

Stories from the Cultural Awareness Team

Tenderness is True Wealth

by Nada Al Rayash

Once there was an elderly man who lived in a small, dilapidated old house with his only son. The son was very sick and the treatment for his illness was very expensive.

One glorious morning as the earth was basking in golden sunshine, the poor man started his daily task of collecting empty water bottles, which he would clean and fill with cool fresh water. He would then walk around the streets in hope of selling some of them to get the money needed to treat his sick son.

Under the hot rays of the sun, as the old man dragged his aching tired feet, gloomily watching the parents playing with their children, he thought sadly of his sick son lying on a broken bed and eating scraps of food discarded on the ground. The man then started moaning, envisioning his sick son getting worse and worse and made a promise to himself that he would save his son, even if it would cost him his own life.

As the man was out selling his water bottles, a little girl was running heedlessly around in the streets without caring about what might happen to her. Suddenly the old man saw a truck heading down the road, speeding towards the child. Without hesitation, the man threw down the bag containing his bottles and the day's much needed earnings for his son's treatment. He ran to the child to save her from being hit by the truck. He quickly pushed the girl to the other side of the road where there were no cars or trucks. The poor man fell to the ground as the truck hit him, causing an injury to his right leg. He then started stumbling towards the crying shaken little girl, scooped her into his arms and tried to comfort her as if she were his son.

The old man smiled at the little girl, hiding the sorrow in his heart. He then remembered his bag, the water, and the money needed for his son's treatment. He clutched the girl and started limping anxiously as fast as he could towards his bag, his heart pounding as if his heartbeats were also racing against time. The poor man reached the other side only to realize that his bag had been stolen; it had disappeared without a trace. He started crying out and weeping bitterly, flailing himself and tearing at his hair as he remembered his sick son.

All his sorrow was consumed in wails and tears as the girl looked on in astonishment. He had risked his son's health to save a life of a girl he had no responsibility for. Claspings the girl's hand, the man kept his head down out of fear that others would see his weakness.

Just then the girl's parents came running towards them; they embraced their daughter tearfully with loud cries. He watched them with a sad smile. The girls' parents asked the old man to explain what had happened; he told them how the girl had been playing in the path of the truck so he had run across the road to rescue her. The girl's mother started to cry.

The father embraced the old man, thanking him and saying: "You have saved my daughter's life, and this is a big favor; in order to repay you I will treat your leg for free". The old man was very happy to learn that the little girl's father was a successful and well-known surgeon so he replied: "If you really want to thank me, and then please treat my ill son, you will be saving two lives and I will never forget your great kindness."

The doctor gladly accepted and started treatment sessions for the old man's sick son; these continued until he had recovered completely. The son grew up. He attended school, went on to become a successful and well-educated man, and he recompensed his father for all the hardship he had gone through for his sake. Together they left all their sorrows behind and lived a happy life.

These stories were written by FP students and edited by FPDE teachers. The team is now recruiting illustrators for a book that has 20 stories. All stories were written by FP students and now we want FP students to illustrate them. If you can draw high quality illustrations this semester, please join the Cultural Awareness Team by sending your complete name, QU ID number, and QU email address to Mondher (mchaabane@qu.edu.qa), Randy (rbriones@qu.edu.qa) or Charles (cfullerton@qu.edu.qa).

We hope to publish our book of Qatari stories in 2018 with FP stories and illustrations!