

A little servant girl and the proud general

The little slave girl and Naaman, from 2 Kings 5

NAAMAN WAS a very important man in a very important army of a very important country. So you see, he was very, very, very important.

But Naaman was sick. He had leprosy, which is a nasty thing that stops you from feeling anything. Bits of you fall off without you noticing, like bashed fingers and squished toes. It might sound funny but it wasn't—and Naaman certainly wasn't laughing. There was no cure, it never went away, and in the end it killed you. Naaman needed help.

Now there was a little slave girl who worked for Naaman and she knew someone who could help him. But there was a problem; Naaman was her enemy.

Not long before, Naaman had led an army raid on her home in Israel. He had killed her whole family, carried her off to Syria, and made her into his slave. Every night she cried herself to sleep—she had lost everything.

Why would she, of all people, want to help Naaman? Didn't she hate him and want to hurt him back? Didn't she want to make him pay for the wrong he'd done?

That's what you would expect, but instead of hating him, she loved him. Instead of hurting him back, she forgave him.

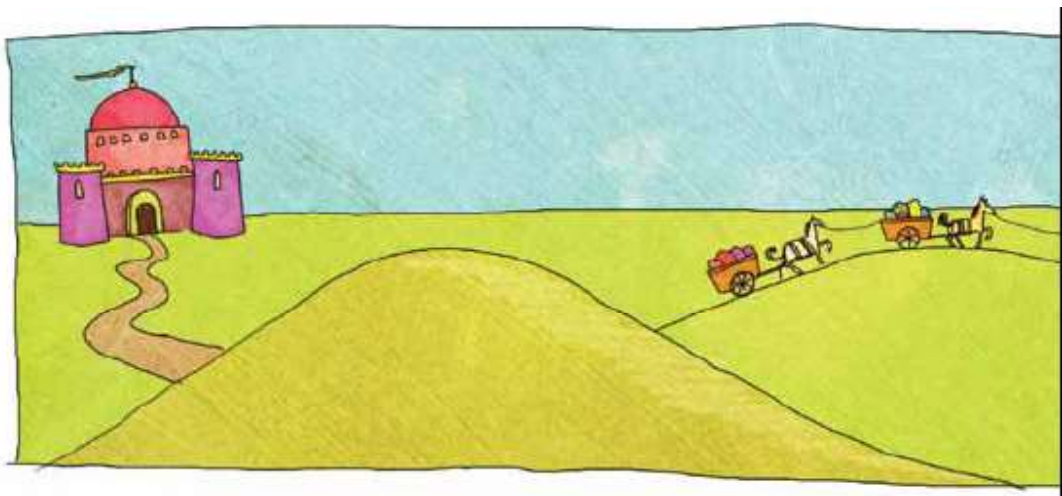




“I want Naaman to get well,” she said to her mistress. “There’s a man in Israel called Elisha who can heal him.”

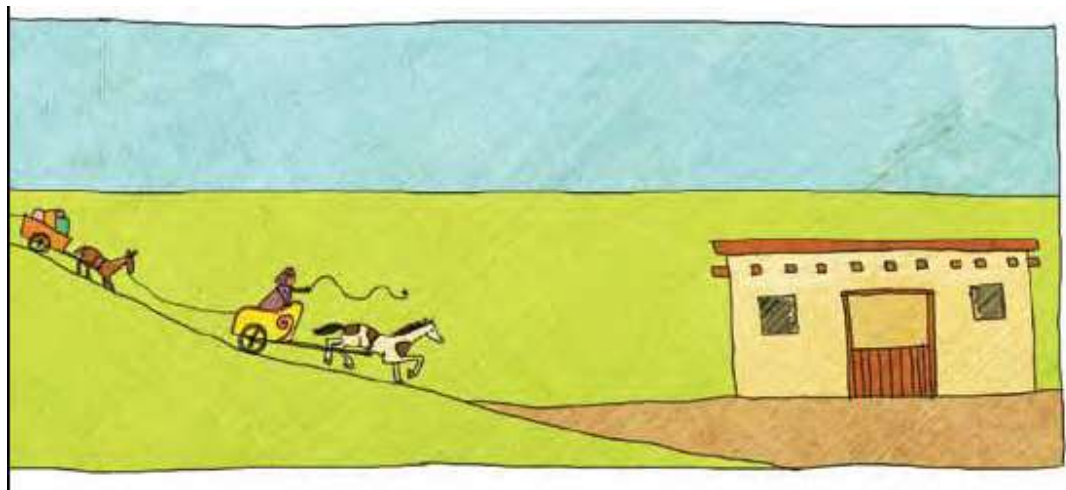
“I’ll go,” said Naaman, loading up his wagons and putting on his flashing armor. “But I’ll go to the palace because that’s where someone important like me gets healed!”

So he hurried off to Israel and went straight to the king. “My healing, please!” he announced.





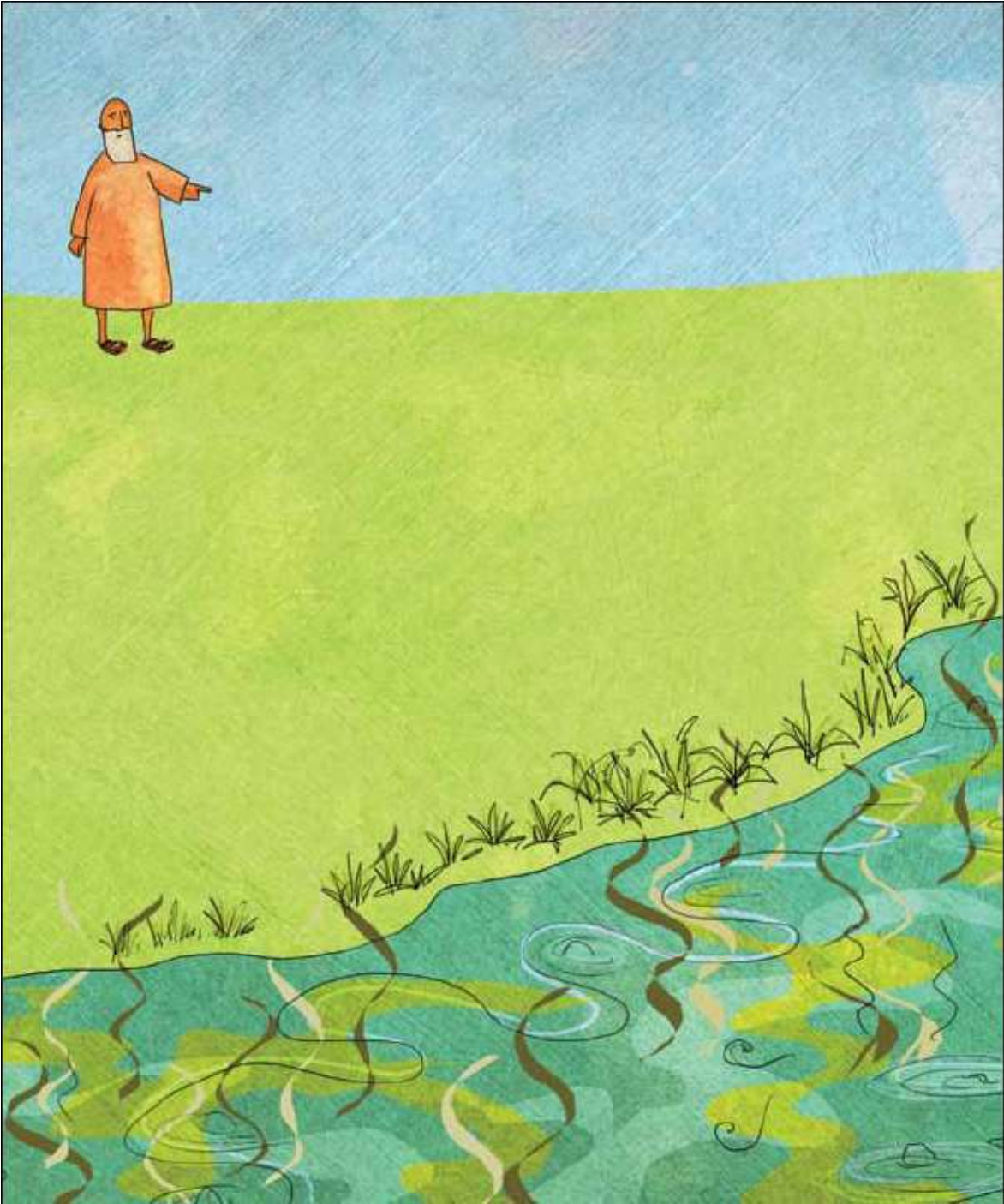
“I can do lots of things!” the king replied. “But only God can heal.” Just then a message from Elisha arrived. “Send Naaman here,” it read. So Naaman hurried off to Elisha’s house. But Elisha didn’t even come out and greet him, he just sent a servant instead. *Doesn’t Elisha realize who I am?* Naaman thought.

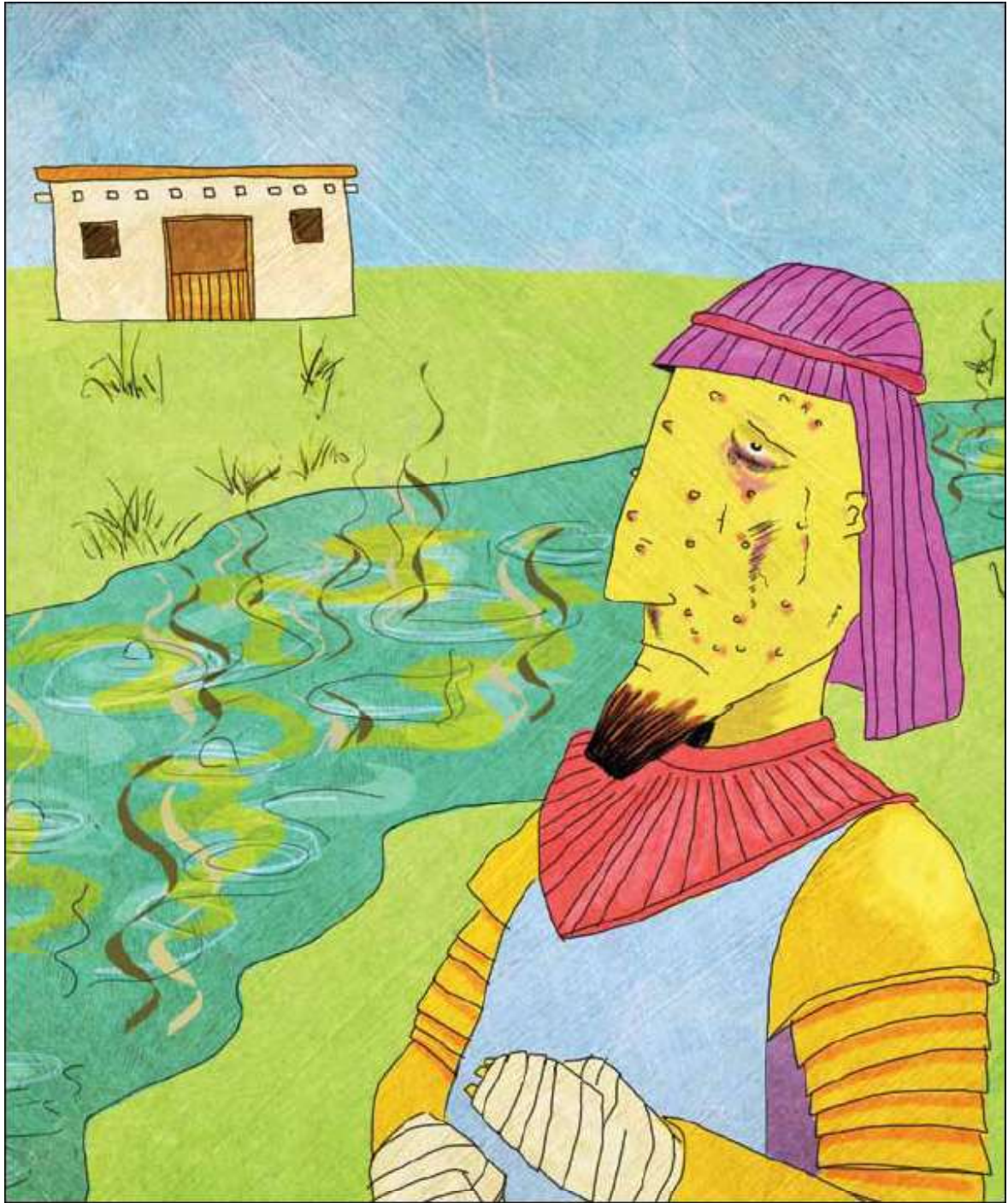


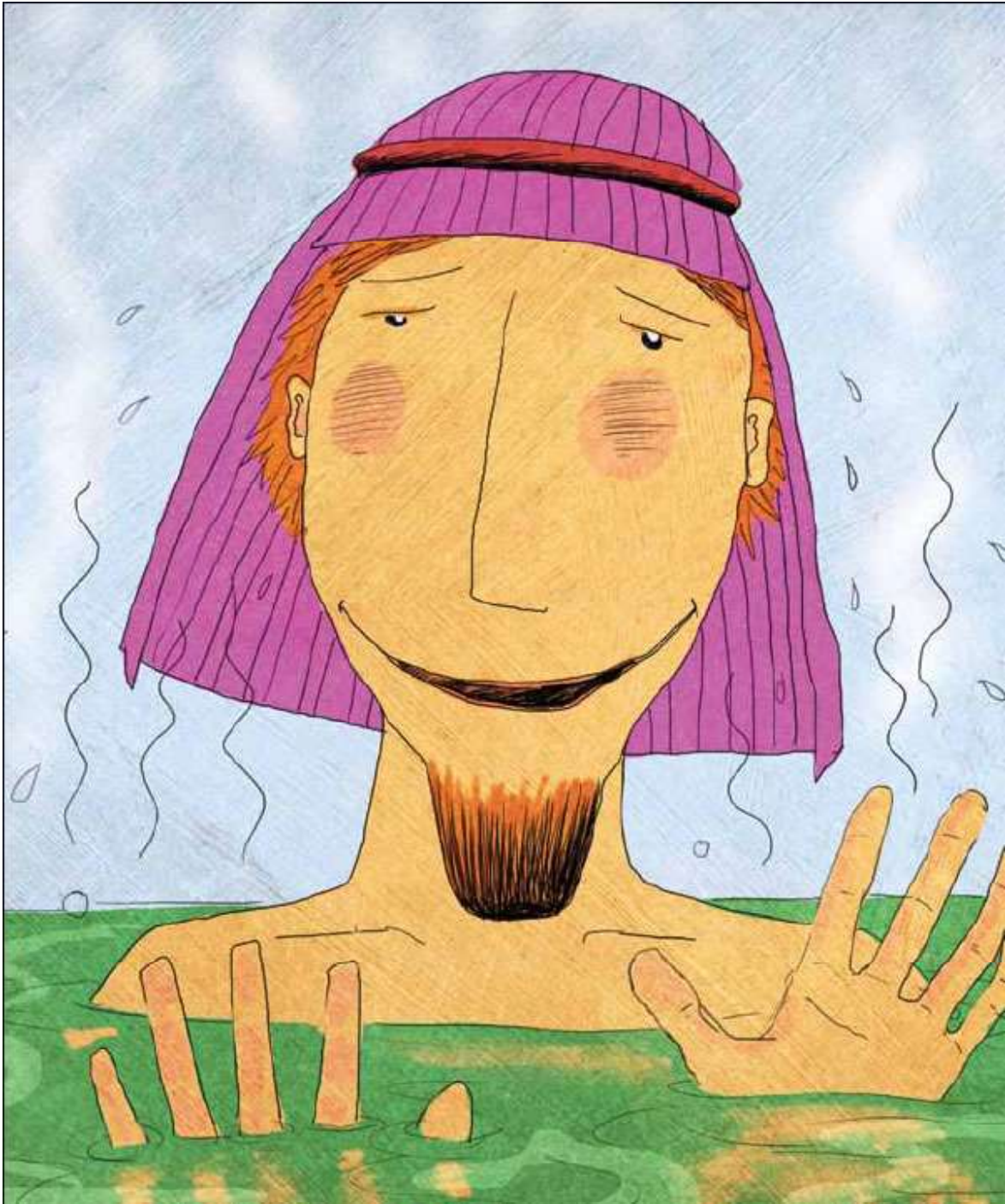
But what the servant said next made him even crosser. “Wash in there!” he said.

“Just wash?” Naaman laughed. “In that slimy, stinky river?” He looked around to see if this was some kind of joke. It wasn’t. *Any person can wash in a river!* he thought. *I am Naaman. I am important. I should do something important so God will heal me!* And he rode off in a rage. (Of course, you and I both know, that’s not how God does things. All Naaman needed was nothing. It was the one thing Naaman didn’t have.)

God knew that Naaman was even sicker on the inside than he was on the outside. Naaman was proud. He thought he didn't need God. His heart didn't work properly—it couldn't feel anything. You see, Naaman had leprosy of his heart. God was not only going to heal Naaman's skin, he was going to heal his pride.







Naaman finally agreed to wash in the river, and instantly, his skin became smooth like a baby.

Naaman wanted to pay Elisha.

“God healed you. You can’t pay,” Elisha said. “It’s free.”

And so it was that a very sick man was healed—all because of a little servant girl who forgave him.

God knew sin was like leprosy. It stopped his children's hearts from working properly and in the end it would kill them. Years later, God was going to send another Servant, to forgive as she did—to forgive all of God's children and heal the terrible sickness in their hearts.

Their hearts were broken.

But God can mend broken hearts.

