



Educational stories for children

KARIM AND THE FRONT DOOR



By

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Translated by

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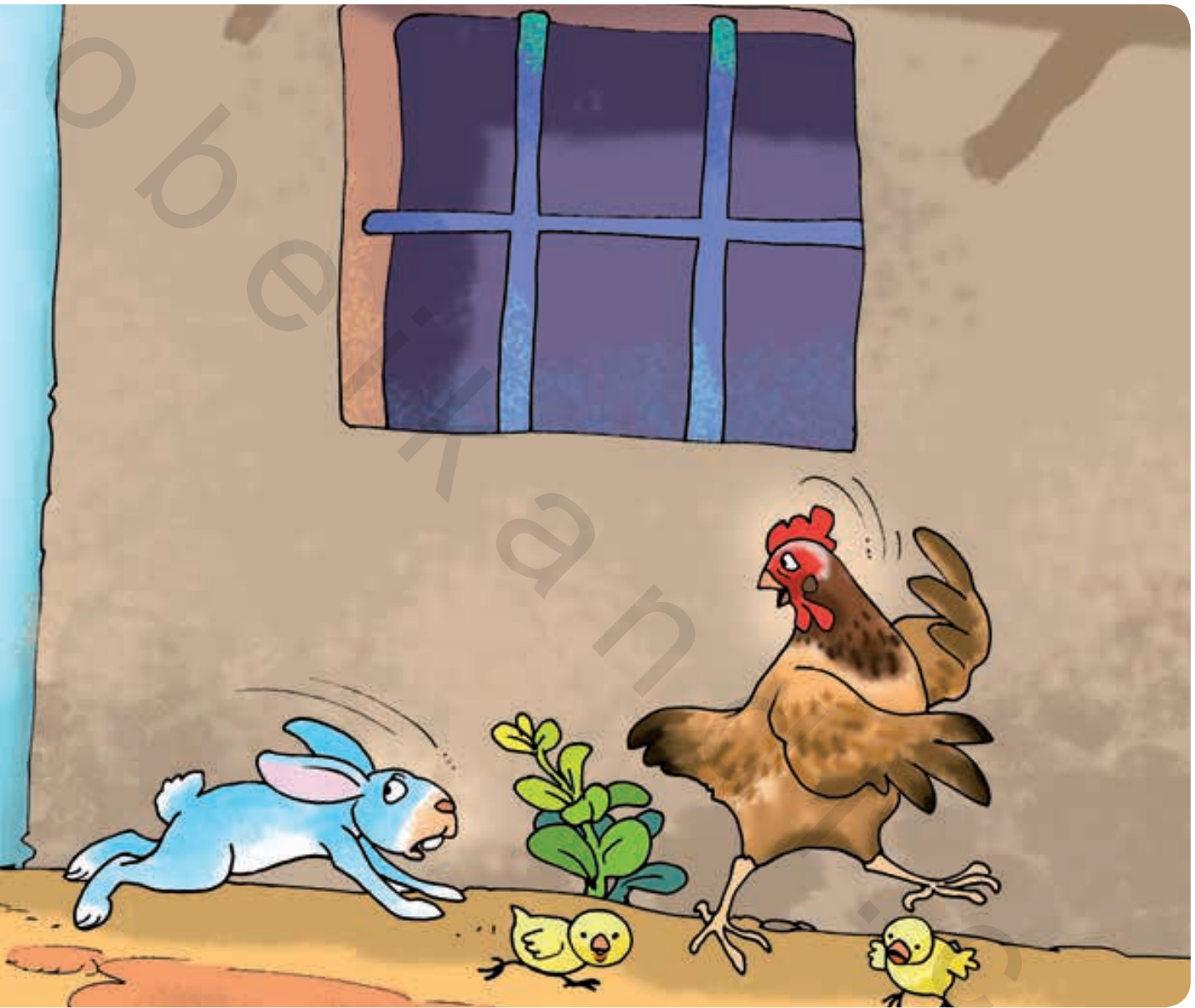
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Karim is a kind and gentle child and is tender with all living creatures. Yet Karim has a very odd habit: he slams the door whenever he comes in or goes out.



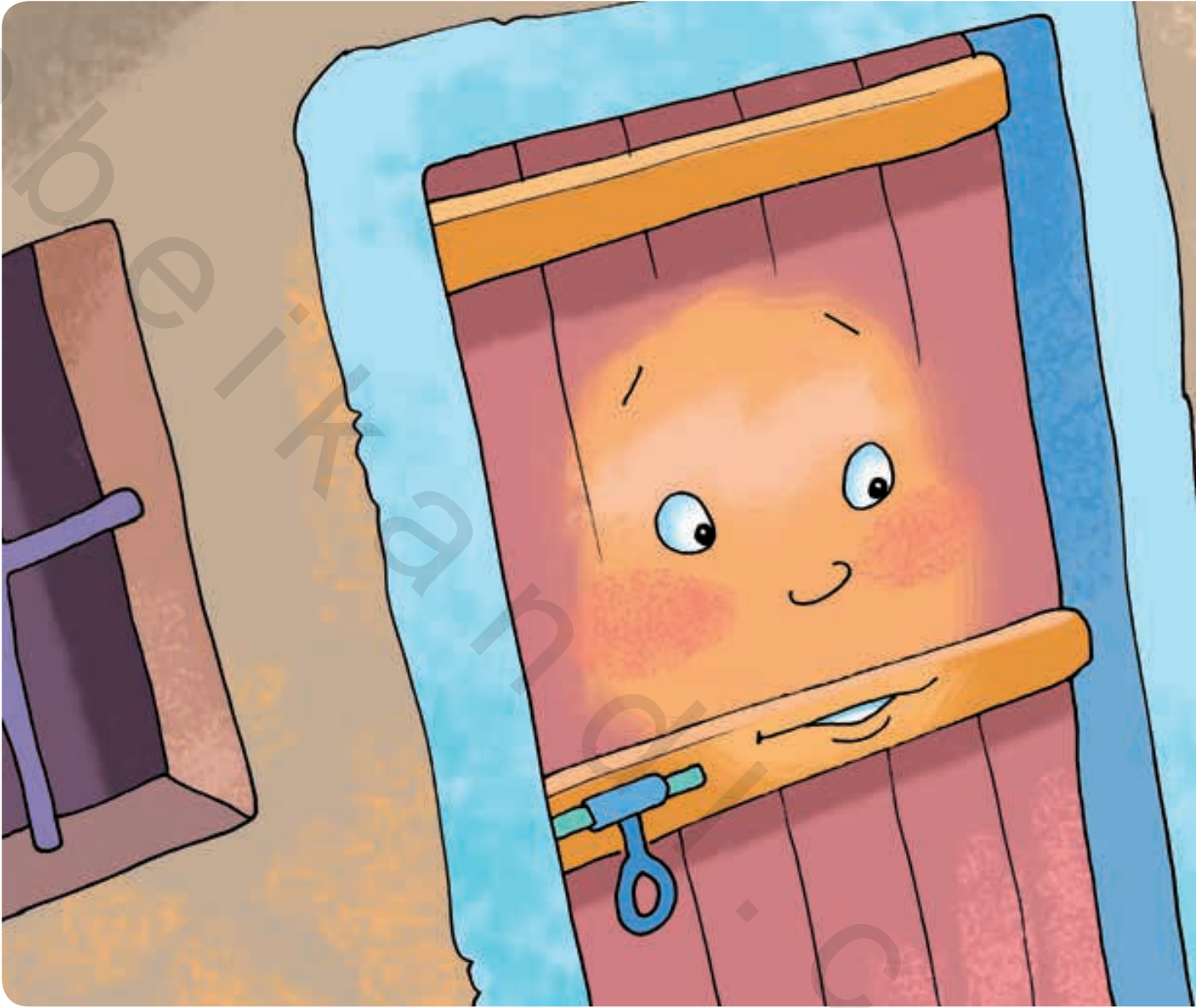
This behavior irritates everyone in his house. It also causes great pain for the door itself, yet Karim never even noticed.



One day, Karim rushed out and slammed the door behind him. He heard a pained voice cry out, "Ouch!"



Karim stopped and turned around to see who had cried, "Ouch!" but he didn't see anyone. Karim walked up to the door and asked it, "Was it you who said, 'Ouch'?"



In a sad voice the door replied, "Yes, it was me." Karim was bewildered. He asked the door, "And why did you say 'Ouch'?" The door replied, "Because you slammed me and it hurt."



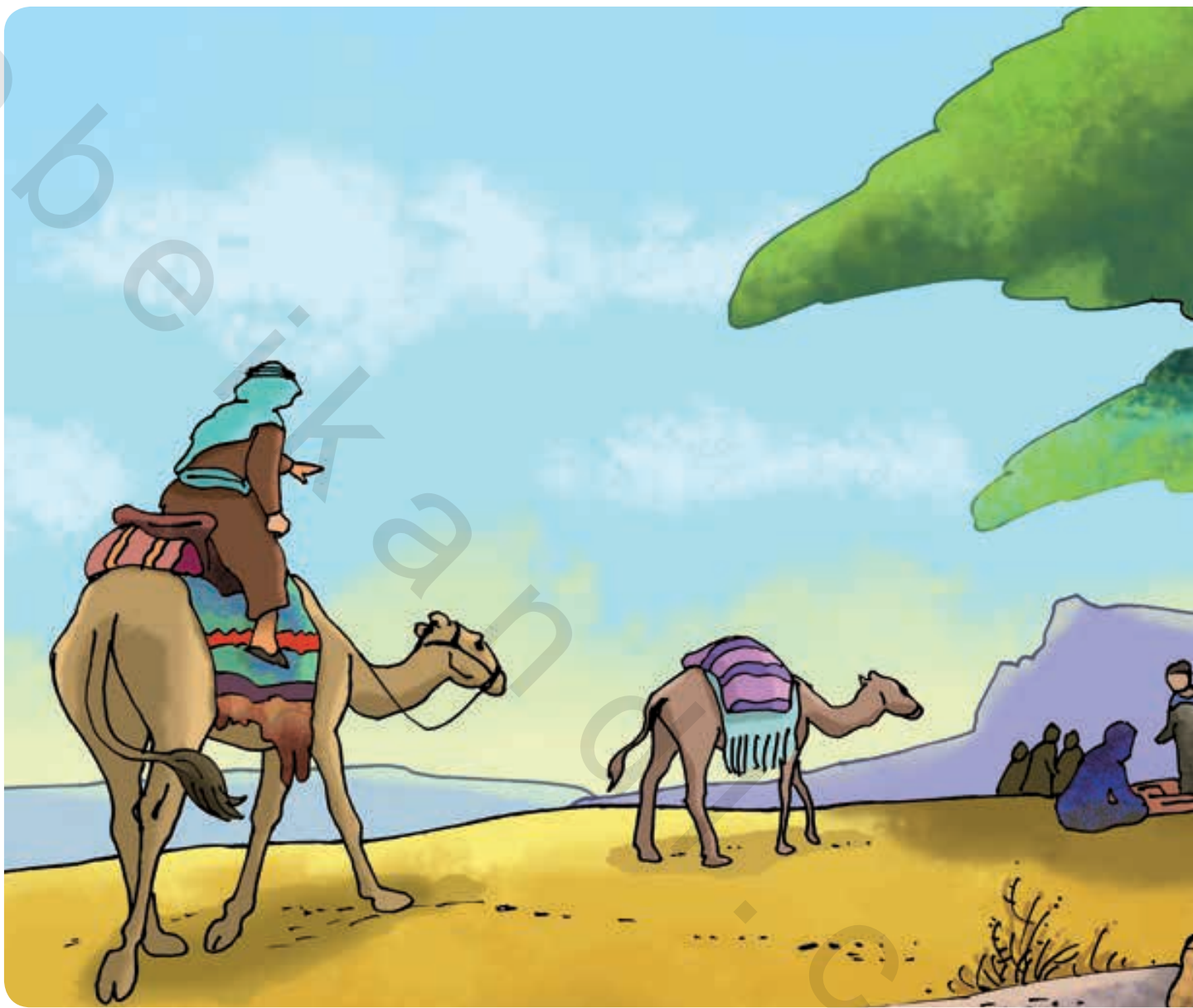
Karim was surprised by this. He said to the door, "I'm sorry. I didn't know that you could feel and be pained!" The door said, "Of course I do, Karim. I was originally a living creature."



Karim grew even more confused. "I thought you were inanimate!" he said. "No, Karim, don't you know that I was originally a tree?" the door said. Karim's bewilderment grew. "A tree?!" he said, "How is it that you were a tree? And how did you become a door?"



“That’s a long, sad story,” the door said. “I don’t want to cause you pain and sorrow, my friend.” Karim said to the door, “Please, I beg you, tell me the story! I love trees’ stories.”



The door was silent for a moment, and then he began to tell his tale. "A long time ago, I was a huge green tree on the travelers' route through the desert. A poor man came along one day and built a small house beside me in which to live in with his family.



I spread my branches out to provide shade for the house and the wide patch of ground around me. I was happy as I did this, for people sat and rested in my shade and ate my fruit. Birds came to me and built their nests in my branches.



I prayed to God and said, 'Oh Lord, make my shade wide and spacious so that all people can sit beneath me, and make my fruit plentiful, so that all people can eat from me.' The days went by peacefully and happily. But then some rowdy boys started coming and throwing rocks at me



to knock down my fruit. It hurt me, but I was willing to put up with it. Then the rocks started to fall on the house and break the windows, and the rowdy boys would just run off.



One day a rock fell on the man's head and injured him badly. He ran after the rowdy boys but couldn't catch up with them. He returned angered and said, 'I have to cut down this tree!'"



Karim was shocked. “But why cut down the tree? What had it done wrong?” he asked. In a sorrowful voice the tree said, “That’s what happened, Karim!”



The man went to a carpenter and asked him to bring a large saw to cut the tree down with, so that he would be relieved of the rowdy boys.



Carpenters came and started cutting my trunk with the large saw as I screamed in pain and cried to them, 'Why are you cutting me? I haven't done anything wrong! I provide you with shade and fruit, I love you!'



But the carpenters didn't understand the language of trees. They didn't hear me and didn't understand what I was saying.



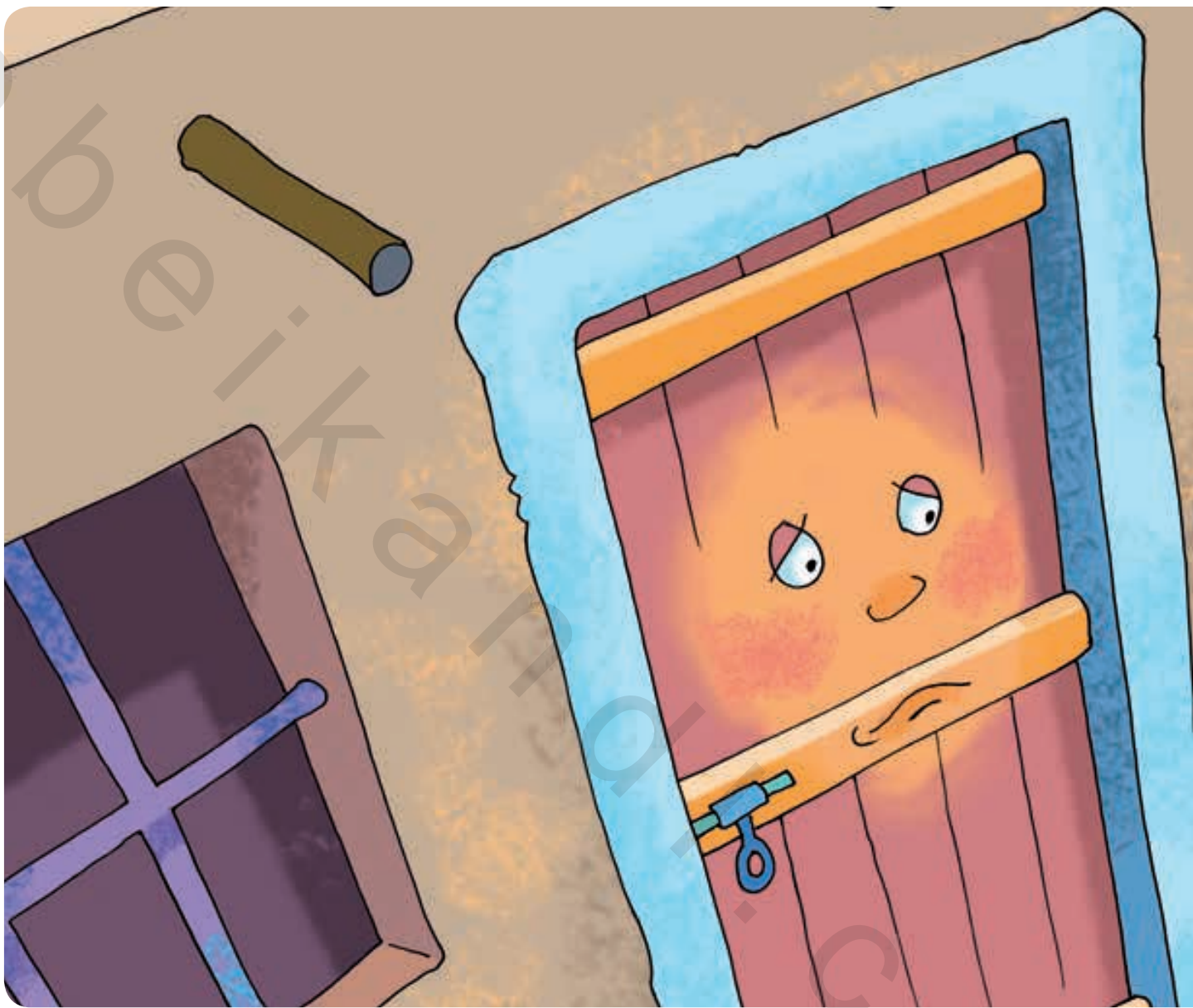
They kept sawing my trunk until they cut it all the way through. I fell to the ground and all the birds flew off, screaming and crying. They left me on the ground like that for days.



Then they returned with the saw and began splitting me into sections. One part they made into a fisherman's boat, and another part they made into a chair and desk and bookcase.



Your grandfather came and bought a piece, and made me out of it. He placed me here as the front door to his house. All of these things are lovely and useful, but a tree in the desert was lovelier and more useful.”



Karim was moved by the door's story, and sorry for the kind tree.
He cried, tears falling down his cheek.



The door said, "I knew that you would be affected and would cry, and I don't want you to cry, my friend, but I wanted you to learn from this story."



Karim wiped away his tears and said, "I've learnt my lesson, and understood what you mean. From today on I will plant lots of trees everywhere, and I'll take care of them and won't ever let anyone cut them down. And I'll never slam the door again!"