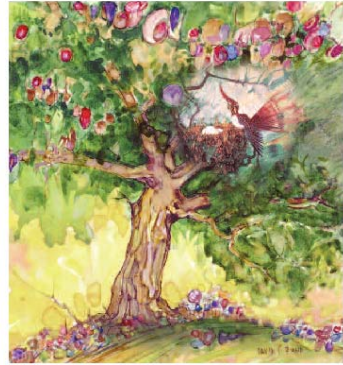


The following story is from the book

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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*“He Who
is the
Best-Beloved
is come!”*

— Bahá'u'lláh,
*Gleanings from the Writings
of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 319

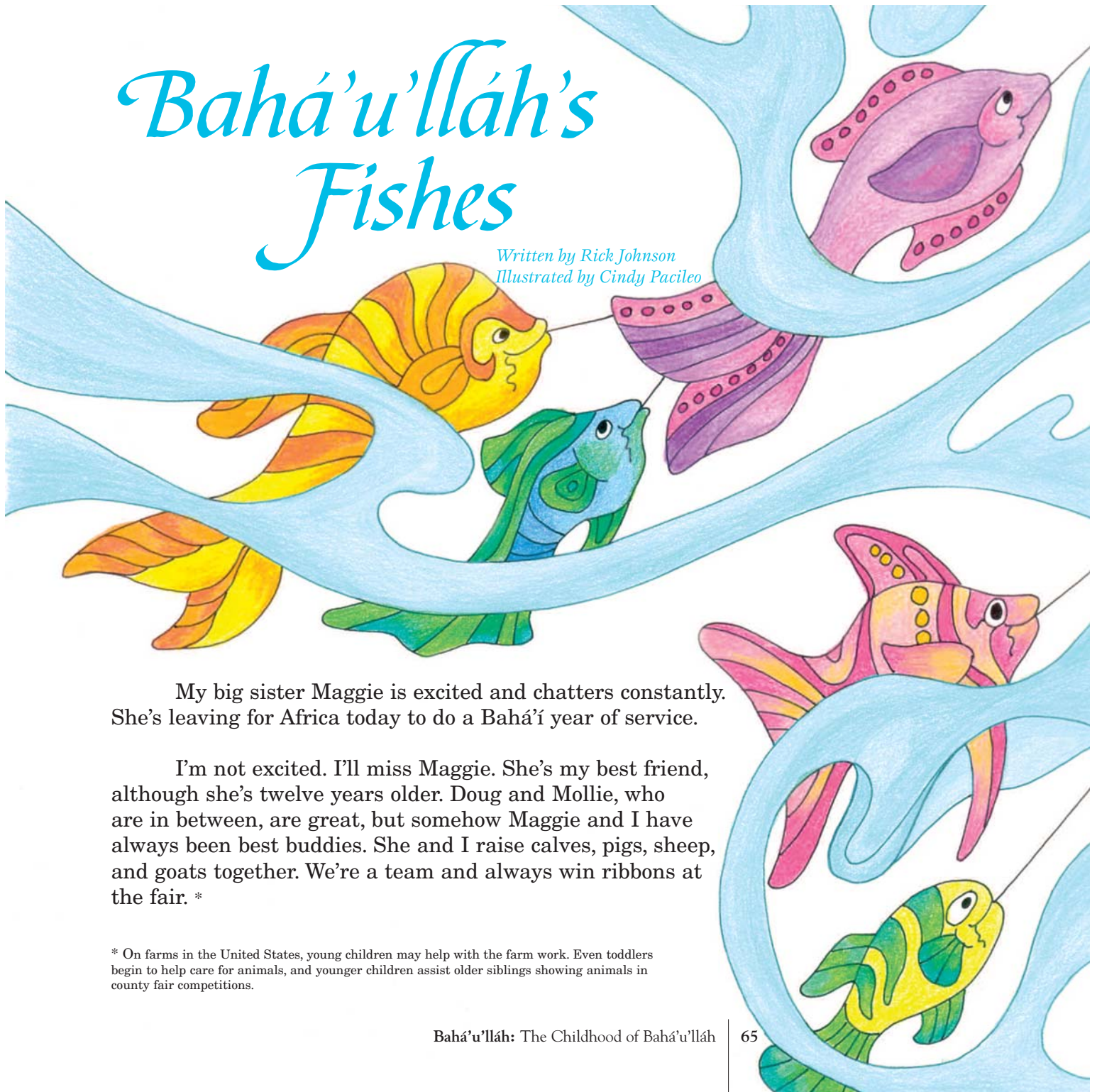
Bahá'u'lláh's Fishes

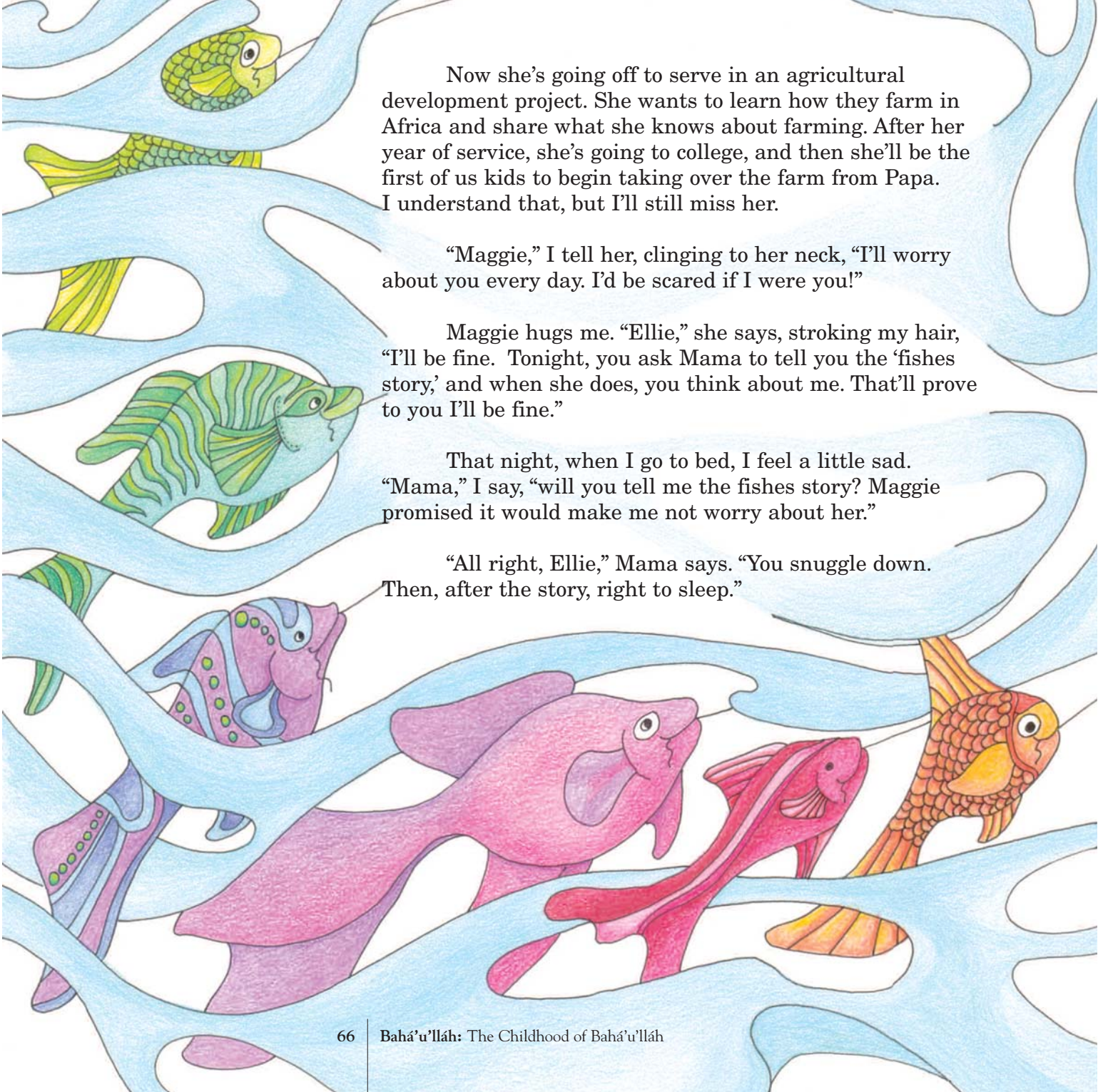
Written by Rick Johnson
Illustrated by Cindy Pacileo

My big sister Maggie is excited and chatters constantly. She's leaving for Africa today to do a Bahá'í year of service.

I'm not excited. I'll miss Maggie. She's my best friend, although she's twelve years older. Doug and Mollie, who are in between, are great, but somehow Maggie and I have always been best buddies. She and I raise calves, pigs, sheep, and goats together. We're a team and always win ribbons at the fair. *

* On farms in the United States, young children may help with the farm work. Even toddlers begin to help care for animals, and younger children assist older siblings showing animals in county fair competitions.





Now she's going off to serve in an agricultural development project. She wants to learn how they farm in Africa and share what she knows about farming. After her year of service, she's going to college, and then she'll be the first of us kids to begin taking over the farm from Papa. I understand that, but I'll still miss her.

"Maggie," I tell her, clinging to her neck, "I'll worry about you every day. I'd be scared if I were you!"

Maggie hugs me. "Ellie," she says, stroking my hair, "I'll be fine. Tonight, you ask Mama to tell you the 'fishes story,' and when she does, you think about me. That'll prove to you I'll be fine."

That night, when I go to bed, I feel a little sad. "Mama," I say, "will you tell me the fishes story? Maggie promised it would make me not worry about her."

"All right, Ellie," Mama says. "You snuggle down. Then, after the story, right to sleep."

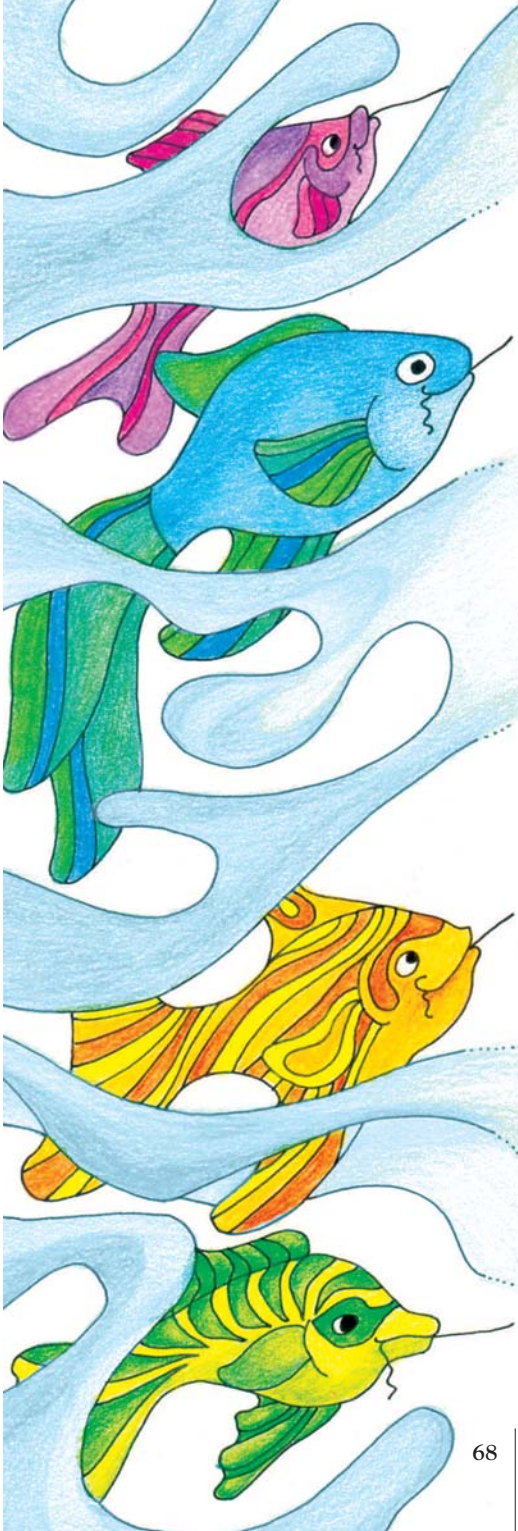
“Now, you know,” she began, “that when Bahá’u’lláh was five or six, He had dreams in which birds of the air and fishes of the sea were attacking Him from all sides, but none of them could hurt Him. A famous interpreter of dreams explained that the dreams meant that Bahá’u’lláh would found a great cause and, despite attacks from enemies, would always be victorious.”

“But Mama, that’s not the fishes story!”

“Yes, Ellie, I know,” Mama replies, “but I wanted you to see that there were several stories about similar dreams that tell us the same thing about Bahá’u’lláh—that He had the unfailing protection of God. With help from God, no problem was too big for Bahá’u’lláh to overcome. So, when I tell you the fishes story, you remember that there are several stories like it. That assures us even more that Bahá’u’lláh is stronger than loneliness, or fear, or troubles.”

“So, Bahá’u’lláh will keep Maggie safe, too, Mama?”

“That’s where the fishes come in, Ellie. Mírzá Buzurg, the father of Bahá’u’lláh, dreamed that Bahá’u’lláh was swimming in a vast ocean, bigger than any other ocean anywhere. As He swam, His long, jet-black hair floated out in all directions. Great schools of fish swam around Him on all sides, each one holding onto the end of one hair. Can you imagine such a thing, Ellie?”



“No, Mama,” I say, covering my eyes, “that would be really scary!” It’s a little game we play. I pretend to be scared during this part of the story, and then giggle like crazy when the good part comes!

“Well, you don’t have to be scared for Bahá’u’lláh, Ellie, because the story’s not over yet,” Mama smiles at me with my eyes peeking out between my fingers.

“So, in the dream there were thousands of fishes hanging on Bahá’u’lláh’s hair. But no matter how many fish there were, or how hard they pulled on His hair, Bahá’u’lláh just kept swimming as if nothing were happening! They could not hurt one single hair on His head! He just swam along peacefully as if He were completely free.”

“So Maggie can do that, too, can’t she Mama? She can be like Bahá’u’lláh!”

“Well, honey, she can’t really be like Bahá’u’lláh,” Mama replied, “but when she calls on Bahá’u’lláh for help, He uses that same power He had over those fishes in the dream.”

“And Bahá’u’lláh’s father stopped worrying about Him, didn’t he, Mama?”

“Yes, a person who knew about dreams told him that it meant that the fishes represented all the peoples of the earth gathering around Bahá’u’lláh and clinging to Him. His calm and powerful swimming among them is a symbol of the power and protection of God that helps Him.”

“And we’re like all the little fishes clinging to Him!” This is the part of the story I really like, and I start making fish faces and waving my arms like fins.

“Maggie will be just fine, Ellie, because she’s Bahá’u’lláh’s fish. No matter where she is, as long as she holds onto Him, she’ll be okay.”

“Mama, I want to be like Maggie. I want to go to Africa and Asia and New Mexico and everywhere!”

Mama laughs and holds me close. “Angel, you will be Bahá’u’lláh’s best fish!”

“I’ll be a whale, Mama! That’s how much I love Bahá’u’lláh!” ★

