

The following story is from the book

The Central Figures

The Báb

Volume One



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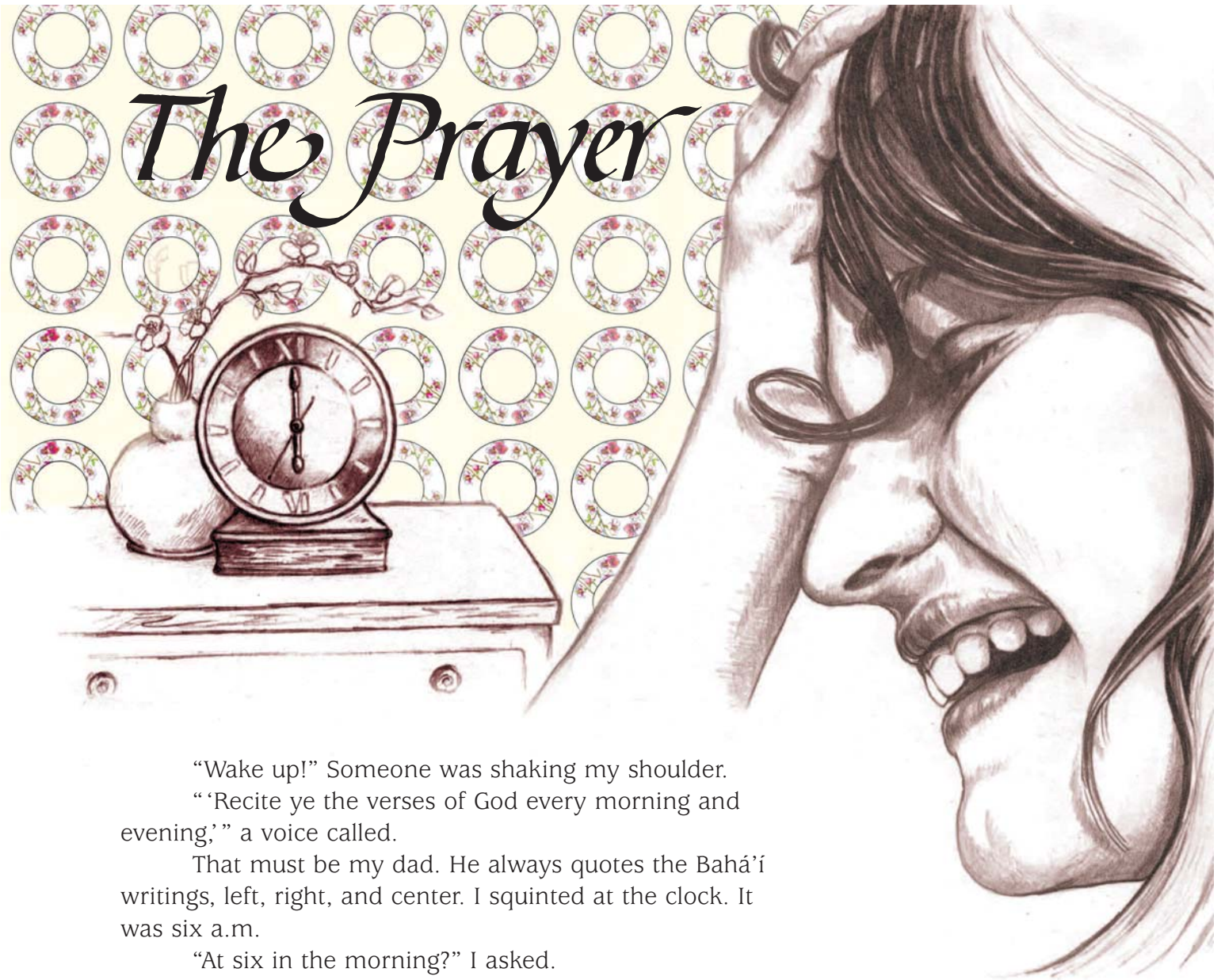
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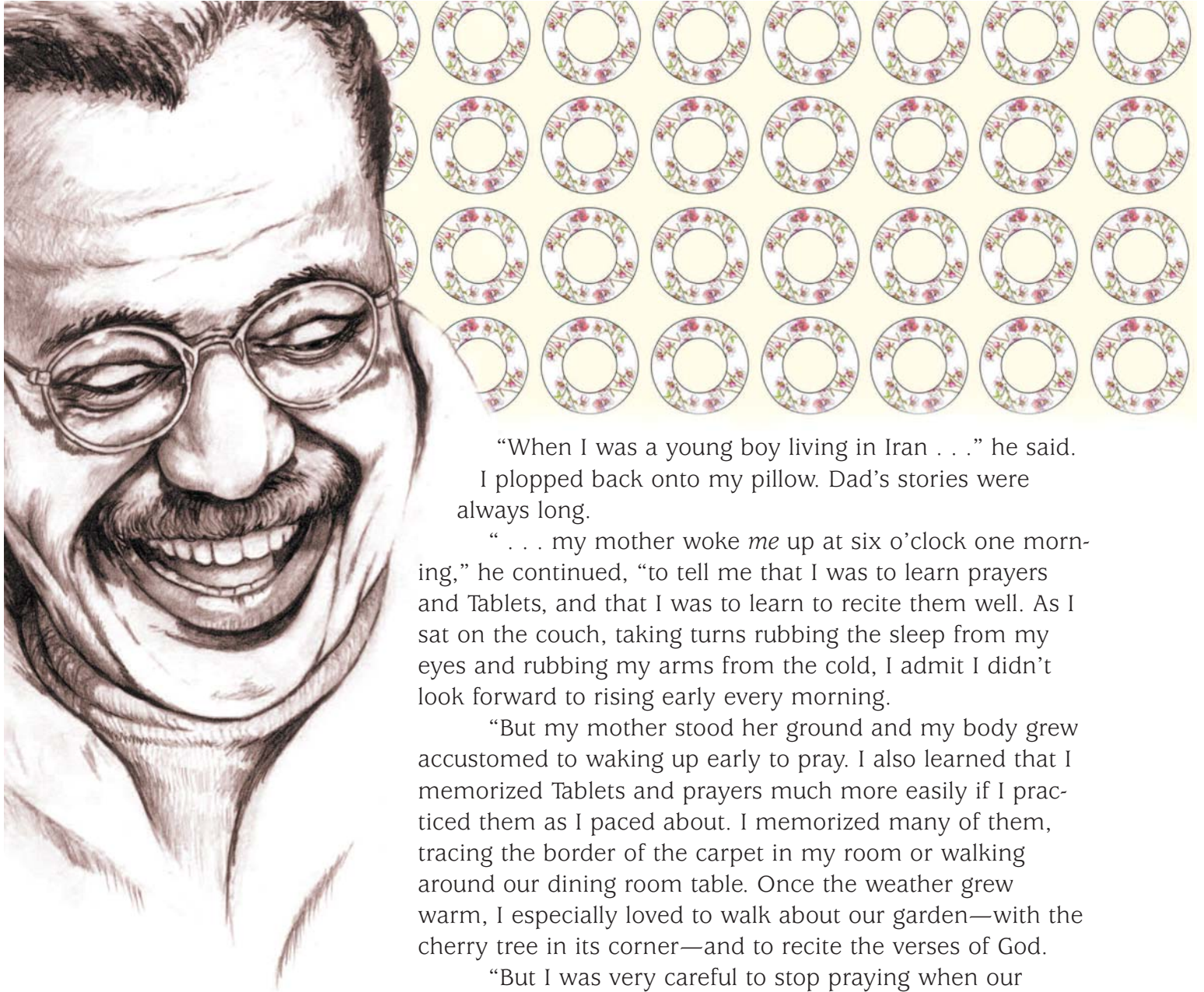
*Is there any
Remover of difficulties
save God?
Say: Praised be God!
He is God!
All are His servants
and all abide
by His bidding!*

— The Báb, *Selections from the Writings of the Báb*, p. 217



“Wake up!” Someone was shaking my shoulder.
“‘Recite ye the verses of God every morning and evening,’” a voice called.
That must be my dad. He always quotes the Bahá’í writings, left, right, and center. I squinted at the clock. It was six a.m.
“At six in the morning?” I asked.
“You are now old enough to join our morning prayers,” Dad said.
“Noooo!” I moaned. Mom and Dad chanted prayers every day at the crack of dawn.

*Written by Suzan Nadimi
Illustrated by Carla Trimble*

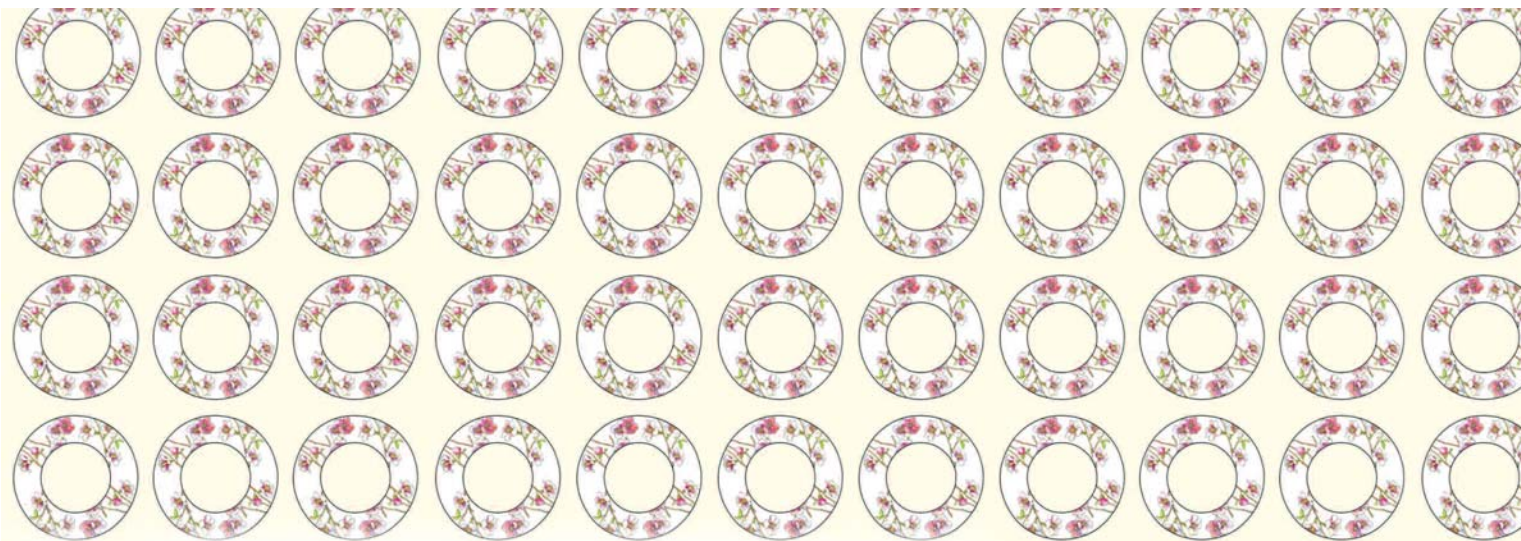


“When I was a young boy living in Iran . . .” he said. I plopped back onto my pillow. Dad’s stories were always long.

“ . . . my mother woke *me* up at six o’clock one morning,” he continued, “to tell me that I was to learn prayers and Tablets, and that I was to learn to recite them well. As I sat on the couch, taking turns rubbing the sleep from my eyes and rubbing my arms from the cold, I admit I didn’t look forward to rising early every morning.

“But my mother stood her ground and my body grew accustomed to waking up early to pray. I also learned that I memorized Tablets and prayers much more easily if I practiced them as I paced about. I memorized many of them, tracing the border of the carpet in my room or walking around our dining room table. Once the weather grew warm, I especially loved to walk about our garden—with the cherry tree in its corner—and to recite the verses of God.

“But I was very careful to stop praying when our landlady stepped onto her balcony overlooking the garden. Goli Khánum was not a kind woman.



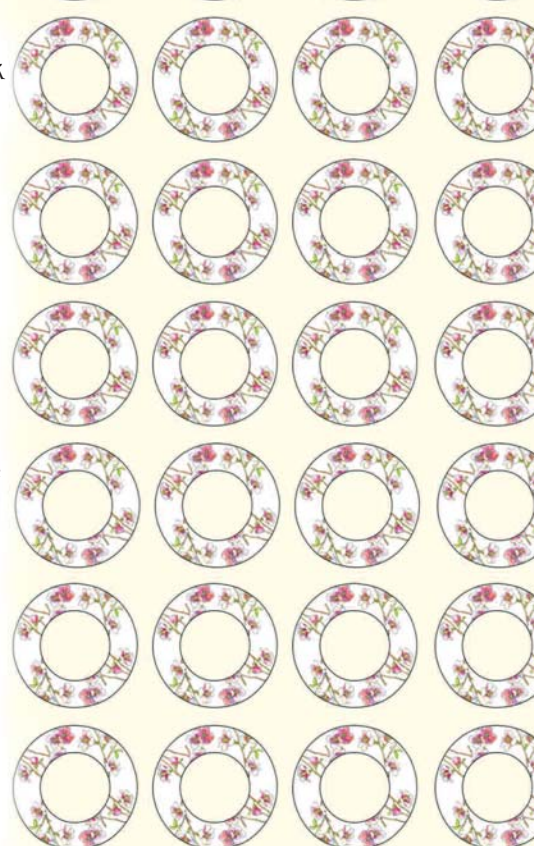
“She never said anything except, ‘Run along, run along!’ And she never smiled except when she looked back into her room where her invalid husband lay on a bed in the corner.

“Over many months, I learned many prayers and Tablets from Bahá’u’lláh, ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, and the Báb.

“My mother once told me,” Dad continued, “‘It is a bounty to possess these prayers. Do you know that the Báb wrote a special prayer for His wife? She was to read that prayer in times of difficulty, before she went to sleep. The Báb assured her that it would remove her difficulties and ease her burden. Alas, that jewel has been lost, but we are fortunate to have all the prayers that we do.’ I nodded, as if I agreed with her, but in reality I had *no* idea what she meant.

“One afternoon, I must have not seen Goli Khánum stepping onto her balcony. She suddenly appeared by my side, towering over me.

“‘Have you no respect for the sick?’ she cried. ‘My husband is suffering. Do you hear me? My husband is suffering, and you sing!’





“‘That’s not true!’ I said. As it happened, I had been saying a most appropriate prayer.

“Goli Khánum inched closer towards me. I had to swallow, even though my mouth felt dry.

“‘I was chanting a prayer,’ I said, ‘a prayer that asks for the removal of difficulties.’ I closed my eyes to Goli Khánum’s fearsome face, and I opened my heart to the Words of the Báb as I chanted, melodiously and with conviction, ‘Is there any Remover of difficulties save God?’ just as my mother had taught me.

“‘Very well.’ She backed away. ‘Make sure you chant that prayer whenever you come down to the garden.’

“That day, as I walked away from Goli Khánum, my mother’s voice rang in my ears, ‘It is a bounty to possess these prayers.’ Now, I could not help but agree with her. For once, Goli Khánum had not told me to run along, and her face had appeared somewhat softer. Over the years, those prayers and Tablets have been my constant companion, and that’s why I want *you* to learn them.”

“There’s no mean landlady in our neighborhood,” I pointed out.

“We’ll start with ‘Is there any Remover of difficulties,’”
Dad ignored me. “It’s going to come in handy for you.”

I looked at my dad. What did he mean by that?

“Is life going to get difficult for me?” I asked. “Because I have to get up early and memorize prayers?”

“‘Accustom your children to hardship,’ ‘Abdu’l-Bahá says.”

“No fair! You quote the writings for everything!”

“Why don’t you do the same?” he asked.

I thought about that for a while. I’d do anything to quote from the writings when my dad and I didn’t see eye to eye.

I jumped out of bed. “Let the prayers begin!” ★

