



Educational stories for children

THE TALE OF A GLASS BOTTLE



By

Omar Elsayy

Translated by
Jennifer Peterson

Illustrations by
Fayza Nawwar

العبيكان
Abëkan



The bottle of juice was happy because Yousef had taken it out of the refrigerator and poured its remaining juice into his cup to drink.



Yusef drank with gleeful satisfaction as he gazed at the bottle and said, "I wish your delicious juice would never run out, my beautiful bottle, you!"



Yusef carried the juice bottle back to the refrigerator but then noticed what he was doing and said to himself, “What’s the point? It’s an empty bottle.” Instead he placed it in the trash can.



The bottle was bewildered. It sadly said to itself, “My God! I, the juice bottle, after all this love, have been tossed away amidst the garbage!”



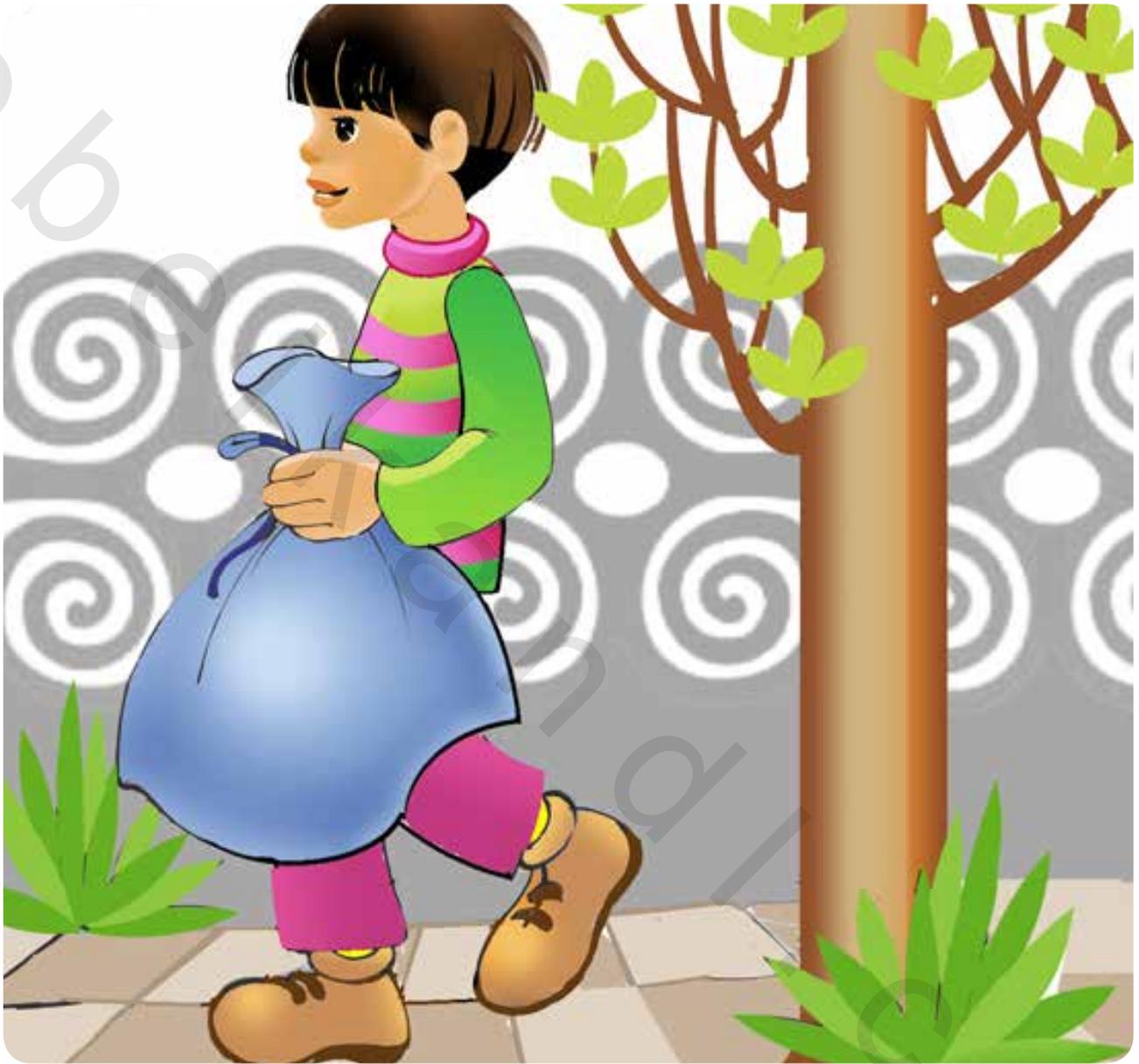
The bottle realized that it had landed on a worn-out shoe in the trash can, and apologized profusely. Yet the shoe did not reply!



The bottle turned to its right, and found a broken pen nearby. It recalled this was a pen that Yousef's father had been fond of using.



Then it turned to its left, and found a toy that Yousef loved. He had called it a smart toy. Now it was in the trash can because it had broken and couldn't be fixed.



In the morning, Yousef took the trash bag out to the street and placed it in the large garbage bin in which all the neighboring homes' trash was collected.



At night, the garbage truck came and collected everything in the bin. The truck placed the garbage in its cavernous belly and compressed it tightly.



The bottle was deeply pained and felt as though it would be smashed. It almost cried out like the many other objects screaming in pain from the tight pressure.



Yet the bottle bore the pain, and prayed, “Oh Lord, salvage me, and make me useful again to people as I used to be. Don’t let me become a piece of useless trash.”



The garbage truck drove a long distance until it reached the garbage dump. There it opened its rear door and raised its cavernous belly, spilling everything out.



Everything fell with great force, each object atop the other. The bottle was afraid it would be shattered by the many heavy items falling upon it.



In distress the bottle cried, “How has this happened? How can I end up like this amongst all these things and these bad smells and this suffocating environment?”



The broken pen straightened up and said, “Show some humility, you juice bottle! You’re no better than I am. I’m a pen with which the arts and sciences are written.”



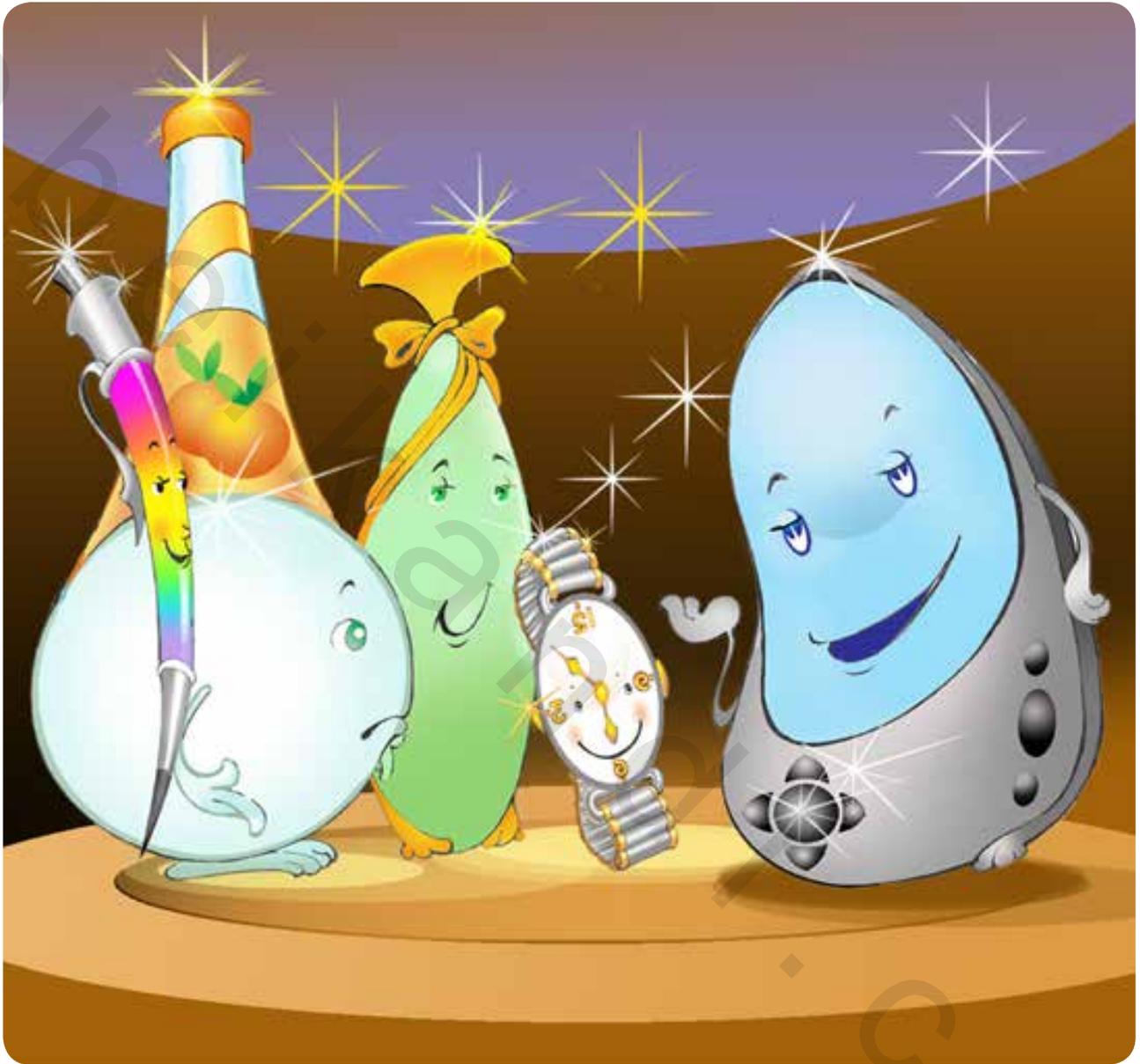
An old watch turned to them and said, “Nor are you any better than I. You all know my worth. You know I used to ornament my owner’s wrist and organize his schedule.”



An empty perfume bottle shuddered and said, “My God! I, who used to perfume my owner with the most exquisite scents, have found my end smelling this horrid stench!”



That was when the smart toy turned on and said, “My friends, there’s no point to all this arrogance. Each of you has your own beauty and importance.”



“The pen is most important when we want to write, the bottle is most important when we’re thirsty, and the watch is most important when we want to know what time it is.”



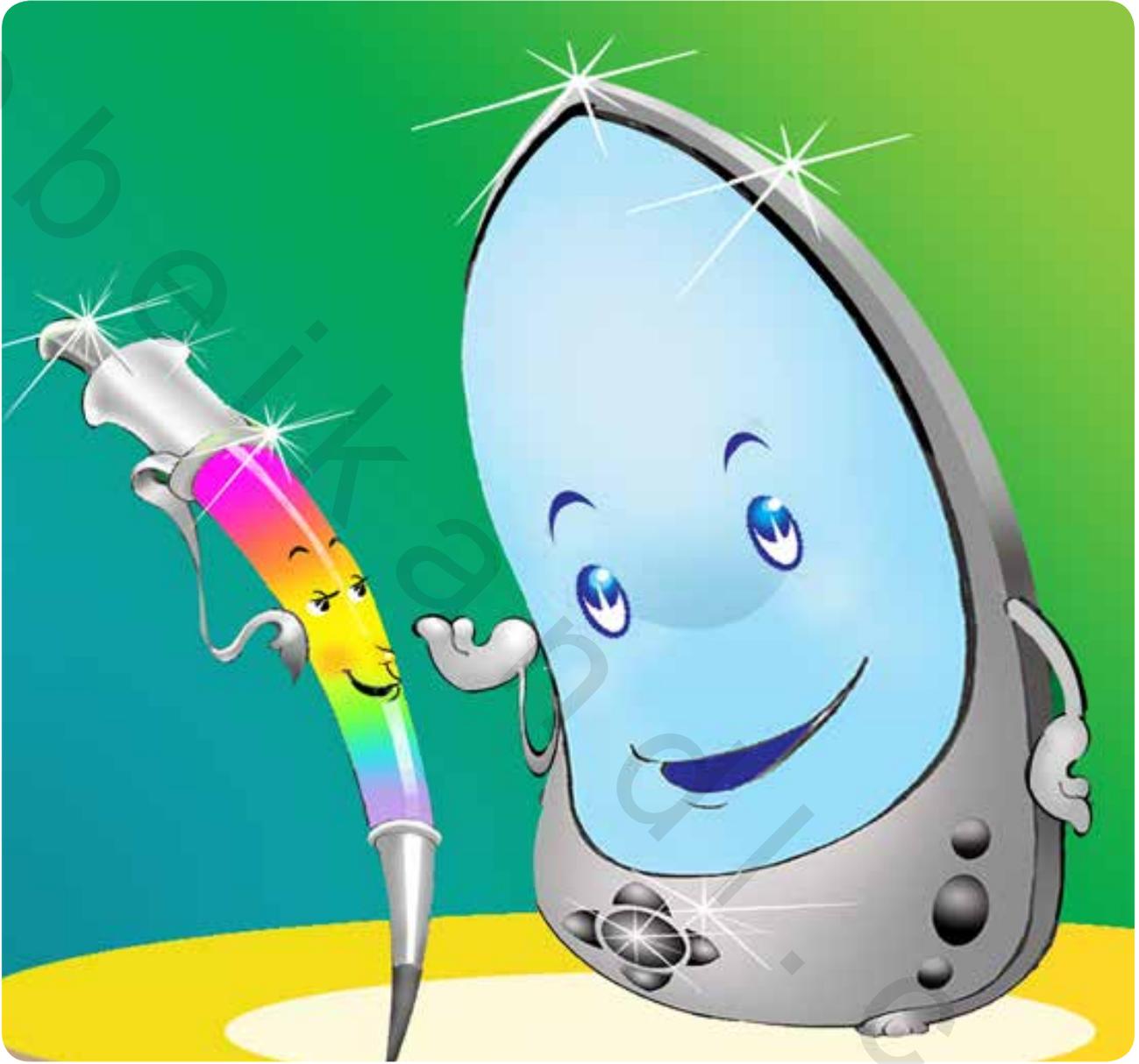
Suddenly the bottle burst into tears and said, “But now we are of no use. We’ve become trash tossed away in the garbage dump. No one needs us, and no one can make use of us.”



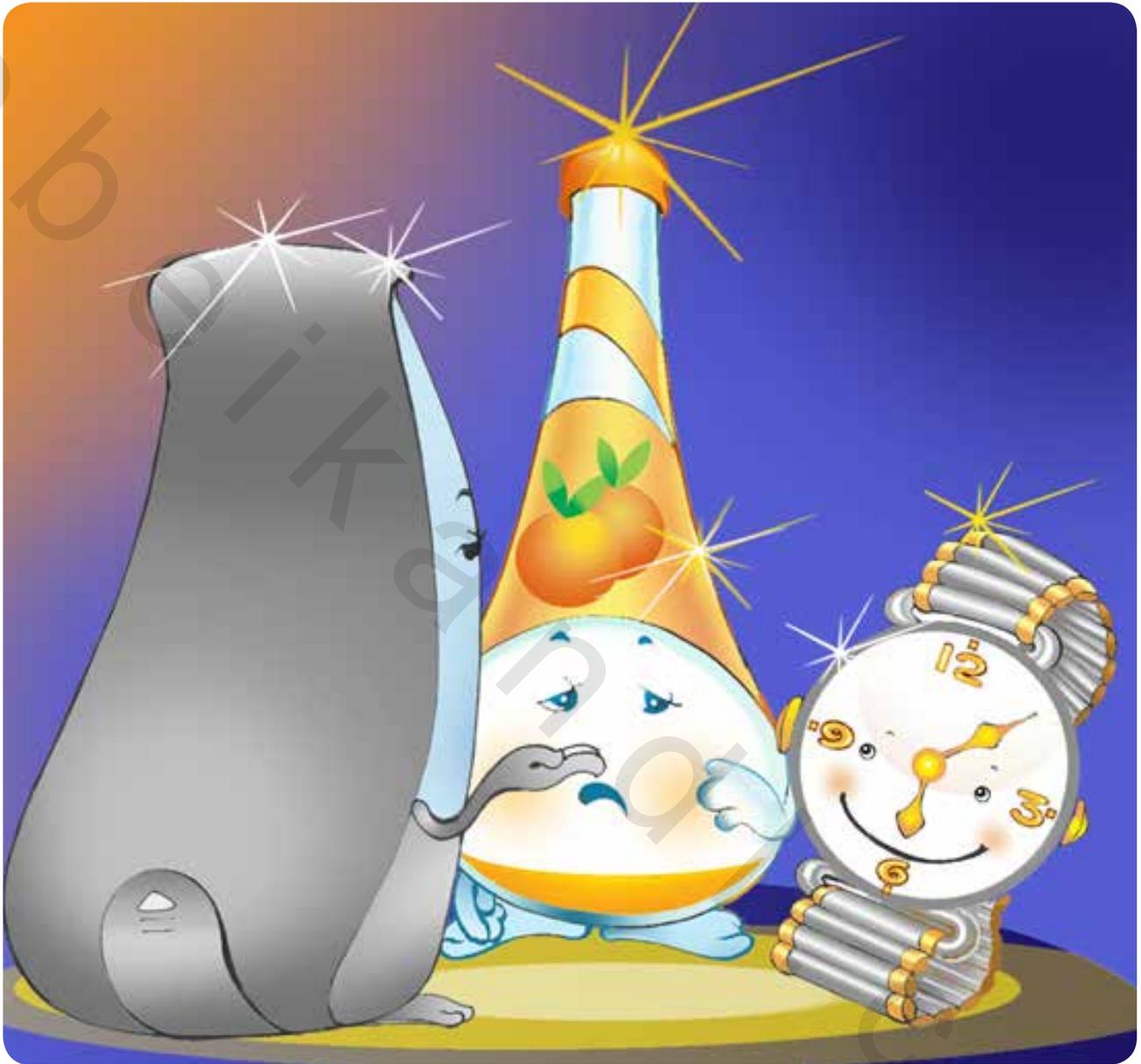
“Don’t be sad,” the smart toy said. “They’ll make use of us and won’t leave us tossed away like trash.” In unison everyone cried out, “And how is that?”



“My friends,” the smart toy explained, “we’re all made of various materials, including plastic, glass, iron, and copper.” “And what does that mean?” asked the pen.



“These materials have begun to grow scarce as a result of their mass consumption,” the smart toy said. “As such, people are recycling them in order to benefit from them once again.”



“I don’t understand,” said the bottle. “What do you mean?” The smart toy explained, “They’ll come and sort us.” “What does sorting mean?” asked the watch.



“Sorting means placing similar items together,” said the smart toy.

“For example, things made out of glass are taken to the glass factory.”



In the factory, they melt these old glass items down and purify them. Then they produce new items from the melted glass.



They do they same thing with objects made out of iron, copper, aluminum, plastic, paper, leather, and fabric.



Each of these materials is recycled in the way appropriate for it so that people can re-use it. And in this way they can preserve natural materials instead of consuming them.”



The bottle clapped and said, “And in this way they maintain a clean environment too, because they don’t leave used, worn-out objects to turn into a polluting garbage dump.”



Then it turned around and asked the smart toy, “But how do you know all this?” The smart toy laughed and said, “Because I was a plastic bottle before I became a smart toy!”



They all clapped in delight, and laughed as they said, “Thank God! We’ll return to our friends in the form of new and useful objects, instead of remaining useless trash!”