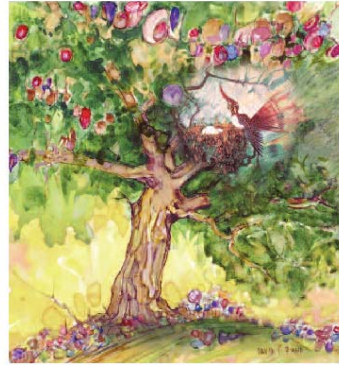


The following story is from the book

The Central Figures

Bahá'u'lláh

Volume One



These stories are lovingly provided to download as a convenience to teachers or communities otherwise unable to acquire the book. Each book in this storybook series also includes an appendix with questions for discussion and reflection, a glossary of words and phrases used in the stories, a bibliography, and an index.

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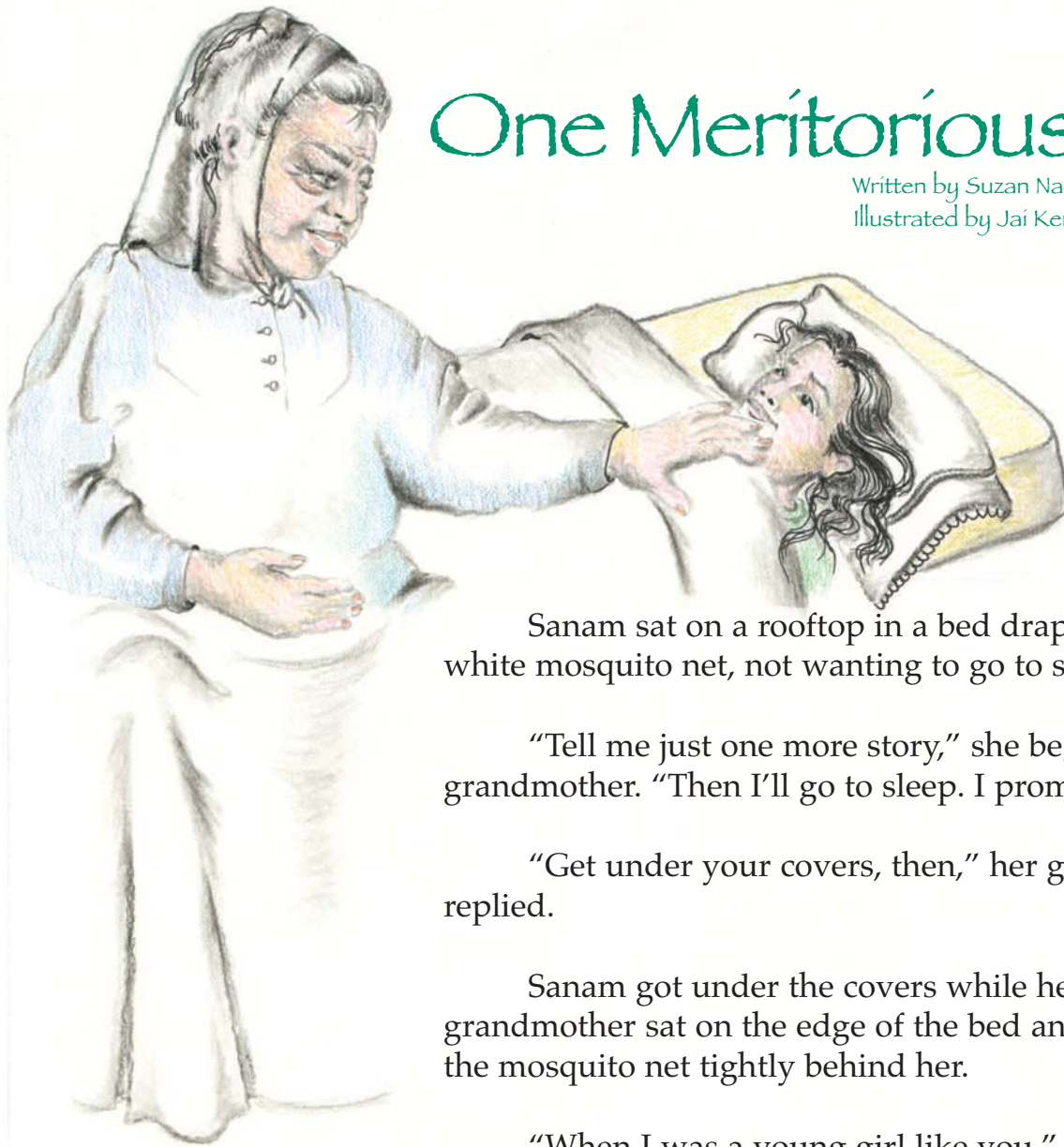
Core Curriculum for Spiritual Education • Stories
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One Meritorious Act

Written by Suzan Nadimi

Illustrated by Jai Kenyatta-Anderson



Sanam sat on a rooftop in a bed draped with a white mosquito net, not wanting to go to sleep.

“Tell me just one more story,” she begged her grandmother. “Then I’ll go to sleep. I promise.”

“Get under your covers, then,” her grandmother replied.

Sanam got under the covers while her grandmother sat on the edge of the bed and closed the mosquito net tightly behind her.

“When I was a young girl like you,” her grandmother recounted, “I loved being with my grandmother, Naneh-joon, just as much as you love being with me.”

“Naneh-joon was a very devout Muslim. She got up to pray before the sun rose and went to bed after her midnight prayer. Even in her old age and poor health, she went to the mosque every day. She gave money to the poor and was kind to all.

“One hot day in August, Naneh-joon gave me permission to accompany her on her daily journey to the mosque.

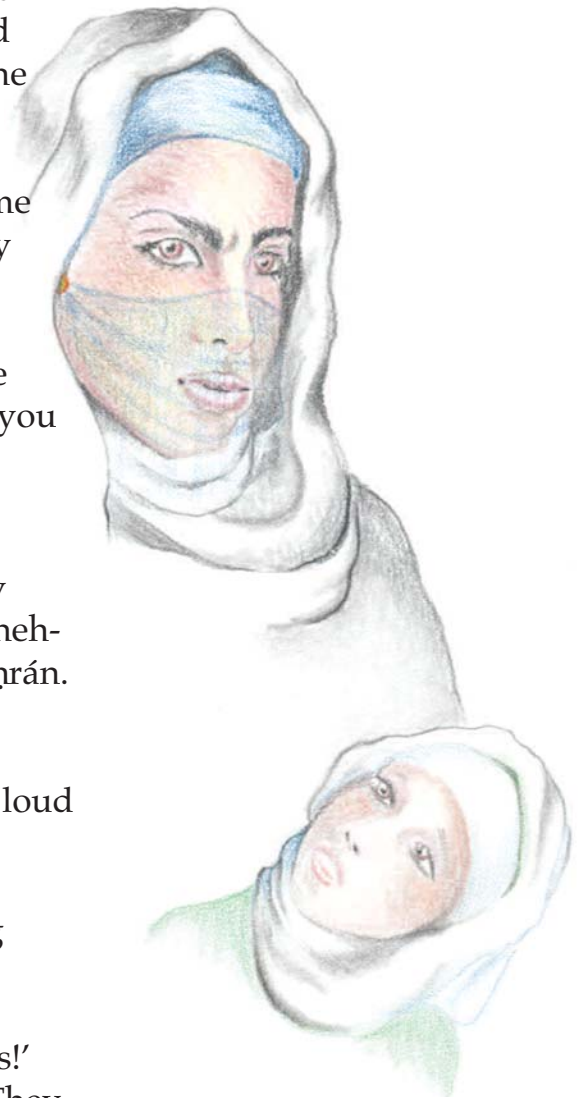
“ ‘On the occasion of your turning nine,’ she said, ‘you may come with me to the mosque. But you must cover yourself well and be silent as a mouse in God’s house.’

“I held my chador tightly in place under my chin with one hand, and with the other I held Naneh-joon’s. We went through the alleys of southern Tih̄rān. I was going to the mosque!

“As we drew near to the mosque, we heard loud noises echoing between the clay houses.

“ ‘Bábí! Bábí!’ The sound of people shouting reached our ears. ‘Enemy of Islám!’

“Naneh-joon gripped my hand. ‘Those Bábís!’ she hissed. ‘The mullá says they are bad people. They do things I shudder to tell you.’



“I wanted to free my hand from Naneh-joon’s tight grasp. ‘Please, Naneh-joon,’ I pleaded. ‘Let’s go home.’ I wanted my Naneh-joon back, not this stranger with an angry look in her eyes.

“ ‘The mullá says that hurting any Bábí helps the Prophet Muḥammad,’ Naneh-joon said.

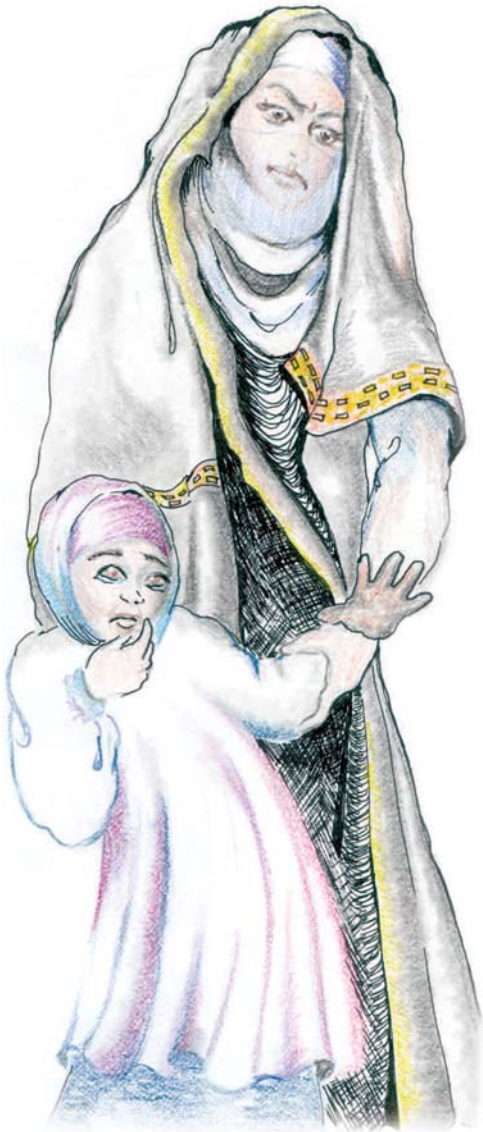
“Naneh-joon pulled me toward the noise, walking faster than I had ever seen her. She pushed and shoved until we were at the front of the crowd that was shouting and throwing stones.

“Then and there was the first and last time I saw Him. He was barefooted and bareheaded, but I felt I was standing in the presence of the King of Kings. I stood mesmerized, shutting out the noise of the people and seeing nothing but the glory surrounding Him.

“Naneh-joon let go of my hand, and I jolted out of my trance. I saw her picking up a stone.

“ ‘No!’ I shouted. But she did not listen to me. She was about to step forward when an old woman ran ahead of her into the street.

“The old woman’s frame shook with rage as she stepped forward and raised her hand to throw her stone at Him.



“ ‘By the Holy Imám, I beg you,’ the old woman pleaded with the guards surrounding Him. ‘Give me a chance to fling my stone in His face!’

“The King of Kings turned to His guards and said, ‘Suffer not this woman to be disappointed. Deny her not what she regards as a meritorious act in the sight of God.’

“Tears welled up in my eyes at the words that had passed through His lips. I looked up and saw, through my tears, my old Naneh-joon standing by my side. She had dropped her stone to the ground. She took hold of my hand, and we walked back to her house in silence.”

“Then what happened?” asked Sanam.

“I’m not going to tell you the story of how Naneh-joon and I became Bahá’ís, Sanam!” her grandmother said. “It is your bedtime!”

“Okay, okay!” replied Sanam.

Sanam made herself snug under the blankets. She prayed in her heart for Bahá’u’lláh to forgive the old woman for what she had done. Then she went to sleep. ★