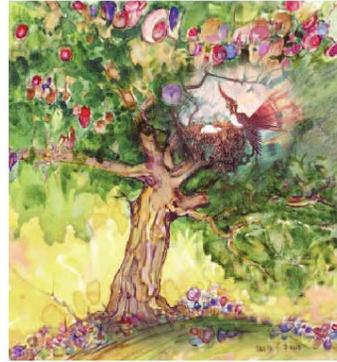


The following story is from the book

The Central Figures

Bahá'u'lláh

Volume One



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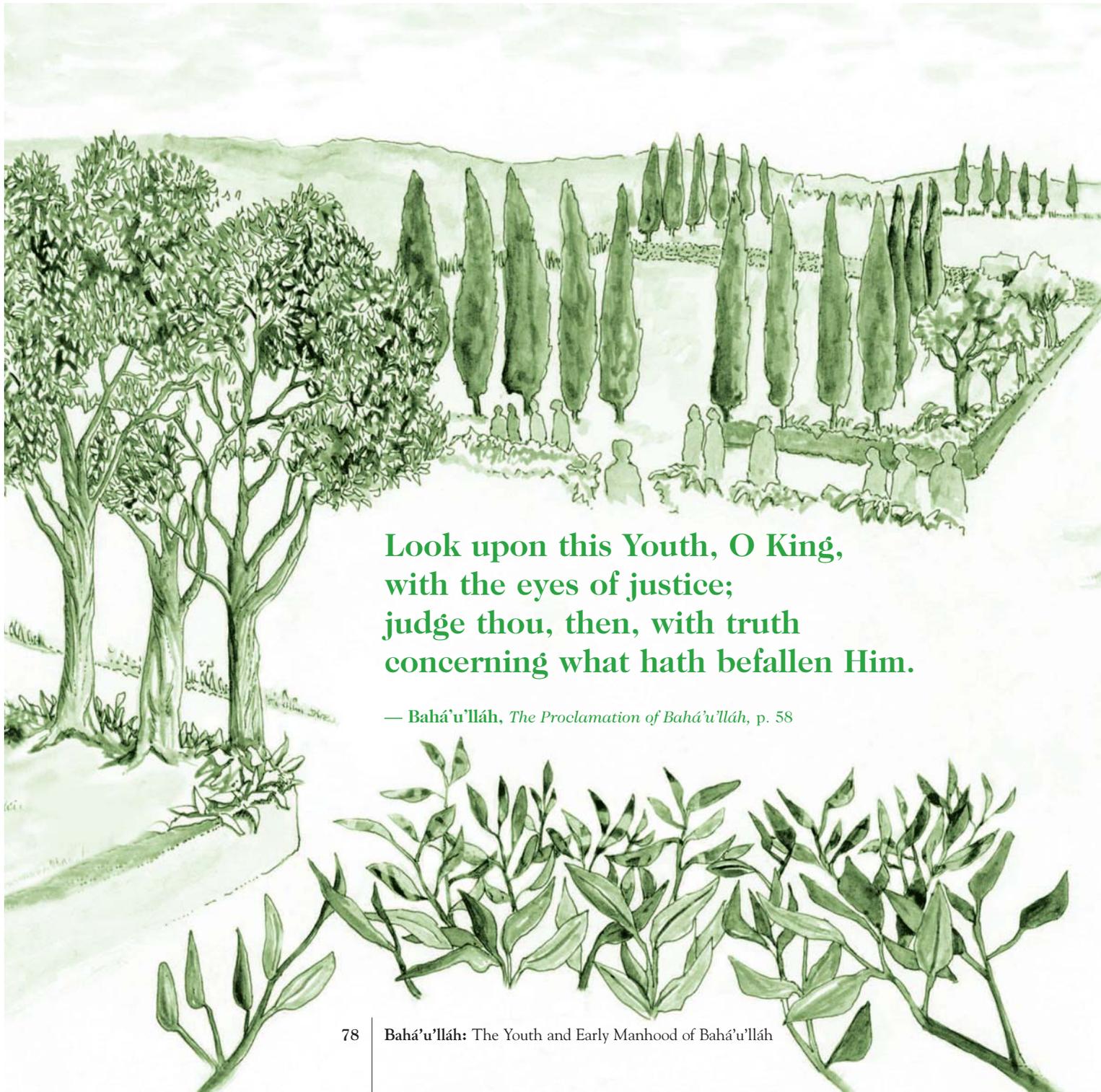
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**Look upon this Youth, O King,
with the eyes of justice;
judge thou, then, with truth
concerning what hath befallen Him.**

— Bahá'u'lláh, *The Proclamation of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 58

The Badasht Conference



*Written by Lily Ayman
Illustrated by Jaci Ayorinde*

It was the summer of 1848. The followers of the Báb, the Bábís, were fiercely persecuted in Persia, the birthplace of their Faith. They needed guidance and support. Bahá'u'lláh, Who, at that time, was a directing force among the Bábís, decided to meet with His fellow believers. A group of them gathered in the small village of Badasht in northern Persia.

Upon His arrival, Bahá'u'lláh rented three gardens, one for Quddús, another for Qurratu'l-'Ayn, and the third one for Himself. The main purpose of this gathering of Bábís, known as the Badasht Conference, was to consult about the future of the Bábí Faith. Tents were put up in the three gardens to house the eighty-one Bábís who had gathered at this most important event. From the day they arrived to the day they left, for twenty-two days, they were all the guests of Bahá'u'lláh.



Every day, Bahá'u'lláh revealed a new Tablet, which was chanted every morning in this memorable gathering of Bábís. Through these Tablets, Bahá'u'lláh discarded one after another of the established traditions of the past. The Bábís were dismayed as they saw the ways they had worshiped, and many of the teachings they had followed for so long, changed and discarded.

Bahá'u'lláh bestowed a new name on every believer at Badasht without disclosing the identity of the person who had given those names. From this time on, He became known as “Bahá” (Glory), Quddús (the Most Holy) gained his title, and Qurrat'u-'Ayn became known as “Ṭáhirih” (the Pure).

The Bábís were in awe. They did not know the source of all these Revelations. They wondered: Who wrote the Tablets? Who gave them the new names? Some were guessing, each one to his own degree of understanding. Very few, if any, thought Bahá'u'lláh was the author of the changes that were so fearlessly introduced.

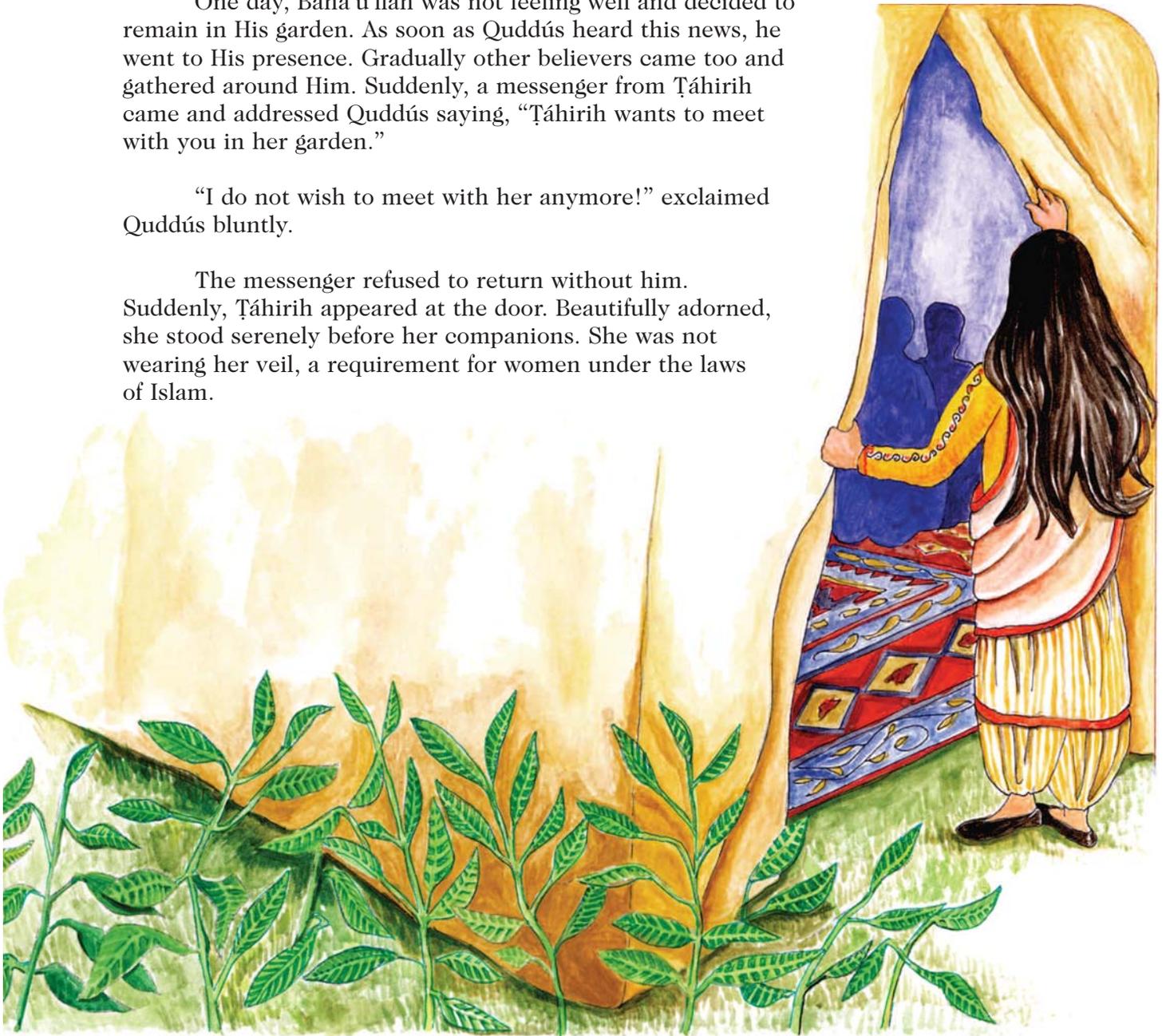
Bahá'u'lláh presided every day over the Conference of Badasht, guiding the discussions and enlightening His fellow believers. Ṭáhirih and Quddús, encouraged by Bahá'u'lláh, discussed the future of the Bábí Revelation. Ṭáhirih wanted to declare its complete break from Islam. Quddús rejected her views. Bahá'u'lláh did not take sides but let the two examine and contemplate all aspects of this most important matter.



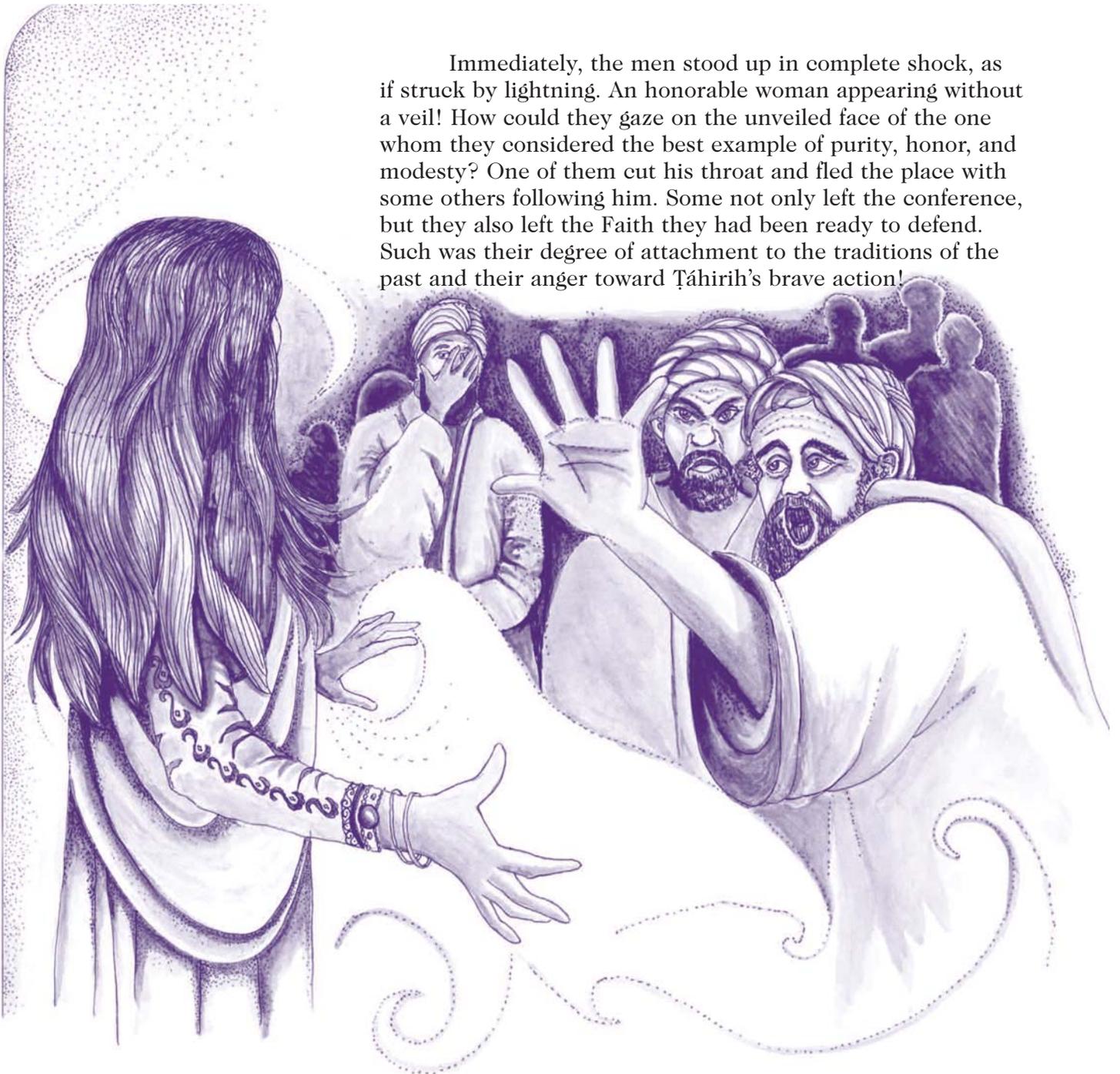
One day, Bahá'u'lláh was not feeling well and decided to remain in His garden. As soon as Quddús heard this news, he went to His presence. Gradually other believers came too and gathered around Him. Suddenly, a messenger from Ṭáhirih came and addressed Quddús saying, “Ṭáhirih wants to meet with you in her garden.”

“I do not wish to meet with her anymore!” exclaimed Quddús bluntly.

The messenger refused to return without him. Suddenly, Ṭáhirih appeared at the door. Beautifully adorned, she stood serenely before her companions. She was not wearing her veil, a requirement for women under the laws of Islam.



Immediately, the men stood up in complete shock, as if struck by lightning. An honorable woman appearing without a veil! How could they gaze on the unveiled face of the one whom they considered the best example of purity, honor, and modesty? One of them cut his throat and fled the place with some others following him. Some not only left the conference, but they also left the Faith they had been ready to defend. Such was their degree of attachment to the traditions of the past and their anger toward Ṭáhirih's brave action!



Those who remained listened in complete awe to Ṭáhirih's eloquent speech delivered in a language highly resembling that of the Qur'án, the Holy Book of Islam. In her address, she announced the dawn of a New Day. She announced that this was the time to break away from the traditions of the past. She ended her talk in her strong, melodious voice, declaring: "This is the day in which the fetters of the past are burst asunder."

This incident changed the life of the Bábís. The change involved all their manners and customs. It freed them from the obligation of following the Muslim clergy. Yet they remained confused. Many of them wrote letters to the Báb, asking for guidance. Each one of them received a Tablet from Him reassuring them and confirming the changes. In regard to Ṭáhirih's unveiled appearance, He wrote, "What am I to say regarding her whom the Tongue of Power and Glory [Bahá'u'lláh] has named Ṭáhirih [the Pure One]." By writing this, He also showed that Ṭáhirih's appearance, unveiled in the presence of men, was acceptable.

Bahá'u'lláh, with His love, wisdom, and patience, built peace and harmony among the remaining believers at Badashu. The main objective of the gathering was achieved; the future of the Bábí Faith was determined. "The clarion-call of the new Order had been sounded. . . . The way was clear for the proclamation of the laws and precepts that were destined to usher in the new Dispensation."* ★

* Nabíl, *The Dawn-Breakers*, pp. 297-98