask for her hand in marriage. She wanted her to marry her very own son, the Imám Ḥusayn.

That very day, the Báb's mother and grandmother paid a visit to her mother. Khadíjih Bagum took them some sharbat, some fruit syrup, then left them alone.

Soon they rose to leave. Siyyid 'Alí-Muḥammad's mother kissed her tenderly on the forehead. This was unusual. Khadíjih Bagum was puzzled and uncertain.

"She has asked for your hand in marriage to her Son," her mother explained. From that day, Khadíjih Bagum felt a great stirring in her heart.


They were married in Siyyid 'Alí-Muḥammad's own house. She lived there with Him and His beloved mother. Those were warm and happy days.



One night she had yet another dream. She had her arms around the neck of a fearsome lion. It dragged her twice around the courtyard and then halfway again. Suddenly she was awake and afraid. She poured out her dream to her Husband. “You awoke too soon,” He said. “Your dream portends that our life together will last no more than two-and-a-half years.”

Such a short time! And what of the terrible lion? But her Husband calmed her fear. Soon she felt ready to accept anything in the path of God. It wasn’t long before she was tested.

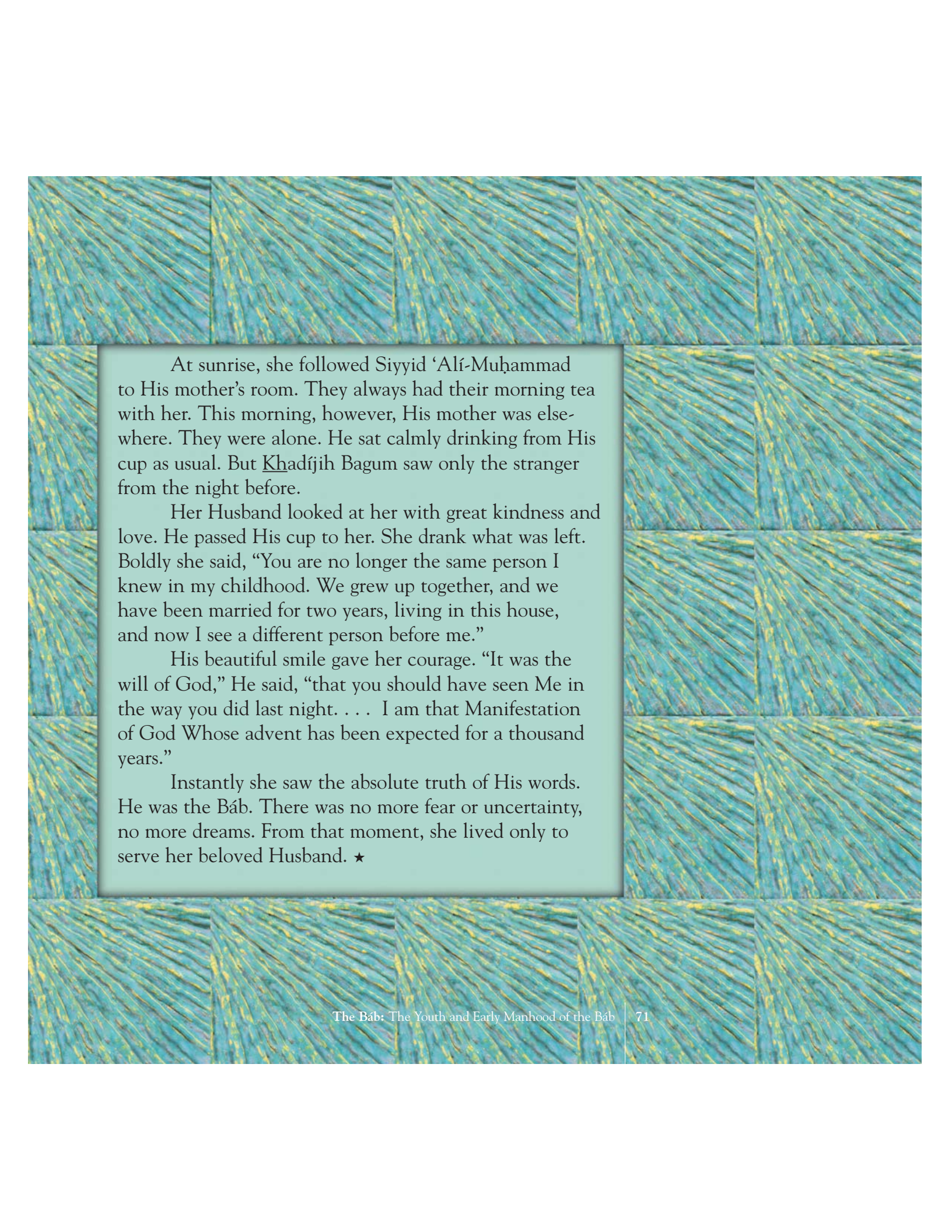
One afternoon Siyyid ‘Alí-Muḥammad came home earlier than usual. That evening, He said, He had something special to do. After an early dinner, He went to His room. An hour later, the house quieted. Then He rose and left the room.



Another hour passed. Khadíjih Bagum went to find her young Husband. On silent feet she searched the house. Finally she looked to the upper room on the western side. It was well lighted. He never used that room so late unless He had guests. Who could be there?

She didn't know why she was suddenly afraid. She stepped quietly up the stairs to the lighted chamber. But it was no ordinary light. From the doorway, she could see her Beloved. He was praying. Tears were streaming from His eyes. And His face was shining. Rays of light were radiating from it. He was majestic and unearthly. Khadíjih Bagum was terrified. She stood still where she was. She was unable to go forward or return to the stairs. A scream rose in her throat.

Suddenly, her Beloved made a sign with His hands. Go back! Able, finally, to move, she raced away to her room. There she stayed awake through the night. What could possibly be wrong? Why the terrible tears and sorrow? Why the awesome light? At dawn came the muezzin's call to prayer. Perhaps she would have the answers to her fearful questions.



At sunrise, she followed Siyyid ‘Alí-Muḥammad to His mother’s room. They always had their morning tea with her. This morning, however, His mother was elsewhere. They were alone. He sat calmly drinking from His cup as usual. But Khadíjih Bagum saw only the stranger from the night before.

Her Husband looked at her with great kindness and love. He passed His cup to her. She drank what was left. Boldly she said, “You are no longer the same person I knew in my childhood. We grew up together, and we have been married for two years, living in this house, and now I see a different person before me.”

His beautiful smile gave her courage. “It was the will of God,” He said, “that you should have seen Me in the way you did last night. . . . I am that Manifestation of God Whose advent has been expected for a thousand years.”

Instantly she saw the absolute truth of His words. He was the Báb. There was no more fear or uncertainty, no more dreams. From that moment, she lived only to serve her beloved Husband. ★