



One day the Prophet and Abu Bakr heard some voices, then sounds of steps approaching the cave. It was the Quraysh search party looking for them. Abu Bakr was overcome with fear. He thought: "We will be discovered any time now."

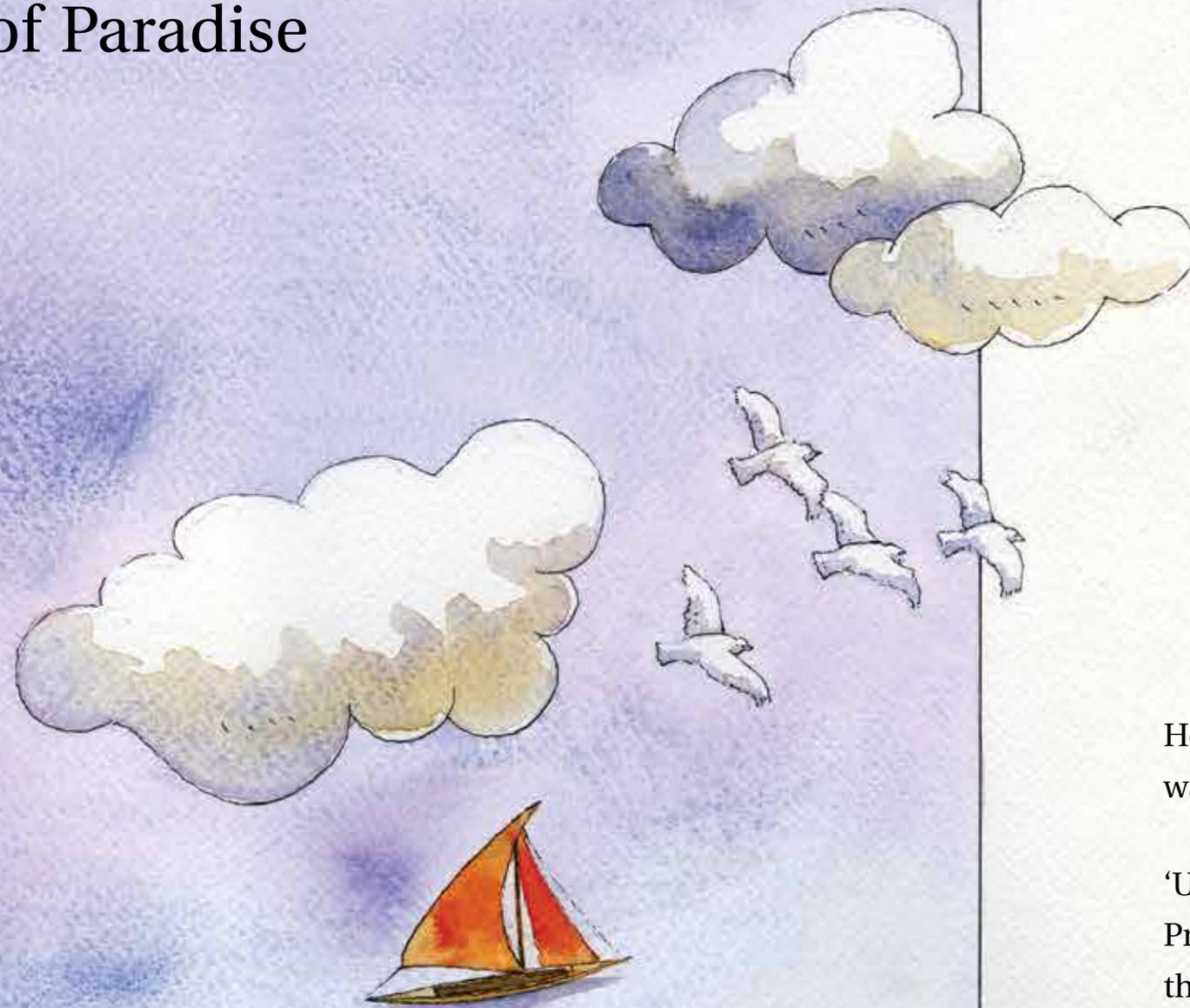
But the Prophet, as if reading his thoughts, said: "Do not worry, Allah is with us." (9:40).

And then he asked: "Do you really think anything would happen to two people who have Allah as their third companion?"

Meanwhile, the men looked around and moved away. Nobody had bothered to look into the cave. When the sound of retreating steps and voices had died down, the Prophet and Abu Bakr went to the opening of the cave.

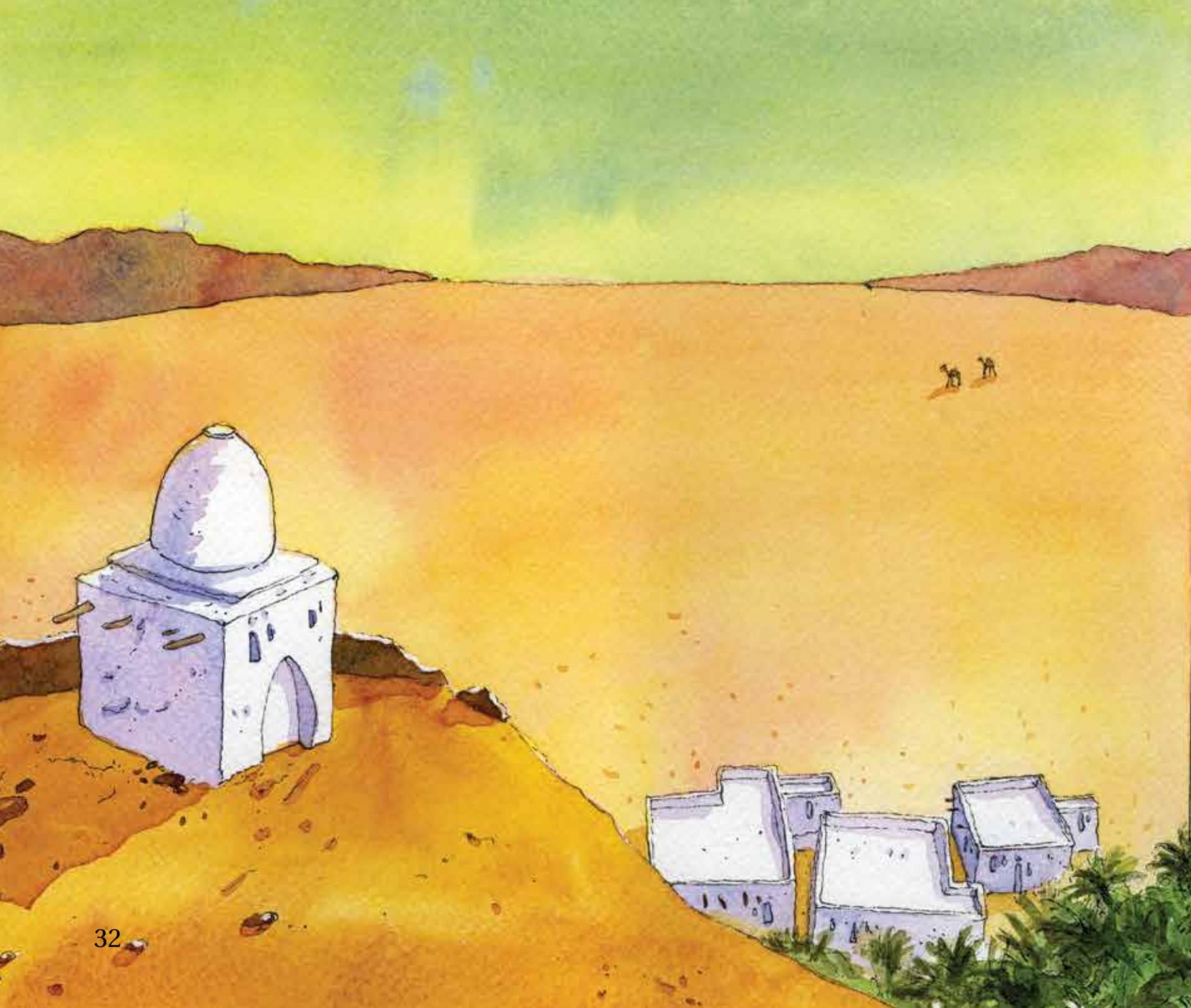
Offering thanks to Allah, the Prophet and Abu Bakr breathed a sigh of relief. But they remained in the cave yet for a while. When it was safe, they left the cave, and, with Allah's help, reached Madinah.

The Buyer of the Fountain of Paradise



'Uthman ibn 'Affan was one of the most prosperous and well-known men of Makkah. He had inherited a great deal of wealth from his father and, like his father, became a merchant. His straight-forwardness combined with his ability to trade made him in no time the richest man amongst the Quraysh. Soon he came to be known as 'Uthman Ghani or 'Uthman the Rich. But he was still best known for his modesty and good character. Even before becoming a Muslim, he never gambled or drank wine. He led a simple life. Whenever he could, he helped widows, orphans and the poor. He was always most obliging and kind to his relatives.

'Uthman was one of the very first converts to Islam. When Abu Bakr told him about the Prophet, he went straight to him and without any second thoughts accepted Islam. From then on, he remained firm in his faith until death.



When the Makkan Muslims came to Madinah and settled there, they faced great difficulty in getting drinking water. There was just one well in their locality and its owner was a Jew. He did not allow the Muslims to draw water unless they paid him a high price. One day, the Prophet saw that he was selling water to the Muslims for an even higher price than usual. This grieved him and he declared to one and all: “If any Muslim buys that well and hands it over to the Muslims, he will be rewarded by Allah with a fountain in Paradise.”



‘Uthman heard the Prophet’s words and, always mindful of the needs of his brothers in faith, hurried to buy the well. He tried to persuade the owner to sell it to him outright, but the owner would only agree to let him use the well on alternate days for 12,000 *dirhams*. ‘Uthman agreed to the arrangement which meant that ‘Uthman would use the well one day and the Jew the next day and so on. When it was ‘Uthman’s turn, the Muslims drew all the water they needed for that day and the next day. The Jew did the same when it was his turn. This continued for a while until the Jew realized that ‘Uthman had outwitted him, so he decided to sell the well to him outright. ‘Uthman happily availed of this offer and so the Muslims could use it any time they wanted.

They formed a circle around the Prophet and made way as the Prophet's camel moved forward. Each and every one of them wanted the Prophet to stay in his house and be his guest. But the Prophet, without refusing or accepting anybody's offer, simply pointed to his camel: "Let her choose her way. She has been ordered by Allah."

Each of the Ansar was hopeful that the camel would stop outside his house and he would have the honour of having the Prophet as his guest. As the Prophet's camel plodded down the streets, the Ansar would call out to the Prophet again and again:

"Stop here, O Messenger of Allah! Stop here, O Messenger of Allah!"

But the Messenger of Allah would only say:

"Let my camel choose her own way, for she has been ordered. She will stop on her own at the spot where Allah wants me to descend."

The camel kept its steady pace as if it knew where to go and where to stop. As it passed by the wall belonging to two orphan boys of Bani Najjar, named Sahl and Suhayl, the camel knelt down only to get up again. Then it moved in a circle near the wall until it spotted a small house next to it where it knelt and made its final halt. Seeing all that was taking place Abu Ayyub pushed his way through the crowd surrounding the Prophet till he found himself right in front of him. He greeted the Prophet and invited him and his companion into his house. The Prophet accepted his invitation.

