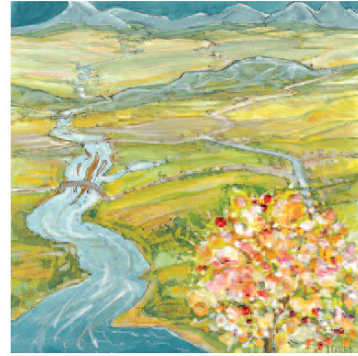


The following story is from the book

The Central Figures

Bahá'u'lláh

Volume Two



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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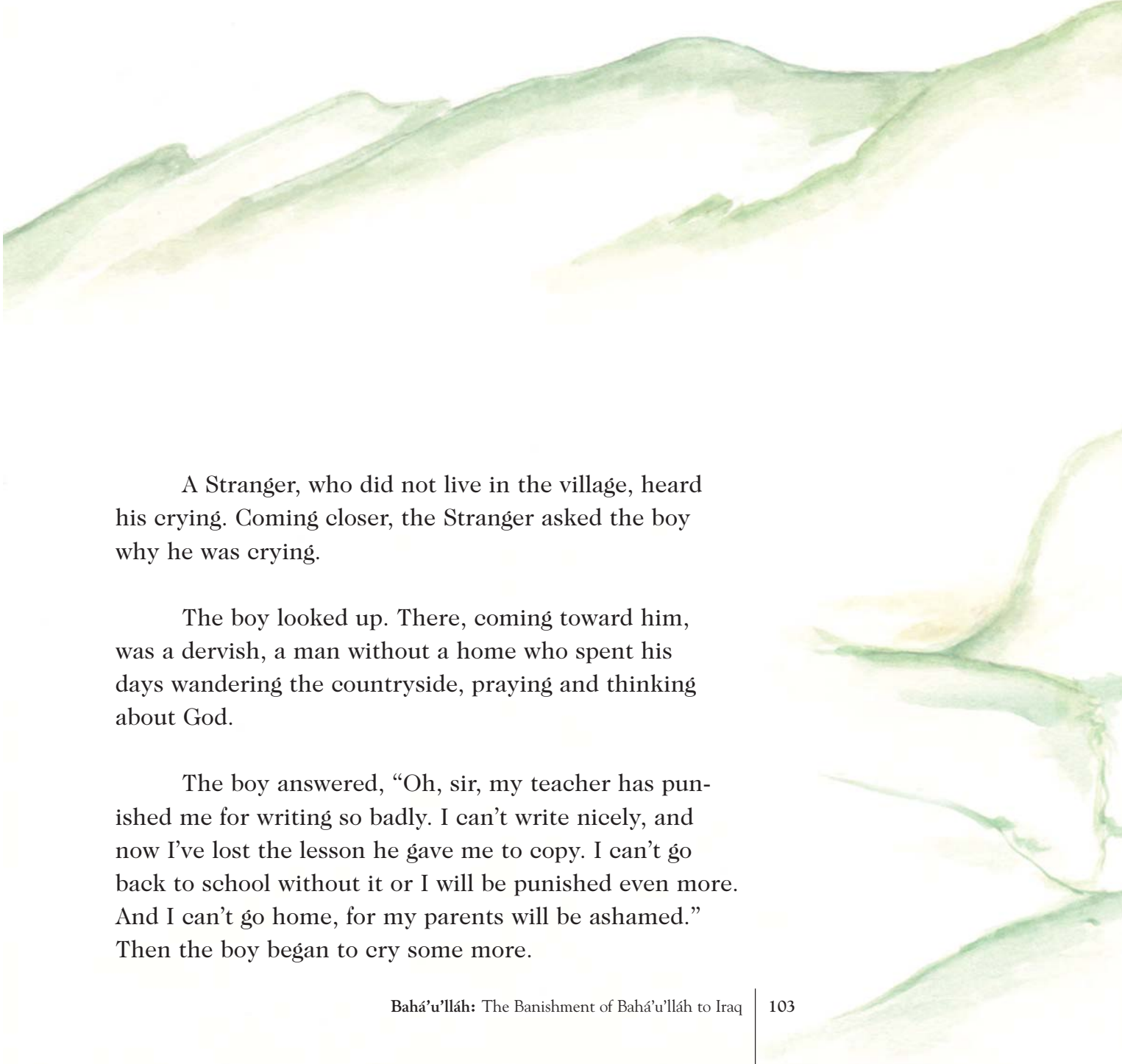

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*Written by Duane L. Herrmann
Illustrated by Jaci Ayorinde*

Stranger in the Mountains



The boy was sitting on the hillside, crying bitterly. He could see the mountain village below that was his home. He wanted to go home but was afraid. He had been punished at school and would be punished again at home. So instead, he ran to the hills and cried.

A watercolor illustration of a landscape. In the upper half, there are rolling green hills with soft, blended colors. In the lower right, a thin, dark green branch of a tree extends upwards and to the left, with some lighter green foliage at its base.

A Stranger, who did not live in the village, heard his crying. Coming closer, the Stranger asked the boy why he was crying.

The boy looked up. There, coming toward him, was a dervish, a man without a home who spent his days wandering the countryside, praying and thinking about God.

The boy answered, “Oh, sir, my teacher has punished me for writing so badly. I can’t write nicely, and now I’ve lost the lesson he gave me to copy. I can’t go back to school without it or I will be punished even more. And I can’t go home, for my parents will be ashamed.” Then the boy began to cry some more.



The Stranger gently asked him to stop crying. He then offered to write a lesson and teach the boy to copy it so that his teacher would be proud of him.

From His clothes, the Stranger took out a pen and paper and wrote beautiful letters. Then He showed the boy how to copy them. The boy copied the writing again and again. After a time, he could do it so well you could hardly tell the difference between one writing and the other.

The Stranger told the boy to take his writing lesson to show the teacher that now he could write very well.

With a happy heart, the boy jumped up and went running down the hillside to his village and his teacher. “Thank you, kind Sir,” he called back with a smile full of joy.

Breathlessly, the boy arrived at his school. There was the teacher sternly waiting for him. The teacher demanded, “Where have you been?” And, “Is your lesson ready?”

“Oh yes,” answered the boy proudly. “Here is the work I’ve done.” The boy proudly showed the teacher the writing of the Stranger and his own copy underneath.

The teacher was astonished. “Where did you find this writing? It is beautiful. Do you know the kind of people who write this way?”

“No, sir,” answered the boy. “A strange Dervish saw me on the hillside and wrote it for me.”

“Your Dervish is no dervish at all,” replied the teacher. “Only people connected with the royal family and ministers of the king write in this manner.” The teacher wondered why a member of the royal court would be wandering in the mountains as a dervish.

The teacher told his friends about this Stranger in the mountains and the writing of the boy. His friends told their friends, and they told their friends. Soon everyone in the village knew there was a strange and wonderful Person in the mountains, but no one knew who He was.

Eventually, news of this wonderful Stranger reached Baghdád and the family of Bahá'u'lláh. Bahá'u'lláh had been missing for nearly two years, and His family immediately wondered if this “Dervish” might in fact be Bahá'u'lláh. ‘Abdu’l-Bahá sent a messenger to find this Dervish, and, if He was Bahá'u'lláh, to ask Him to come back. The Dervish was Bahá'u'lláh, and He did return home. He had needed time to pray by Himself to prepare for teaching the new message from God. ★

