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The Central Figures

Bahá'u'lláh

Volume Three



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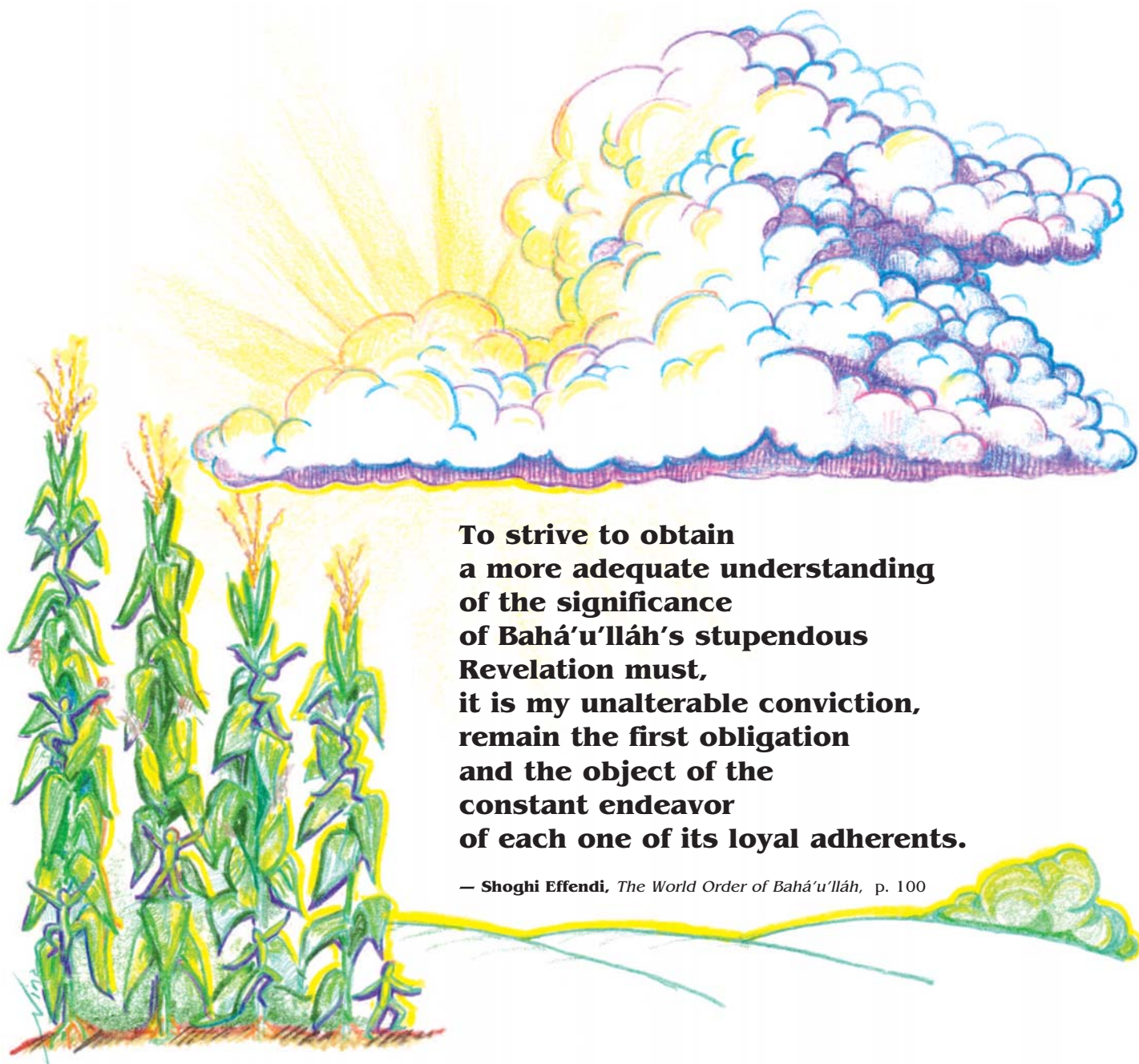
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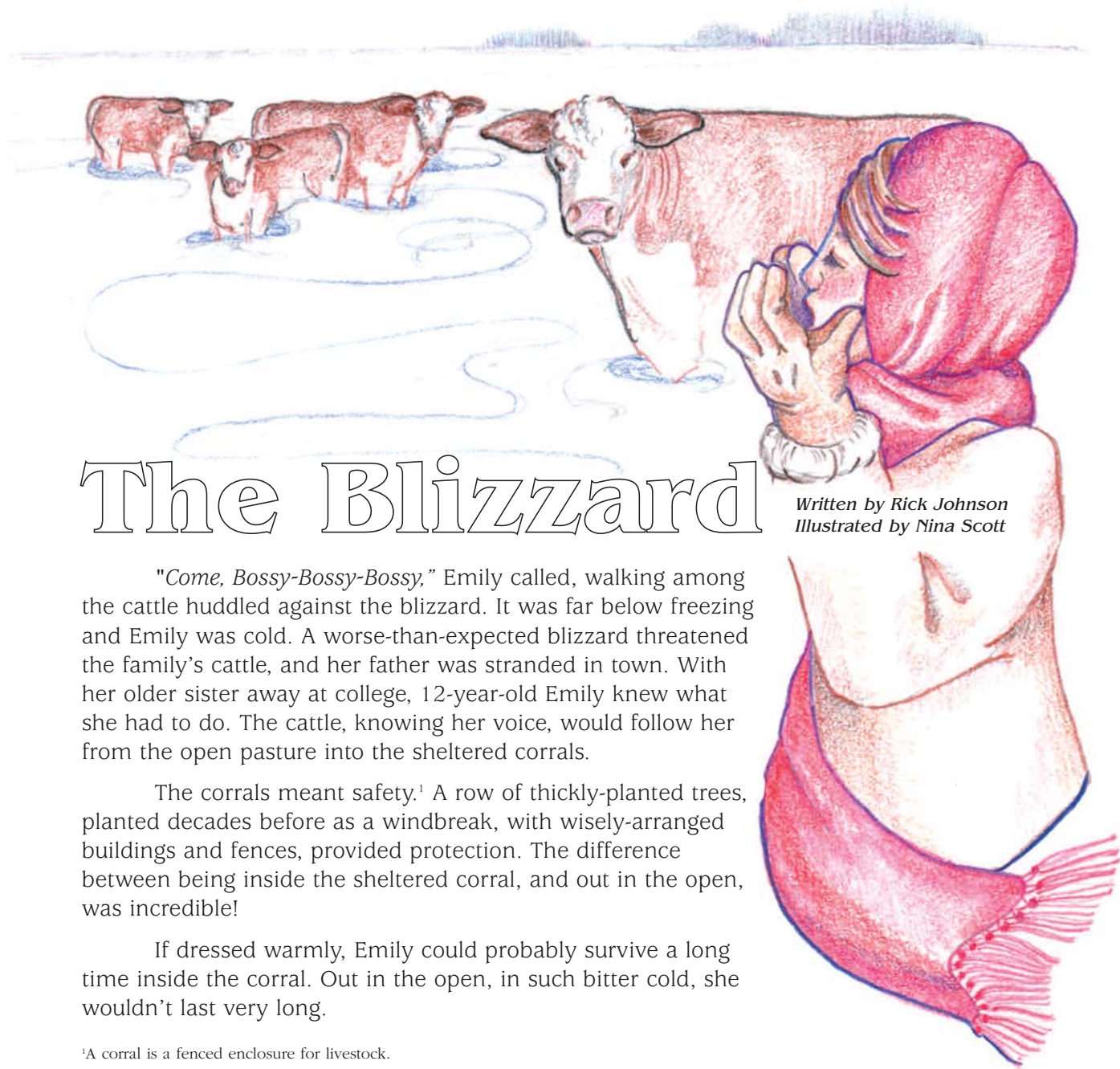
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**To strive to obtain
a more adequate understanding
of the significance
of Bahá'u'lláh's stupendous
Revelation must,
it is my unalterable conviction,
remain the first obligation
and the object of the
constant endeavor
of each one of its loyal adherents.**

— Shoghi Effendi, *The World Order of Bahá'u'lláh*, p. 100



The Blizzard

Written by Rick Johnson
Illustrated by Nina Scott

"Come, Bossy-Bossy-Bossy," Emily called, walking among the cattle huddled against the blizzard. It was far below freezing and Emily was cold. A worse-than-expected blizzard threatened the family's cattle, and her father was stranded in town. With her older sister away at college, 12-year-old Emily knew what she had to do. The cattle, knowing her voice, would follow her from the open pasture into the sheltered corrals.

The corrals meant safety.¹ A row of thickly-planted trees, planted decades before as a windbreak, with wisely-arranged buildings and fences, provided protection. The difference between being inside the sheltered corral, and out in the open, was incredible!

If dressed warmly, Emily could probably survive a long time inside the corral. Out in the open, in such bitter cold, she wouldn't last very long.

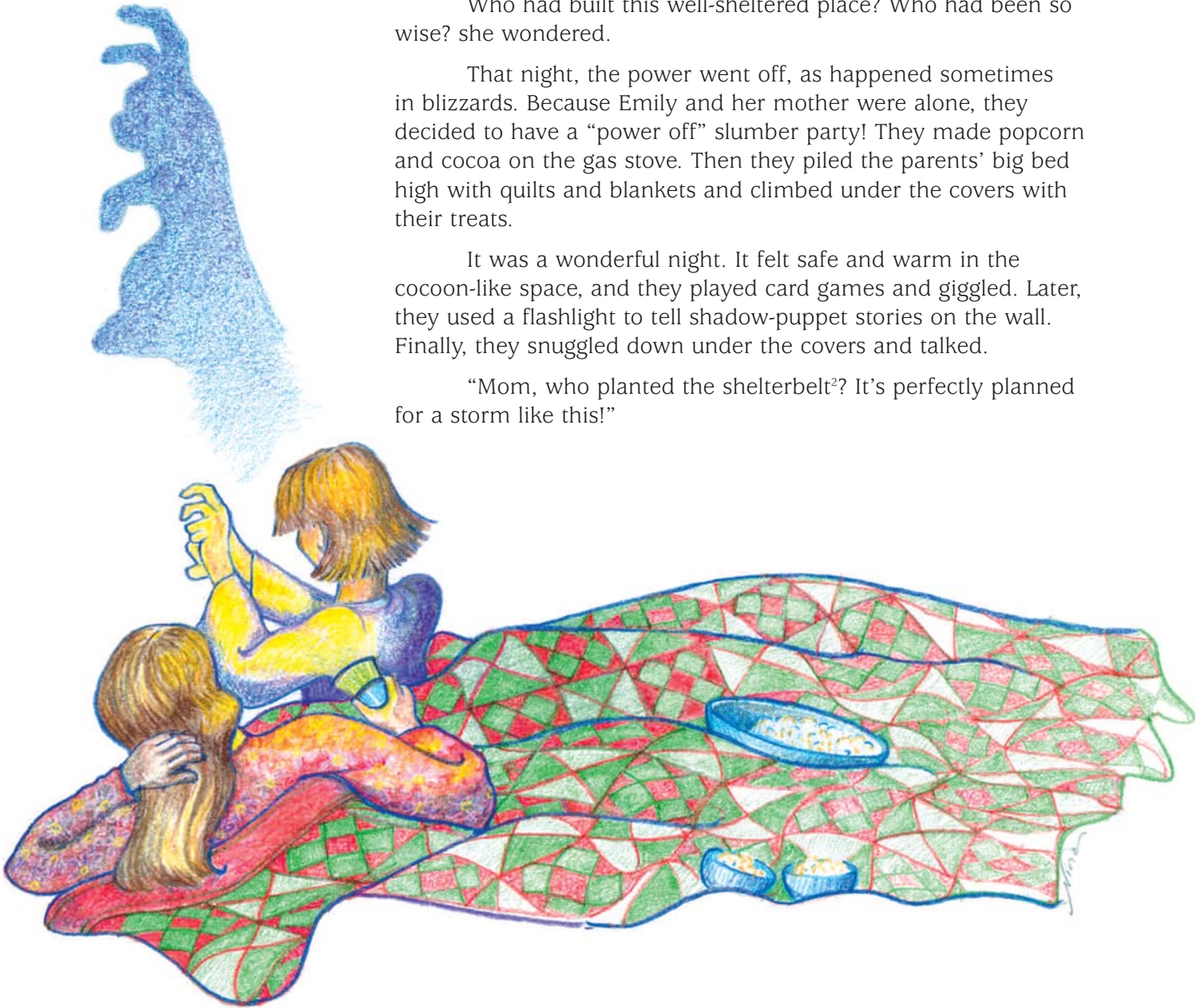
¹A corral is a fenced enclosure for livestock.

Who had built this well-sheltered place? Who had been so wise? she wondered.

That night, the power went off, as happened sometimes in blizzards. Because Emily and her mother were alone, they decided to have a “power off” slumber party! They made popcorn and cocoa on the gas stove. Then they piled the parents’ big bed high with quilts and blankets and climbed under the covers with their treats.

It was a wonderful night. It felt safe and warm in the cocoon-like space, and they played card games and giggled. Later, they used a flashlight to tell shadow-puppet stories on the wall. Finally, they snuggled down under the covers and talked.

“Mom, who planted the shelterbelt²? It’s perfectly planned for a storm like this!”



²A hedge or row of trees planted to break the force of the wind.

“It was Great-Grandfather A.C.—my grandfather. As a little girl, I remember sitting in a wheelbarrow watching him plant the trees. He knew exactly what he wanted to do, and why!”

“He was a genius, Mom!”

“You’ll like the story, Emily,” Mom replied. “You remember Grandpa A.C. was the first Bahá’í in our family, right?”

“Yes.”

“Well,” Mom continued, “he read the ‘Bahá’í News’ cover-to-cover. Sometimes he’d say, ‘Children, look at the photos of how the Guardian is planning the World Center of our Faith!’

“Well, we kids didn’t know much about it,” Mom laughed, “but Grandpa wasn’t shy about telling us!”

“I remember him saying,” Mom continued, “‘The Guardian has a plan for everything he’s doing in the Holy Land—the beautiful gardens, the Monuments and Shrines, the Archives Building—all of it is according to a precise plan. He looks at a place, at the land he plans to develop, and makes a plan that perfectly blends old and new! It’s proof that this man is guided by God Himself.’”

“When Grandpa A.C. got talking like that, his voice boomed with excitement. And he took us kids out where the shelterbelt is today and said, ‘We’re going to lay out our plan for shelter here just like the Guardian does.’ And that was exactly what we did.”

“You mean Grandpa A.C. planted the trees like the Guardian did?”

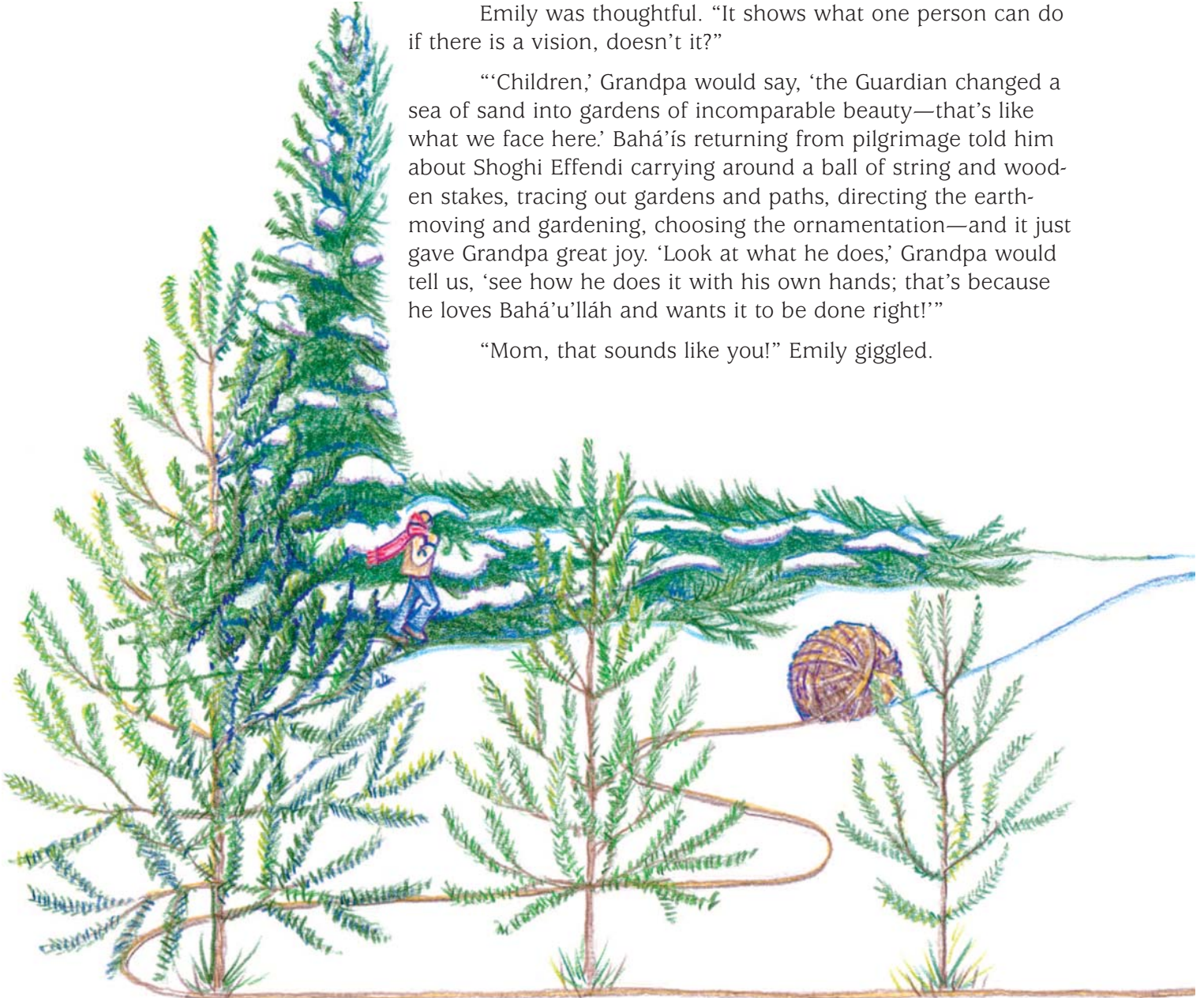
“Yes,” her mother said, “he carefully followed the Guardian’s example. Shoghi Effendi made his own drawings and plans and worked out the dimensions and details according to his vision. Then he made sure that it was done according to his plan. Grandpa A.C. did the same—he was inspired by what the Guardian did in the Holy Land.”



Emily was thoughtful. “It shows what one person can do if there is a vision, doesn’t it?”

“‘Children,’ Grandpa would say, ‘the Guardian changed a sea of sand into gardens of incomparable beauty—that’s like what we face here.’ Bahá’ís returning from pilgrimage told him about Shoghi Effendi carrying around a ball of string and wooden stakes, tracing out gardens and paths, directing the earth-moving and gardening, choosing the ornamentation—and it just gave Grandpa great joy. ‘Look at what he does,’ Grandpa would tell us, ‘see how he does it with his own hands; that’s because he loves Bahá’u’lláh and wants it to be done right!’”

“Mom, that sounds like you!” Emily giggled.



“I’ll tell you how I’m like Grandpa,” she replied. “I’ll recite a passage from *The Dispensation of Bahá’u’lláh* that he taught me: ‘Every single letter proceeding from Our mouth is endowed with such regenerative power as to enable it to bring into existence a new creation—a creation the magnitude of which is inscrutable to all save God.’ The power of the Word of God to create new and beautiful things—that’s what the Guardian relied upon in everything he did. We can draw on that power, too. That’s what Grandpa A.C. taught me.”

Emily was finding it hard now to keep her eyes open. “Mom, can we go to the Holy Land sometime?” she asked. “I really want to see those gardens and Shrines. After tonight, I’ll never see them in the same way again!”

“Yes, Emily,” her mother said softly, “we’ll go sometime soon.” ★

