

The forgiving prince

Joseph and his brothers, from Genesis 37–46

JACOB HAD TWELVE SONS but of all his sons, Joseph was his favorite.

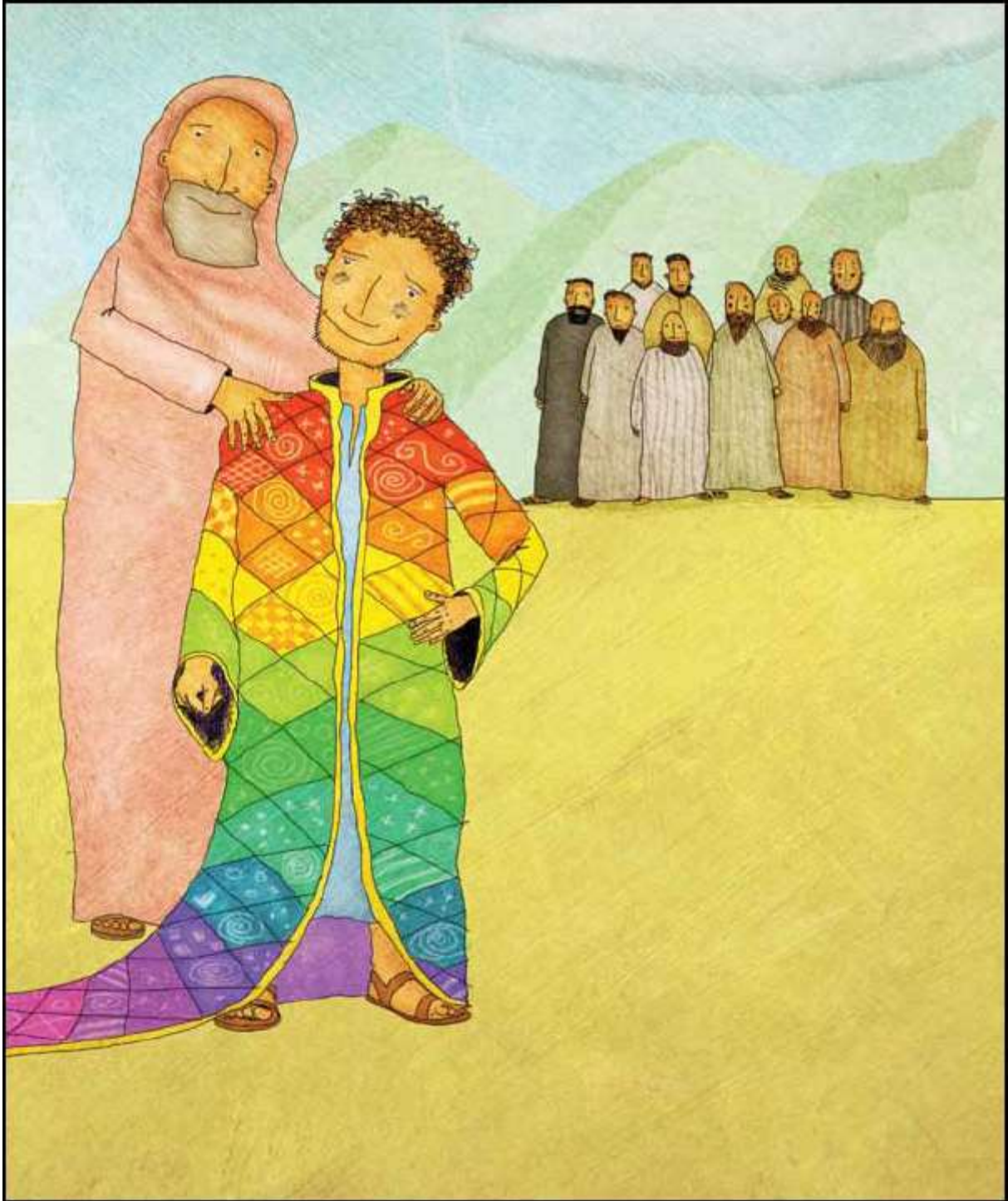
One day, Jacob gave Joseph a splendid new robe. It was beautiful and rich with all the colors of the rainbow, but it made Joseph's brothers jealous—they wanted rich rainbow robes, too.

Then to make matters worse, Joseph kept on having these special dreams: "I dreamed I was the greatest! I was king!" Joseph told his brothers. "And you all bowed down to me!"

Now I'm sure you know, even if Joseph didn't, that telling your brothers things like that isn't a very good idea. Joseph's brothers hated him even more. They wanted to kill Joseph and his dreams.

And one day that's exactly what they tried to do.

They tore Joseph's rainbow robe off him and sold him to slave traders—for 20 pieces of silver.

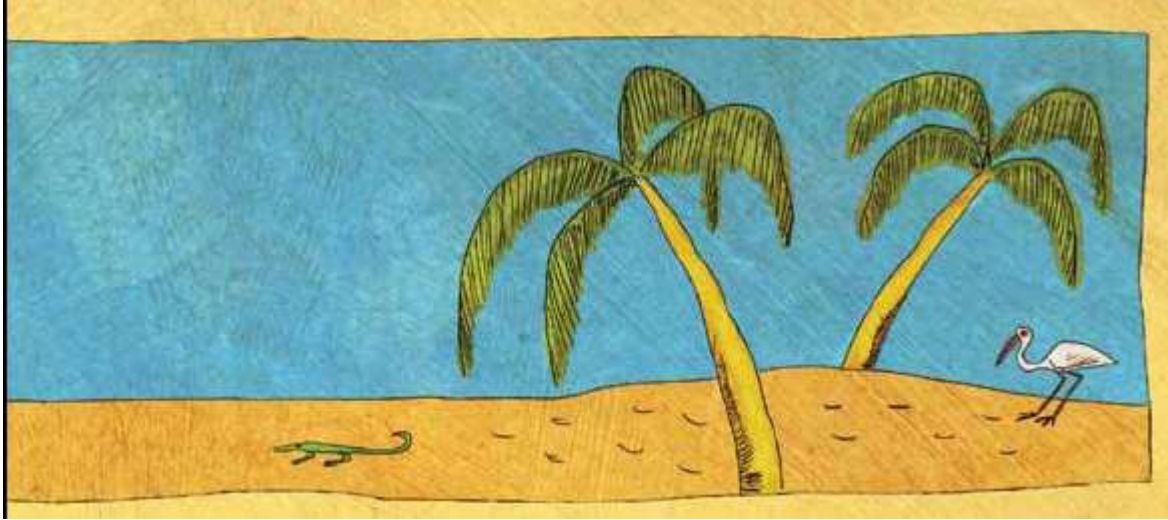




The traders took Joseph to Egypt and made him into a slave. The brothers went home and lied to their father, telling him that Joseph was dead.

That's the end of that dreamer! they thought. But they were wrong. God had a magnificent dream for Joseph's life and even when it looked like everything had gone wrong, God would use it all to help make the dream come true. God

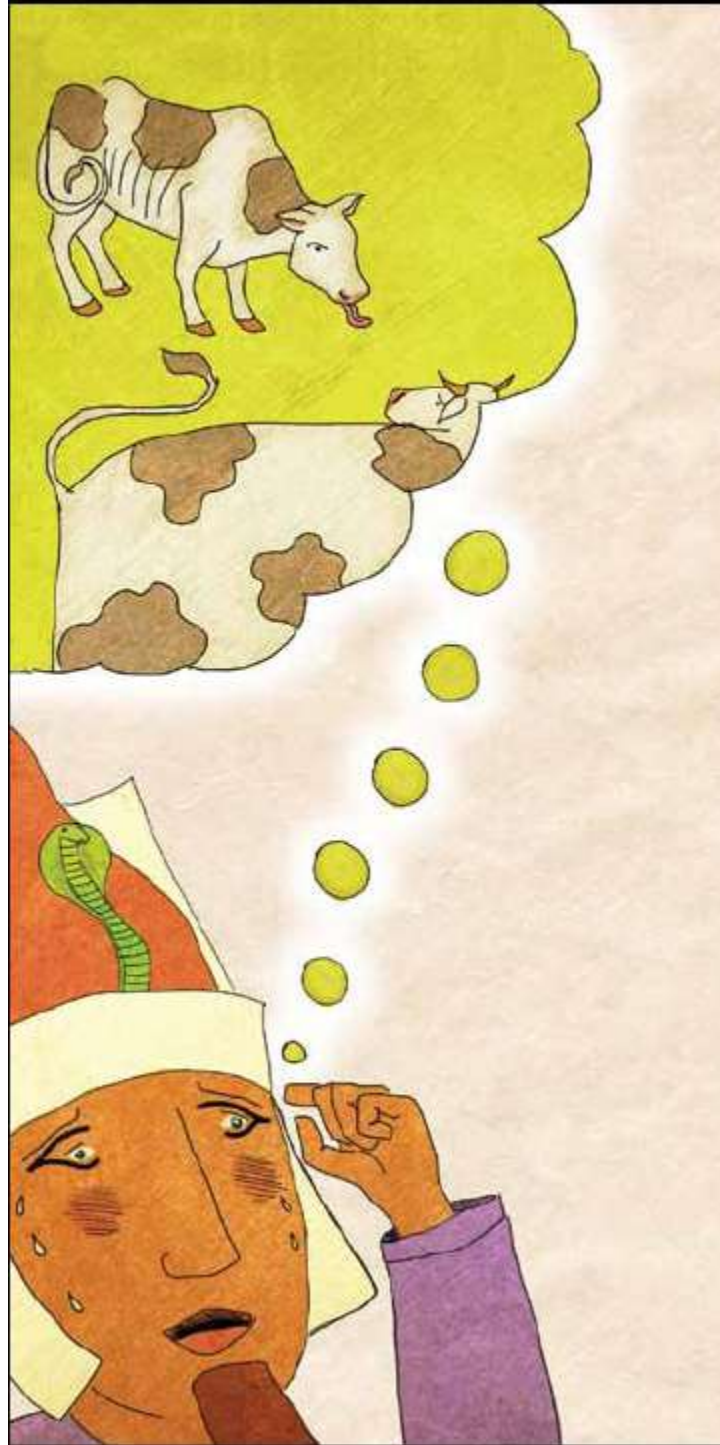




would use everything that was happening to Joseph to do something good.

Meanwhile though, things were not looking good for Joseph in Egypt. He was far from home and from his dad. Then he got blamed for something he didn't do, and, even though he had done nothing wrong, he was punished and thrown in jail. But God had not left Joseph.





One night, Pharaoh (king of Egypt) had a scary dream about thin cows gobbling up fat cows. What on earth did it mean? He didn't know. But Joseph was a dream expert so Pharaoh sent for him. "It means a famine is coming," Joseph explained. "There won't be enough food."

Pharaoh was so pleased by Joseph's skill that he immediately took Joseph out of jail and made him a prince.

Now back home, Joseph's brothers had run out of food and everyone was hungry. God's special family was in danger—if they didn't get food soon they would starve to death. So Joseph's brothers traveled to Egypt to buy food.

They came and knelt before the new prince. His brothers didn't know that the prince was Joseph. But Joseph knew who they were. Joseph's dream, the one about his brothers bowing down to him, was coming true.

“It's me!” Joseph cried.

When they saw it was Joseph, his brothers were afraid. They had wronged Joseph. They had sinned and they knew it. Now Joseph would certainly punish them.

But Joseph looked at his brothers and his eyes filled with tears. Even though his brothers had hurt him and hated him and wanted him dead—in spite of everything—he couldn't stop loving them.

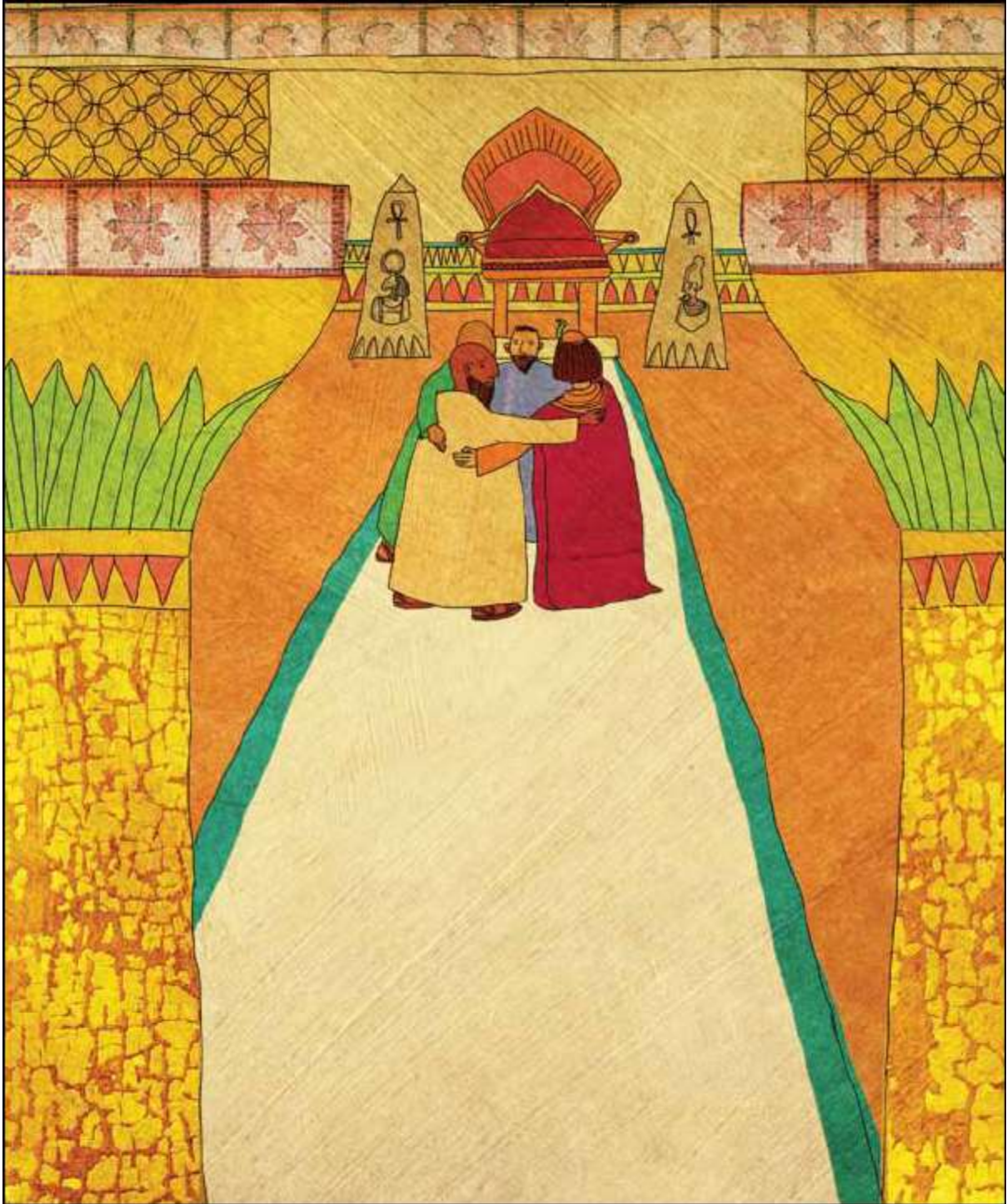


His heart, which they had broken, filled up with love, and Joseph forgave them.

Joseph threw his arms around them. “Don’t be afraid,” he said. “Behind what you were doing, underneath everything that was happening, God was doing something good. God was making everything right again.”

Joseph didn't punish them, he rescued them—he brought God's special family to live safely with him in Egypt.

One day, God would send another Prince, a young Prince whose heart would break. Like Joseph, he would leave his home and his Father. His brothers would hate him and want him dead. He would be sold for pieces of silver. He would be punished even though he had done nothing wrong.



But God would use everything that happened to this young Prince—even the bad things—to do something good: to forgive the sins of the whole world.