

About our search for happiness . . .

FROM THE AUTHOR

When we hear what our heart wants to say, we begin to hear what other people want to say through their heart, in any language and in all places of our Earth.

I was writing a story about a young boy who dreamed to make the whole world happy, listening to my heart and listening to the hearts of the people whose stories became the basis of my heroes' destinies.

I wrote this story twice, first in Russian as a novel and then in English as a screenplay. But in fact, this story has only one language. It is the language of my heart . . .

My beloved husband Joff found time in his incredibly busy schedule and did a tremendous job editing this book. He also edited the text with his great wonderful heart, living alongside the heroes of this story. I have infinite gratitude to him from my heart.

I very much appreciate everyone who has supported the creation of this book. I am grateful to you for finding the time to read this book.

Our hearts are boundless. Joy, Gratitude, Love, and Character make up the circle of our heart's Unity. And when we listen and begin to speak in the language of our heart seeking its unity, we open the amazing world of our Earth where everyone can be happy. This story is about the search for happiness . . .

Welcome!

With love Olga Verasen



GOLDEN PALACE, WAY OF RULER

written & illustrated

by

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edited

by

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Golden Palace, Way of Ruler

novel
book-screenplay

ISBN: 978-0-9995779-4-3
(paperback)

Written & illustrated by
Olga Verasen
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Joffrey Cowan

Published by
Olga Verasen L.L.C.
Vermont, USA



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GLOSSARY OF FILM TERMS

EXT. -- Exterior. The scene at an outdoor location.

INT. -- Interior. The scene at an indoor location.

DISSOLVE TO: -- A transition when one scene dissolves into another scene.

TRANSITION TO: -- A special passage from one scene to another scene.

MONTAGE: -- A collection of very short actions, in different events at different times, places and times.

INTERCUT BETWEEN: -- Used to show different scenes happening at the same time.

TIME CUT: -- The same scene continues at a later time.

CONTINUOUS -- It refers to action that moves from one location to another without any interruption in time.

CLOSE ON: -- The camera shows an object, action, or person at close range.

HIGH WIDE: -- The camera shows a panoramic view from above.

POV: -- Point of view. The image is presented from a character's point of view.

(V.O.) -- When the character is not physically in the scene or his inner-monologue.

(O.S.) -- When the character is in the scene location, but not currently on screen.

CHARACTER -- The character ALL-CAPS the first time you meet them in the action.

EPISODE, PROLOGUE, ACT ONE, ACT TWO, ACT THREE -- The structure of each episode. An episode corresponds to one show in the series.

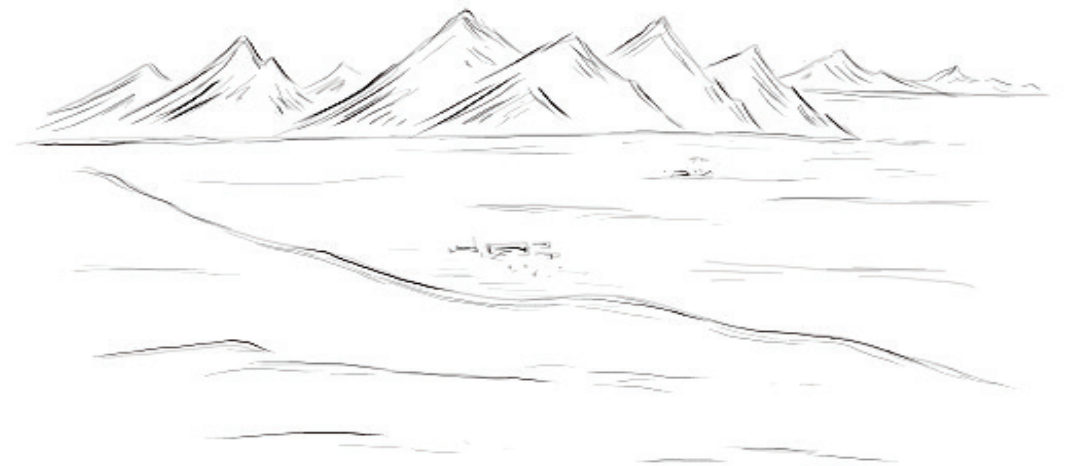
FADE IN: and FADE OUT: -- Transitional instructions denoting the beginning and end of each prologue and each act.

* Strict script design rules have been modified to accommodate transforming the script to a book.

* Title and names of the characters are written in accordance with the author's intentions.

EPISODE 1

“FOREWORD”





PROLOGUE

FADE IN:

EXT. MOUNTAIN - SUNSET

A country of the East. The top of the Mountain sparkles with golden colors in the rays of the setting sun.

Ahead of the Mountain is a silhouette of a little boy around ten years old. He is staring at the Mountain's top.

A melody sounds. On screen appear the words:

"GOLDEN PALACE, WAY OF RULER"

TRANSITION TO: EXT. SEA, BEACH - AFTERNOON

AUTHOR sits under an umbrella on the beach. /Author is a European woman around fifty years of age./

AUTHOR (V.O.)

Several years ago I was visiting one of the countries of the East as a tourist.

I hadn't planned any trips to tourist attractions. It seemed to me too hectic as I had only one week to rest . . . I just wanted to enjoy the sea, the sun and relax from all my hard work, the city, the gray skies and the cold winter.

INT. HOTEL LOBBY, TOURIST COMPANY RECEPTION - EVENING

Author enters the hotel lobby.

AUTHOR (V.O.)

But one evening, returning to my hotel room from a magnificent day at the beach, I entered the hotel lobby and saw a clutch of people.

Moving closer, I heard an offer from the tourism manager about a trip to one of the famous places.

(pause)

I listened to him and smiled.

Author listens to MANAGER of Tourist Company. He talks to her and shows her a brochure. /Manager is a man of around thirty years./

AUTHOR (V.O.)

Yes, of course, I really appreciate the achievements of world culture, but, excuse me . . .

I was thinking, "Do I really want to drive more than a few hours one way, see the world famous place, and then travel the same number of hours back? Thanks you, but . . ."

And suddenly, as if hearing someone else, I answered, "Okay!"

Manager hastily explained the details to me but I did not hear him . . . I heard my heart . . .

I asked the time of departure and Manager answered, "We leave at 4 am," and added, "We only have one last place on the bus! It's special for you!"

I smiled politely, thinking "Standard marketing move!" thanked him and took some advertising brochures about the trip, a ticket and left--

INT. BUS - BEFORE SUNRISE

Tourists climb into the bus.

AUTHOR (V.O.)

My seat on the bus was really the last one.

I settled on the last seat, folded my legs under me and looked out with sleepy eyes through the window at a sky that was beginning to brighten . . .

EXT. DESERT - CONTINUOUS

Road. Mountains are visible in the distance.

AUTHOR (V.O.)

The road was really difficult . . .

Even though the quality of the bus was very good, it couldn't keep up with the growing heat.

I heard English, German, and Italian being spoken around and I asked myself, "What am I doing here?"

All that I saw with my group left wonderful impressions, which of course overcame the hardship of all the heat and the long drive.

I, and my fellow tourists, admired the immense beauty that was created by people.

"What a contrast we people can to create," I thought. "What is in the hearts of those who create the best in contrast to those who destroy?"

I'm not a historian and I'm not a psychologist. I just live on our Earth and I have always wanted to understand it . . .

As I looked around, I searched for the answer to this question again and again--

INT. BUS - EARLY EVENING

Tourists sit in the bus.

AUTHOR (V.O.)

The day of attractions seeing was coming to an end . . .

We got on the bus and I fell immediately asleep, tired by the heat and all the impressions.

Author sleeps on the last seat of the bus on folded legs.

EXT. GAS STATION - EVENING

Bus stops.

AUTHOR (V.O.)

I woke up because the bus stopped and the tourist manager loudly announced that we had a fifteen minute break before going on again.

Tourists file off the bus.

AUTHOR (V.O.)

It was a small gas station with an old cafe attached to it.

Around it was sand and a few stunted trees. In the distance I could see several small houses and a big Mountain.

The sun was setting quickly over the horizon and already its disc was touching the peaks of the Mountain.

I left the bus to stretch my tired legs and began to grumble to myself, "Well . . ."

EXT. GAS STATION. PLAYGROUND FOR PASSENGER - CONTINUOUS

Author stands apart from the tourist group. Tourists talk to each other. Manager goes to Author.

MANAGER

Madam! Are you Okay?

Author nods with a smile.

AUTHOR (V.O.)

All day. Beautiful, interesting of course, but I would have preferred the beach and . . .

Why do I want to find an answer to my foolish question? Our world always has something that we cannot change.

(pause)

Unexpectedly I heard a child's infectious laughter . . .

Author sees three children, ages three to seven far away behind the gas station. They are playing with sand.

AUTHOR (V.O.)

I turned around and saw three children, far from the bus, ages ranging from three to seven years.

They were sitting on the ground and playing. I looked at them and something began to happen in my heart.

The children were just playing . . .

The two younger boys took handfuls of sand and poured the sand on the ground, laughing and exulting at the appearance of smooth little sand-hills that appeared on the ground.

The eldest boy built towers from small stones, trying each time to build a bigger and bigger tower before the stones fell.

As frames of a film, my memory began to show pictures of my childhood and the childhood of my kids . . . This was a boy, older, so serious! When my oldest son was small, he was the same!

I was remembering how my sons and daughter played and their voices and loud laughter seemed to unite with the voices that I was now hearing.

“Oh! It is amazing!” I heard behind me and looked back. I wasn’t the only one looking at the children.

EXT. GAS STATION - SUNSET

Some tourists approach where Author is standing. Someone takes photos while another observes.

MAN-TOURIST and WOMAN-TOURIST go to Author. /Man-Tourist and Woman-Tourist are around seventy years old./

WOMAN-TOURIST

Oh! My grand-kids also play just like them!

Man-Tourist lifting the camera from his shoulder.

MAN-TOURIST

(thoughtfully)

All children like to play with sand and build towers.

MANAGER

(loudly)

Sorry, but it’s time for everyone to get back in the bus!

AUTHOR (V.O.)

Everyone followed the request and filed back into the bus returning to their seats.

As I started to go to the bus, I stopped before the door and looked back. I froze in surprise--

The sun was sinking behind the Mountain and abruptly the Mountain peak flashed from the last rays, dazzling gold colors.

It was incredible! I saw silhouetted against the darkening sky the magnificent contours of a mysterious Golden Palace--

MANAGER

Madam! I’m sorry. We need to go!

AUTHOR

Sorry . . .

Author approaches the door of the bus, takes the first step up into the doorway and again looks back.

EXT. FAR FROM BEHIND GAS STATION - CONTINUOUS

The boys finish playing with the sand.

AUTHOR (V.O.)

The younger boys have finished playing and were running towards the houses.

Only the eldest boy remained as he stood gazing at the top of the Mountain.

MANAGER

Madam! Please . . .

Author nods.

INT. BUS - NIGHT

AUTHOR (V.O.)

We returned to our seats and the bus began to move. The outline of mountains quickly disappeared in the advancing night.

(pause)

I looked at my reflection on the dark glass and understood something had happened.
This stop will not be just another memory.
(pause)
What I have just seen is the beginning of the next stage of my life--

INT. HOTEL. AUTHOR'S ROOM - EARLY MORNING

Author works on a laptop. HOTEL STAFF knocks on the door. /Hotel Staff is a man around forty years of age./

Author opens the door.

HOTEL STAFF

Good morning, madam! This is your breakfast!

Author nods with a smile, takes the breakfast and gives him a tip. She continues to work.

AUTHOR (V.O.)

The next day, waking up early in the morning, I opened my little laptop and began to write. I didn't know then the plot details. I just started writing what my heart wanted to say--

CLOSE ON: Author scrolls back to the first page of her manuscript and writes the title on top:

"GOLDEN PALACE, WAY OF RULER"

FADE OUT.

END OF PROLOGUE

~ ☯ ~

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

EXT. STREETS OF BIG CITY - MORNING

HIGH WIDE: Multiple tower office buildings with many cars on the road.

INT. OFFICE OF COMPANY - CONTINUOUS

Author looks out the window. COLLEAGUE comes in. /Colleague is a woman of around forty-five years./

AUTHOR (O.S)

After a few days, I returned home to my big city life and its rhythms. I already had had experiences as a writer.

At the request of my youngest son, I wrote down the fairy tales that I told my children.

After several books and plays appeared from that, but I never thought I would write something new.

COLLEAGUE

Hi! How was your trip?

AUTHOR

Wonderful! Thank you!

COLLEAGUE

What are you doing this weekend?

AUTHOR

I will write . . .

COLLEAGUE

(smiling)

Fairy tales for your grand-kids?

AUTHOR

It will be a screenplay.

COLLEAGUE

Really?! What's your screenplay about?

AUTHOR

(thoughtfully)

You know it's difficult to say . . . about life and happiness . . .

About a Golden Palace . . .

COLLEAGUE

Wow . . . So, when will you invite me to see your movie?

AUTHOR

(smiling)

I believe it will be . . .

INT. LIVING ROOM BY AUTHOR'S HOME - MORNING

Author works on her laptop. On the wall are family photos of her children and grand-kids.

AUTHOR (V.O.)

Gradually, step by step, I started to remember my life experiences and knowledge.

Different people began to appear in my life that helped me develop my characters.

(pause)

They lived and live in different countries and were from different cultures.

Their histories played a large role in what you will read on the following pages.

I am enormously grateful to them for their sincerity in sharing their childhoods, their dreams and about what was and is important in their lives.

This story is fiction, but behind each hero is a real person and a real destiny.

TIME CUT: Author reads her printed screenplay.

AUTHOR (V.O.)

As time went by, and with every page, I began to realize more and more of what I was writing.

It was an answer to the question that I asked myself as a tourist during that trip, "What is in the hearts of those who create the best in contrast to those who destroy?"

And at the same time, I also found the answer to another question, "What do we need to create in ourselves if we want to create our own happiness?"

Author looks at a large stack of printed sheets and smiles. She prints the last sheet on the printer and puts it on top.

CLOSE ON: the words on the last sheet are:

"GOLDEN PALACE, WAY OF RULER"

AUTHOR (V.O.)

My screenplay is ready . . .

And each page of this life story tells about the value that each one of us has.

EXT. BALCONY BY AUTHOR'S HOME - SUNSET

Author stands on the balcony and looks out at the sunset in the sky.

DISSOLVE TO: EXT. THE TOP OF MOUNTAIN - SUNSET

A country of the East. The top of the Mountain sparkles with golden colors in the rays of the setting sun. Ahead of the Mountain is a silhouette of a little boy around ten years old. He is staring at the Mountain's top.

A melody sounds. On screen appear the words:

"GOLDEN PALACE, WAY OF RULER"

INT. BIG ROOM BY ILMI'S FAMILY HOUSE - EARLY MORNING

/In the middle of the room there is a raised round stone fire stove with a large copper hood. There are three doors in the room: to the yard and to two

other rooms. A long low couch is under the window on the other side wall. Nearby there is a low table.

Four children sleep on the floor close to the round stone fireplace. They sleep on colorful mattresses covered by colorful blankets./

MARIAM comes into the room. She gently wakes up ILMI. He is the eldest of her four sleeping children. Ilmi wakes and sits up on his blanket.

/Mariam is Ilmi's mother. She is a large bodied woman of about thirty years. She is an emotional, very kind, and attentive woman.

Ilmi, is a boy around ten years of age. He is medium height and thin. The other children are his two younger brothers and younger sister./

MARIAM
(whispering gently)
The sun will soon be up in the sky! But you are still asleep!
Get up, son! Your father has already left for the orchard. You need to go . . .

Ilmi quickly jumps up out of his blanket.

EXT. ROAD TO ILMI'S FAMILY ORCHARD - CONTINUOUS

Ilmi runs down the dusty road. UNUS is scooping up water in a bucket from a large old barrel. The barrel is on a cart. Not far from the cart a donkey is tethered to a tree.

Ilmi sees UNUS far ahead and starts to run even faster. Unus sees Ilmi, puts the bucket on the ground and waits.

EXT. ORCHARD BY ILMI'S FAMILY - MORNING

/The orchard - a plot of land around fourteen hectares with different fruit trees. This is the property of the Ilmi's family and the main source of their income.

Unus is Ilmi's father. He is a tall, slim man and about thirty-five years old. He is kind, calm, and strong./

Ilmi greets father. Father answers him.

ILMI
(abashed)
Dad, why didn't you wake me up?

UNUS
(laughing)
I woke you, only you did not hear!

Looks at Ilmi with a smile.
Ilmi! What kind of Golden Palace did you talk about all night?

ILMI
(warily)
What are you talking about?

UNUS
About Golden Palace! Where did you see it?

Unus looks at his son, at the sky, and at the trees in the orchard.
Okay! The sun is already high. It's time for work. The trees in the orchard await us!

Ilmi quickly picks up the water bucket from the barrel and carries it to a line of young fruit trees. He bends over to every tree and talks to them. Unus stops and listens.

ILMI
This is for you! And this is for you!

UNUS
Who are you talking to, son?

Ilmi nods toward the trees.

ILMI
(embarrassed)
With them . . . They are alive.

UNUS
That's right son! They really are alive . . .

ILMI
Dad, do you know that people are talking about your secret?

UNUS
What are you talking about?

ILMI
People in the village say that you know a secret. This secret makes our orchard so beautiful and always yields a great harvest.

UNUS
(laughing)
I know three big secrets.

ILMI
Tell me what they are?

UNUS
Of course! The first secret is work.
Everything that we create is the result of work. You know that, right?

ILMI
Yes. But those who ask about your secret also work very hard . . .

UNUS
That's right. That's why we need the second secret.

ILMI
Can you tell me what it is?

UNUS
Of course. The second secret is attitude.

ILMI
What do you mean?

UNUS
Start all that you do with joy and confidence!
Success comes to everyone who loves and believes in what he is doing.

ILMI
(sighing)
Even if I have to get up so early! Oh!

UNUS
(laughing)
Oh yeah! It's sometimes very difficult. But you know the wonderful fruits we've grown in our orchard for three generations.
Our fruits are known throughout the district.

ILMI
Yes! It is true. That's why a lot of people ask about your secret.

UNUS
The first two secrets you know. The third secret you also know.

ILMI
I don't know . . .

UNUS
You talked with our trees. The trees are alive and the whole world around us is alive.

ILMI
(muttering)
Of course . . . And butterflies, and birds . . .
Mountain . . .

Dad! Grandpa says, everyone on Earth has his own language: the trees, birds, mountains. We just don't understand them.
Tell me, why don't we understand each other?

UNUS
To understand each other everyone just needs to open their heart.

ILMI
How?

UNUS
I'll tell you later. You need to rest now.
The water barrel empties so quickly and you will need to go to the river soon.

Unus puts his hands on Ilmi's shoulders.

UNUS

Well, son! I'll water the trees while you're resting. Then you go to the river and fill the barrel. Okay?

EXT. UNDER THE TREE IN THE ORCHARD - BEFORE NOON

Ilmi lies down on the ground in the shade of a tree. He looks to the top of the Mountain through his eyelashes.

The rays of the sun begin to play with all the colors of the rainbow. Ilmi dreams of the Golden Palace and begins to talk to the Mountain.

ILMI

You're very tall!

I wonder . . . has anyone managed to climb to your top?

In the evening I will again see my Golden Palace on your top . . .

When I climb to your top, I will open a huge golden gate and see the amazing golden halls.

Ilmi falls asleep. Unus approaches Ilmi, waking him up with a laugh.

UNUS

Hey, son, sleeping again? It's time to go to the river for water!

Ilmi jumps to his feet.

ILMI

(confusedly)

I just . . .

UNUS

It's good that you fell asleep. You are now well rested!

ILMI

I am ready to go!

UNUS

Good! When young trees have water, they can grow and will give us a big harvest!

But if we don't help them now, we won't have a good harvest.

ILMI

I remember Grandma telling me about the famine. It was scary!

UNUS

Yes it was, son.

ILMI

Grandfather says that our Earth is very rich. But . . . Dad, if our Earth is rich, why are people hungry and unhappy?

Unus is silent, then finally responds.

UNUS

(thoughtfully)

You are asking a difficult question, son . . .

ILMI

Teacher at school also says that.

(pause)

Why is it impossible to make everyone on Earth rich and happy?

UNUS

Because everyone sees the world in their own way.

ILMI

I don't understand . . .

UNUS

While some see the light side of our world, others see its dark side.

ILMI

I still don't understand . . . Dad . . .

What do you mean by light and dark?

UNUS

Light side has love and happiness while the dark side is its opposite . . . Hatred and unhappiness.

ILMI

Dad! Why do some people see the light but others only see dark?

UNUS

Because everyone has the right to choose their own life.

ILMI

Dad, why would anyone choose to see the dark side?

Wouldn't everyone want to see happiness and love ?

UNUS

O my son! You ask such difficult questions!

UNUS

(laughing)

Are you only ten years old?!

ILMI

(grumbly)

So what if I'm ten years old! I'm already big .

UNUS

Of course you're big. And you are my chief assistant! Look!

The sun is already high in the sky. Time for water!

We need to water the rest of our trees before the sun goes down.

ILMI

I will be fast!

Ilmi quickly harnesses the donkey onto the wooden cart. The donkey doesn't look happy because the day is hot and the road to the river is long.

EXT. ROAD TO THE MOUNTAIN - NOON

Ilmi walks beside the donkey holding his reins. The donkey pulls the cart with the empty barrel. Wheels bounce on the rocks in the road and the cart squeals loudly. The donkey, from time to time, stops.

ILMI

Let's go! You know . . . We need to help our orchard! Let's go, please!

To the left, the Mountain river appears. Ilmi turns the donkey and they all go down towards the river bank.

The river bank is steep and there is only one place where there is a small flat beach.

EXT. MOUNTAIN RIVER - NOON

Ilmi unharnesses the donkey from the wooden cart. He goes into the water and begins to drink greedily, snorting and scattering drops all around.

He splashes water on the donkey. In response, the donkey gently pushes Ilmi with his forehead. Ilmi falls into the water.

He doesn't notice the very cold water. He scoops water in the palm of his hand and throws it up into the air and laughs. Drops of water sparkle with all the colors of the rainbow.

Ilmi feels someone is staring at him. He turns around and sees a big White Eagle. He sits on a large rock in the middle of the river.

IMLI

(admiringly, whispering)

Wow . . . White Eagle . . .

Hello! You are so beautiful!

I know your wings are so big and strong . . .

And you can fly to the top of the Mountain.

I also want to go there.

Do you know about Golden Palace? If you know tell me please how to get there?

I need to know. I need to be there . . .

White Eagle looks at the Mountain for a long time and then again stares back at Ilmi. Then, White Eagle sharply flaps his wings and flies away.

Ilmi watches as White Eagle rises into the sky. Then he remembers his work and that he needs to get back soon.

He quickly fills the barrel with water, harnesses the donkey and starts back to the orchard.

INTERCUT BETWEEN: EXT. NARROW GORGE - NOON

The little old hut stands in a narrow gorge, near the Mountain river. Here, there is almost no light.

INT. OLD SMALL HUT - CONTINUOUS

ABIR stands in the middle of the hut. /ABIR is a woman about forty-five years old. She is medium height, thin build, with big eyes and long dark hair. Her face is very beautiful but unkind./

Abir takes a canvas sack in her hands. Pausing, she takes a copper pounder for grinding seeds, from the shelf and puts it in the sack. Abir goes to a copper pot, suspended on a chain above the hearth, and strokes the pot handle. Her hand is covered with soot. Abir laughs sarcastically.

ABIR
Dirty girl . . .

ABIR'S MEMORIES: EXT. MOUNTAIN RIVER - NOON

LITTLE GIRL (Abir) admires the reflection of the sun on the water. She starts playing with the water, throwing up water droplets.

The droplets sparkle in the rays of the sun that is shining between the rocks. Little Girl forgets about time. She feels the blow of a stick on her shoulder, shudders and turns around to see OLD WITCH.

/Little Girl (Abir) is a thin small girl of about ten years. She has big eyes and long dark hair. Her clothes are dirty. She is very scared.

Old Witch is a hunchbacked scary old woman with gray dirty hair. Her clothes are dirty and old. She has a yellow wrinkled face and evil black eyes./

OLD WITCH
Did you forget what you had to do?

LITTLE GIRL (ABIR)
(scared)
I did everything you said.

OLD WITCH
No! You forgot to clean the cauldron above the hearth . . .

Scared, Little Girl stumbles and runs into the hut. She comes out of the hut with a cauldron in her arms.

She is waiting for Old Witch to go to her. Old Witch slides her finger along the side of the boiler and then runs a finger across the face of Little Girl.

LITTLE GIRL (ABIR)
(horrified)
No!

OLD WITCH
(enjoying)
Yes! Dirty girl . . .

Old Witch laughs loudly. Little Girl cries and runs to the river in fright.

Little Girl continues to cry while cleaning the cauldron. The cauldron starts to shine brightly in the sun. She turns the cauldron in the sun which reflects a sun bunny on the rocks.

Little Girl sees this and smiles through her tears. Grasping a new handful of sand from the river bank she continues to clean the cauldron.

PRESENT TIME: INT. OLD SMALL HUT - NOON

Abir takes her sack and leaves the hut. She walks along a narrow, barely noticeable path. At the end of the path, she goes out onto the road and sees in the distance a donkey pulling a cart with water and Ilmi's figure. She watches him steadfastly as she walks down the road.

ABIR
(smiling)
Yes . . . I am dirty and dark. And I can create dark life . . .

She laughs hysterically.

ABIR
I can . . .
I can create a lot! And I will make it for you . . .

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE



ACT TWO

FADE IN:

EXT. ORCHARD BY ILMI'S FAMILY - AFTERNOON

Unus meets his son at the edge of the orchard.

UNUS
(smiling)
Oh! Ilmi! The Mountain moves faster! It's time
for dinner!

Ilmi unharnesses the donkey and takes him to the shade of a tree.

The father takes out bread and vegetables from his basket and neatly
places the food on a white towel on the ground. They eat, slowly
watching, as clouds float across the sky. Ilmi questions aloud.

ILMI
Dad . . . Interesting. Where do the clouds go?

He sings and looks up.
The clouds are wonderful. They visit many
places and see many things.

UNUS
(smiling)
Do you want to follow them?

ILMI
Yes! I want to see our Earth . . . Grandfather
says that our Earth is big and very beautiful!

UNUS
If you want this, then you can do it.

ILMI
I want . . . And I want to jump on the clouds.
They're so fluffy! So, can I do this too?

UNUS
(laughing)
Ilmi, again you ask your difficult questions!

ILMI
Why?

UNUS
Because I don't know how you can do it.
But if you want, then you can do it! And now
son, it's time to work again.

Unus rises and goes to give water to the donkey.

ILMI
Thank you, Dad!

Ilmi again carries the water to the young trees. He stops, looks at the
Mountain and talks out loud.

I do not know how I will get to my Golden
Palace at your top, but I know that I will . . .

Ilmi continues to carry water to the young trees.

TIME CUT: the evening comes. The sky is getting darker. The last rays of the
sun touch the top of the Mountain, revealing the first outlines of the Palace.
One, two, three. Step by step one by one, appear the seven cupolas in the
evening's dark blue sky.

Ilmi stops and holds his breath, looks at the miracle that is happening before
his eyes. Golden Palace is visible higher in the sky gaining more brightness.

The seven golden domes start to shine brighter and become even more
clearly visible in the darkening sky. And then, finally, the whole Palace
flashes a blinding golden color in the dark blue sky and after a few moments
disappears with the last rays of the sun. Ilmi looks up into the sky.

ILMI
(whispering)
Golden Palace . . .
I'll be there!

Unus pours the last of the water from the barrel into the bucket and gives it
to the donkey. He calls Ilmi.

UNUS

Ilmi, it's time to go home!

He listens attentively.

H-mm . . . Today it's very quiet. The birds aren't singing. Strange--

EXT. ROAD TO ILMI'S FAMILY HOUSE - EARLY EVENING

Unus and Ilmi are walking down the road. The donkey ambles beside them. Ilmi becomes tired and starts to walk more slowly. Unus notices this.

UNUS

Ilmi, can you help me?

ILMI

Yes of course, Dad! What do I need to do?

UNUS

(smiling)

Please, sit on the donkey and take these tools in your hands. I hope it won't be too difficult for our donkey.

The donkey suddenly stops in the middle of the road. Unus laughs and gives Ilmi the bag with tools.

Look! The donkey is waiting for you!

Ilmi climbs up on the donkey and takes the bag of tools. The donkey slowly walks along the road. Ilmi, hugging the donkey's warm neck, falls asleep.

EXT. YARD OF ILMI'S FAMILY HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

/The yard around Ilmi's house is large. It is fenced on all sides. There is a big gate. Several trees grow around the house. In the courtyard, there is a stove under a cane roof where Mariam usually bakes bread.

Nearby there is a low table with many colorful pillows. Near the house, there is a well with water. In the yard, away from the house, there is a paddock for sheep and horse.

Ilmi's family house isn't so big. Including the other rooms in the house, there is a dining room, grandfather's room, and a big room where the children sleep./

Unus, and Ilmi sleeping on the donkey, enter the courtyard of their house. The donkey stops abruptly beside the porch and Ilmi falls from the donkey to the ground. He gets up from the ground and wipes his sleepy eyes.

Ilmi's two younger brothers and sister: AMIR, BAHT, and YASIRA run out on the porch. They greet each other. At the same moment, Ilmi falls to the ground and his brothers and sister laugh.

/Amir is a tall boy about eight years old. He is very active. Baht is a small, skinny boy about five years. He is very quiet. Yasira is a small girl of about seven years. She has two long braids and is a very active girl./

AMIR

Look, our Ilmi fell asleep! Probably, the donkey helped him!

The donkey told him a bedtime fairy tale!

Baht repeating.

BAHT

Yes! Yes! Told a story!

YASIRA

About the palace whose walls are golden!

UNUS

Enough! Amir and Baht! Go and give our donkey water and grass.

Yasira! Tell your mother we're back.

Unus turns to Ilmi.

UNUS

Ilmi! Let's go to Grandfather Iqram and tell him how our day went.

INT. GRANDFATHER'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

GRANDFATHER ICRAM sits on the couch. /Grandfather Iqram is a tall old man with gray hair and big wise eyes. He has around sixty-five years.

His room has a low couch with colorful pillows, a low table with an old lamp radiating a soft light and an old chair near the window./

Grandfather Iqram sits on the couch, covering his eyes, leaning on the pillows. Unus and Ilmi come in and greet him respectfully. Grandfather Iqram answers with a smile.

ICRAM

Good evening! How was your day? How are the new trees doing?

UNUS

All is well, Father!

We finished all the work that we needed to do: trimmed the branches from the old trees, dug up the ground, and gave two buckets of water to each of the new trees--

Iqram again closes his eyes, it seems that he has fallen asleep.

ILMI

(whisper)

Dad, Grandfather can't hear us!

UNUS

He hears us...

Iqram smiles and opens his eyes.

ICRAM

Unus, what about the Old Apple Tree at the foot of the Mountain?

(pause)

How is this tree?

UNUS

O-o! This apple tree surprises the whole orchard!

ICRAM

This is the tree your mother Safa loved very much.

UNUS

You know . . . I wanted to plant a young apple tree in this place, but that Old Apple Tree blossomed so beautifully in the spring! It is amazing! So I couldn't do it.

ICRAM

Very good. Don't bother her. She wants to give all that she has--

ILMI

Grandfather, what does that mean?

ICRAM

She feels that her spring has come.

ILMI

Can she feel because she's alive?

ICRAM

Yes. Everyone who lives on Earth can feel.

ILMI

And why does the Old Apple Tree want to give us everything that she has?

ICRAM

Trees don't know any other way.

ILMI

Grandfather, what do you mean?

ICRAM

Trees give to others and never ask for anything in return.

ILMI

Why?

ICRAM

Because trees love us . . .

ILMI

Can we love as trees?

ICRAM

We are learning to love . . .

ILMI

Why do we need to learn?
We are also alive!

UNUS

(laughing)

Father, our Ilmi asks many questions that I am now having trouble answering!

(smiling)

That is very good, Ilmi. If you have questions, you always find answers.

ILMI

Grandfather, I have another question. Can I ask you?

ICRAM

(smiling)

It looks like you have many such questions. Yes, Ilmi, ask!

ILMI

Grandfather . . . Why aren't all people on Earth happy?

Unus and Icrum are silent. Icrum covers his eyes.

Unus rises from the couch and takes Ilmi's hand.

UNUS

(whispering)

Your Grandfather needs to rest.

Icrum opens his eyes and smiles.

ICRAM

I will answer your question a little later, Ilmi.

ILMI

Thank you Grandfather!

Unus and Ilmi greet grandfather Icrum and quietly leave the room.

INT. DINING ROOM IN ILMI'S FAMILY HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Behind a large low table Unus, Mariam, Ilmi, Amir, Baht and Yasira are sitting on pillows. On the table are bread, vegetables, milk, and cheese.

MARIAM

(quietly)

Unus, I prepared all that Father Icrum wants and will bring it to him . . . Today he feels much better but he wants to spend a few more days in his room . . .

Unus nods. Unus nods again and sits in silence for a time. Then, everyone at the table gives thanks for the day, for having a warm house, food, for those who love them and who they love. The younger brothers Amir, Baht and sister Yasira furtively glance among themselves.

Unus and Mariam hear grandfather's quiet voice and go to him.

Yasira looks sideways at Amir and Baht, then looks cautiously at Ilmi.

YASIRA

And . . . Today I also saw Golden Palace!

Ilmi abruptly stops eating.

ILMI

Which Palace?

YASIRA

Which Palace? Mine of course! My Palace is very beautiful! And it is located on the top of the Mountain!

ILMI

(whisper)

Why is it yours?

YASIRA

(loudly)

Because I saw it, so it is mine!

ILMI

No it's mine!

YASIRA

No! It's mine! Prove that it is yours!

ILMI

I saw the Palace first! So it is mine!

YASIRA

No! It is not yours! You were not there!

ILMI

I was working!

YASIRA

So what! You helped ad, but I helped Mom!

ILMI

(stubbornly)

It is my Palace!

AMIR

How can you prove it? Tell us about your Palace!

Ilmi is silent, glancing at his younger brothers and sister, and then he begins to speak. At first, he is quiet, and then he speaks with more and more intensity. His brothers and sister listen with bated breath. Their older brother's story is transfixing.

ILMI

I see my Palace every evening!
When the sun wants to sleep and goes behind
the Mountain.

Golden Palace appears at the very top very
quickly and disappears just as quickly.

BAHT

Wow . . .

ILMI

You know . . . It is amazing! It shines a lot of
golden rays in the sky!

AMIR

Can I . . .

Yasira sharply breaks off the conversation.

YASIRA

You can't! This is not true! Don't believe him!

She turns to Ilmi.

YASIRA

You talked about Golden Palace at night in
a dream. I woke up and heard everything.

Today I looked for it on the Mountain
the whole evening . . .

There was no Palace!

ILMI

(whispering)

I know that my Palace is on top of the
Mountain and I will be there!

Ilmi jumps up from the table and runs out of the room.

Amir, Baht and Yasira sit silently at the table. They don't want to eat
anymore. Yasira begins to justify herself.

YASIRA

I really didn't see a Palace! I don't believe it!

AMIR

Why did you lie?

Yasira takes offense, ready to cry.

YASIRA

Why did he talk all night about it!

AMIR

Why did you listen? What do you want?
This was his dream, not yours!

YASIRA

There isn't a Palace!

Voices are getting louder.

The parents, Unus and Mariam return to the room.

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT TWO



ACT THREE

FADE IN:

INT. DINING ROOM IN ILMI'S FAMILY HOUSE - EVENING

UNUS
(strictly)
Don't make noise at the table!
And where is Ilmi? Why isn't he with you?

YASIRA
(looking away)
He . . . he's gone.

Unus looks at her intently.

UNUS
(strictly)
Go and call him!

Yasira guiltily lowers her head and leaves the room to fetch Ilmi from outside.

EXT. YARD - CONTINUOUS

Yasira descends from the steps and gazes into the dark for a long time. Finally she sees Ilmi. He is sitting next to the donkey and is quietly speaking to him. The donkey is slowly chewing on grass.

Yasira comes and sits next to him.

YASIRA
Let's go eat! Dad is calling!

Ilmi is silent. Yasira is also silent, then begins to speak quietly.
You . . . Don't be angry with me . . .
I won't go to your Palace.
(pause)

I didn't see it. Really . . .
This Palace is yours!
Let's go back to the house, please--

Ilmi nods silently and walks back into the house with Yasira.

INT. BIG ROOM IN ILMI'S FAMILY HOUSE - LATE EVENING

Mariam and Yasira quickly spread out on the floor a colorful mattress and sheep's wool blankets made by mother and grandmother.

Amir and Baht help them and quietly argue among themselves while choosing places to sleep.

Unus closes the metal door of the round stone fireplace. Ilmi stands nearby.

UNUS
Good! Now it will be warm at night.

MARIAM
Time to sleep. Good night!

The children greet their parents. Unus and Mariam leave the room.

Ilmi locates himself closest to the round stone fireplace. He lies under his blanket and stares at the fire. Fanciful shadows are reflected on the walls from the flickering flames.

Grandfather Iqram slowly enters into the room supported by Mariam. The children greet him.

AMIR, BAHT
(whispering)
Grandpa feels better and comes to us!

YASIRA
Today Grandpa will tell us another fairy tale!

MARIAM
Quiet! Don't make noise!
Grandfather is tired.
I asked him to go to bed, but he said he wanted to tell a story about Ilmi's question.

Grandfather Iqram smiles and slowly walks to the couch. Mariam helps him to sit on the couch. After surrounding him with pillows, she leaves the room.

BAHT
Grandpa, will you tell us a new story today?

ICRAM
(smiling)
Of course!

AMIR
(carefully)
Grandpa, have you heard about Golden Palace?

ICRAM
Of course!

YASIRA
Grandpa . . . Golden Palace is real?

Silence spreads through the room. Only the crackle of firewood from the fireplace can be heard.

CLOSE ON: firewood burns in the round stone fireplace.

ILMI
(whispering)
Grandfather, please tell . . .

Iqram remains silent for a while staring at the flickering flames in the fire pit, and then begins his story.

ICRAM
Once upon a time, there lived a man who dreamed of going to mysterious Golden Palace . . .
He saw this Palace every evening in the rays of the setting sun on top of the Mountain . . .
The man had been searching for Golden Palace for a long time. When he finally saw his Way to this Palace, he understood that this Way was going to be very difficult . . .

The children listen wide-eyed and in complete silence.

CLOSE ON: shadows from the flame flicker on the wall. Ilmi looks at these shadows and sees in them the reflection of the Mountain and the man.

AMIR
(whispering)
Grandpa . . . Why did he want to find this Palace?

ICRAM
He wanted to become Ruler!

BAHT
What is Ruler, Grandpa?

YASIRA
How do you not know?! Ruler, this is the one who can do anything!

BAHT
How should I know?! I don't . . .

The children begin to grumble at each other. Mariam enters the room.

MARIAM
(indignantly)
Is that how you listen to Grandfather?!
What is with you all today? I just don't know!

YASIRA, BAHT
(guilty)
Sorry we . . . We just . . .
Forgive us, Grandpa . . .

ICRAM
(smiles)
It's all right, you just need to learn how to listen . . .
Then you will understand more.

It gets quiet.

ILMI
(whispering)
Grandpa, and this man became Ruler?

ICRAM

This I will tell you next time! And now it's
really time for sleep! Goodnight!

Mariam helps grandfather Icrum to get up from the couch.

MARIAM

Didn't you hear what Grandfather said?
It's time to sleep!
Goodnight!

Children greet grandfather and mother.

Mariam extinguishes the lamp. She and Grandpa Icrum leave the room. It becomes quiet. The firewood in the fireplace burns down and the shadows on the wall from the flames disappear.

Ilmi lies under a blanket and imagines that he sees himself in the story of his grandfather. Suddenly he exclaims loudly.

ILMI

I'll be there!

Amir peeps out from under the blanket.

AMIR

Hey, Ilmi! What are you talking about?

Ilmi doesn't answer.

EXT. MOUNTAIN - SUNRISE

HIDE WIDE: the Mountain, White Eagle in the sky, the river, the orchard, the Old Apple Tree, Ilmi's family house.

The village, where Ilmi's family lives, is in a valley. Shepherds drive their sheep to the Far Pasture.

CLOSE ON: leaves, the grass, flowers, a butterfly.

EXT. THE YARD - CONTINUOUS

Mariam bakes bread outside in the oven under the cane canopy.

Icrum is sitting on the porch. Unus is repairing the horse cart.

Mariam stops and points to the rising sun.

MARIAM

(smiling)

It is wonderful!

Unus and Icrum both nod and smile.

INT. BIG ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The sun's rays fall through the windows in the room and illuminate the faces of sleeping children.

Yasira wakes up first and cautiously peeps out from under her blanket. She throws off her blanket, jumps up and runs out of the room. Soon she returns.

YASIRA

Mommy bakes bread! Hey! I am the first to see
Mom's bread!

Amir and Baht wake up together and jump out from under their blankets to run outdoor. Only Ilmi continues to lie under his blanket. Yasira comes to him.

YASIRA

Ilmi! Hey! Wake up! We have Mom's hot bread
today!

Yasira pulls the edge of the blanket. Instead of Ilmi under the blanket, she sees only a pillow and a rug. Ilmi isn't anywhere . . .

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT THREE

END OF EPISODE 1

EPISODE 2

"TORNADO"

