



Educational stories for children

KARIM AND THE FARM ANIMALS



By

Omar Elsayy

Translated by

Jennifer Peterson

Illustrations by

Ver Salvador

العبدان
Abekan



In the early morning I woke to the sound of sparrows. I opened my eyes and found my grandmother, who hugged me and kissed me and carried me to the table. I cried, “I’m hungry, Grandma, so so hungry!”



My grandmother said, "I can hear the sparrows in your belly chirping."
I was amazed, and asked her, "Are there truly sparrows in my belly,
Grandma?"



My grandfather laughed, and my grandmother said, “When you’re hungry, I can hear sounds like the chirping of sparrows in your belly. They’re the sparrows of a hungry belly, not the sparrows that fly!”



I ate the delicious food that my grandmother had prepared, and when I was full my grandfather picked me up and took me outside. "Come on, I'll introduce the farm animals to you," he said.



I climbed down from my grandfather's shoulder and leapt about with joy on our way to the corral. "We'll start from here, Karim," he said. "Look at that!"



There's the bull, and his wife the cow, who gives us milk. And that's their son, the little calf. He's so beautiful, and look at how he resembles his parents!



That's the sheep, and his wife the ewe, who also gives us milk and has babies that look just like her. Look at the little lamb, how beautiful it is!



These are the pretty rabbits, which love to eat clover and lettuce. They have lots of little babies who look just like them. We raise them until they grow up, and then they have more and more babies.



This is the horse and his wife the mare, and this is their baby, the colt. Look at how beautiful he is, and how he resembles his parents.



This is the camel and his wife the she-camel. They're the largest animals on the farm. And this is their calf. Look how beautiful and shapely it is, and how it resembles its parents.



These are the dogs and their puppies. They guard the farm and protect it from thieves, and from the wolves and foxes that snatch birds and lambs.



These are the cats and their kittens. They're very useful, for they eat mice and some bugs, and rid the farm of these hazardous pests.



This is the baby donkey, which never stops running about. Look at how beautiful and shapely he is. He's so mirthful!"



I asked my grandfather, "Where's the big donkey?" My grandfather said, "He's working on the farm, for he's the farmer's friend. Look, he's helping that farmer by carrying heavy things for him and transporting them to a distant place."



My grandfather went on, “Just as we’ve visited the corral, now we need to visit the roost. Look, those are the pigeons and their squabs.



That's the duck and its ducklings, and that's the goose and its goslings.
That's the chicken and the rooster and their chicks."



As we left the roost, an angrily chirping sparrow took us by surprise. It fluttered about us, pumping its wings in rage.



My grandfather laughed and asked, "Why are you so angry?"

The sparrow said, "I'm upset because you didn't tell Karim about me, although I, too, am among the farm's birds."



“I didn’t mean anything, my dear,” my grandfather said. “Don’t be angry with me; I love you!” The sparrow said, “And I love you, Grandpa, and I want to be Karim’s friend.”



“Me, too, sparrow!” I said. It was delighted, and flapped its wings and spun about in the air. It waved to me with its wings as I walked on with my grandfather.



I returned to the house happy, and told my grandfather, “I felt like all the animals we visited love me, Grandpa.” My grandfather said, “Yes, they do love you, and they want to be your friends.”



“Me, too, Grandpa!” I said. “But how can I be their friend?” My grandfather smiled and said, “You’ll be their friend if you love them and treat them with kindness and mercy.”



In excitement and delight, I cried, “I promise, Grandpa, that I’ll love all living creatures and treat them with kindness and mercy. I promise!”