

 *The Dance of* 

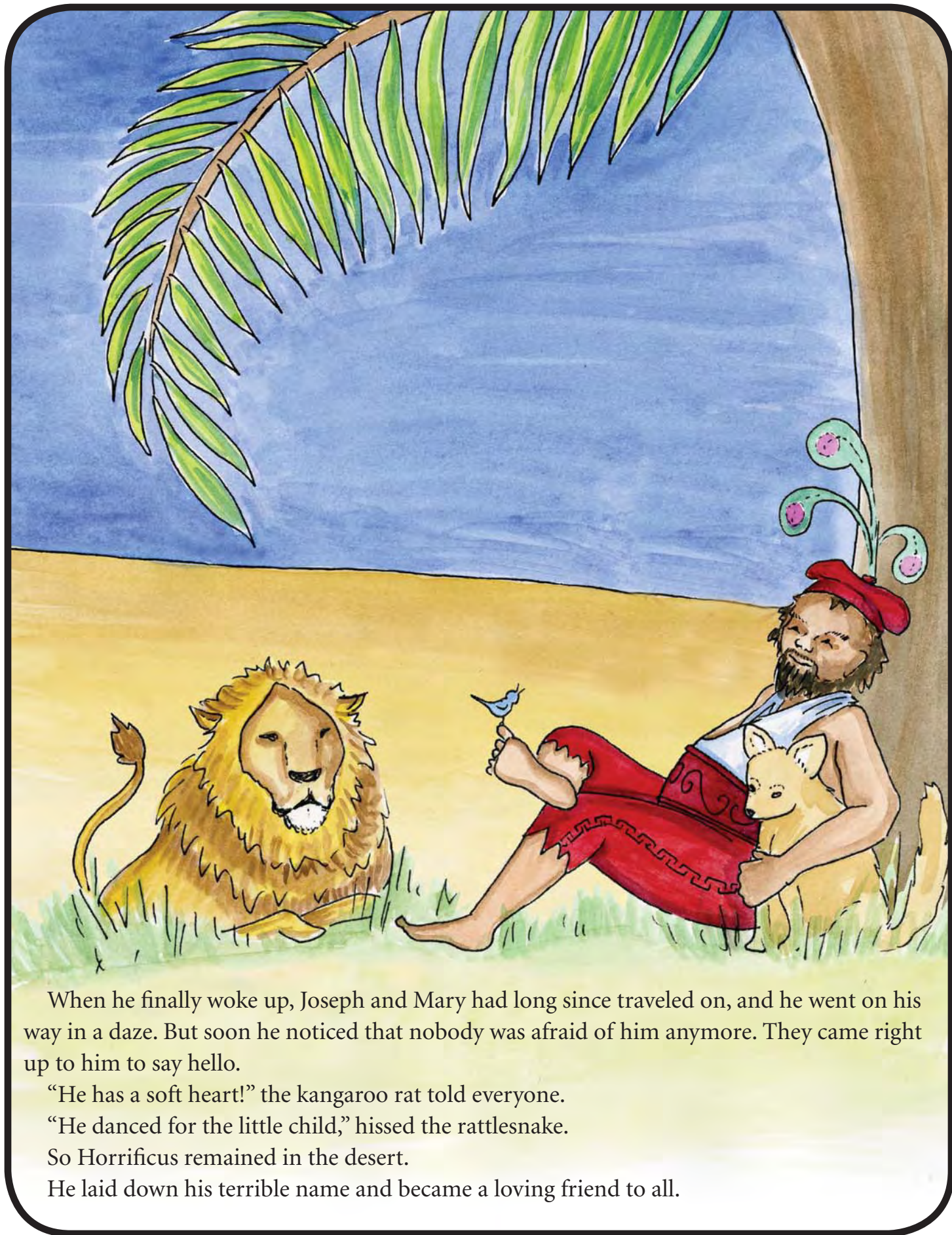


Robber
Horrificus

“Der Tanz des Räubers Horrificus” From Und es begab sich...
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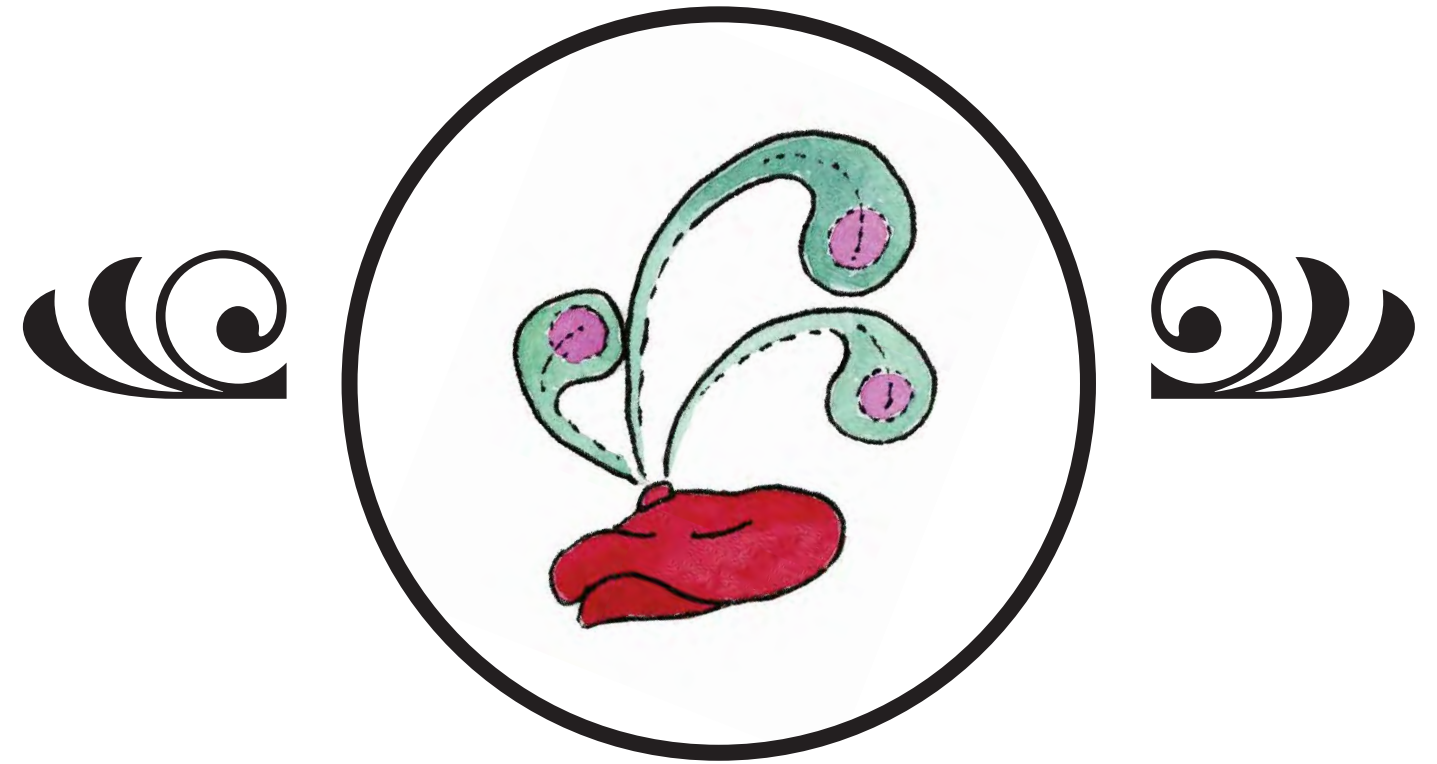
When he finally woke up, Joseph and Mary had long since traveled on, and he went on his way in a daze. But soon he noticed that nobody was afraid of him anymore. They came right up to him to say hello.

“He has a soft heart!” the kangaroo rat told everyone.

“He danced for the little child,” hissed the rattlesnake.

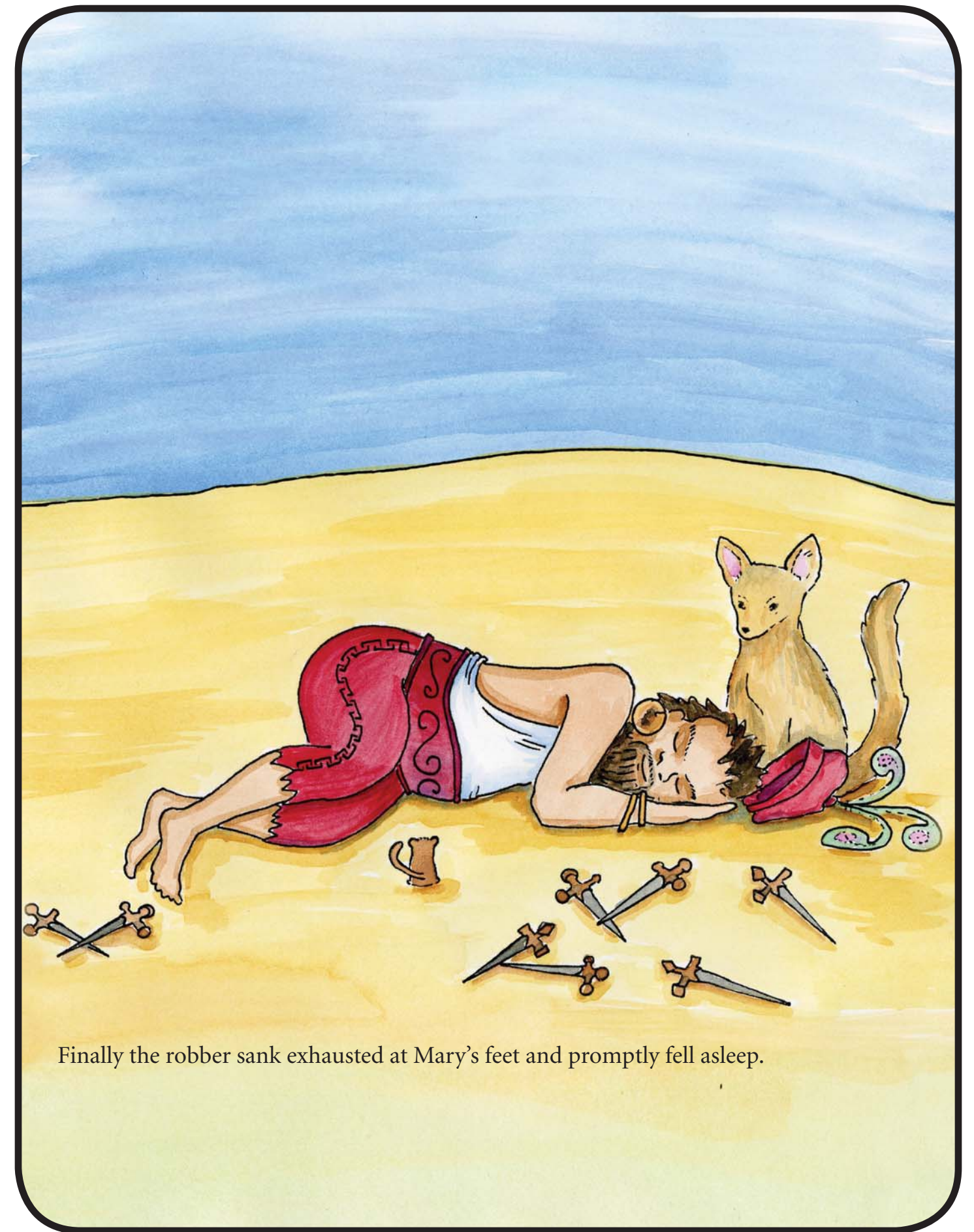
So Horrificus remained in the desert.

He laid down his terrible name and became a loving friend to all.

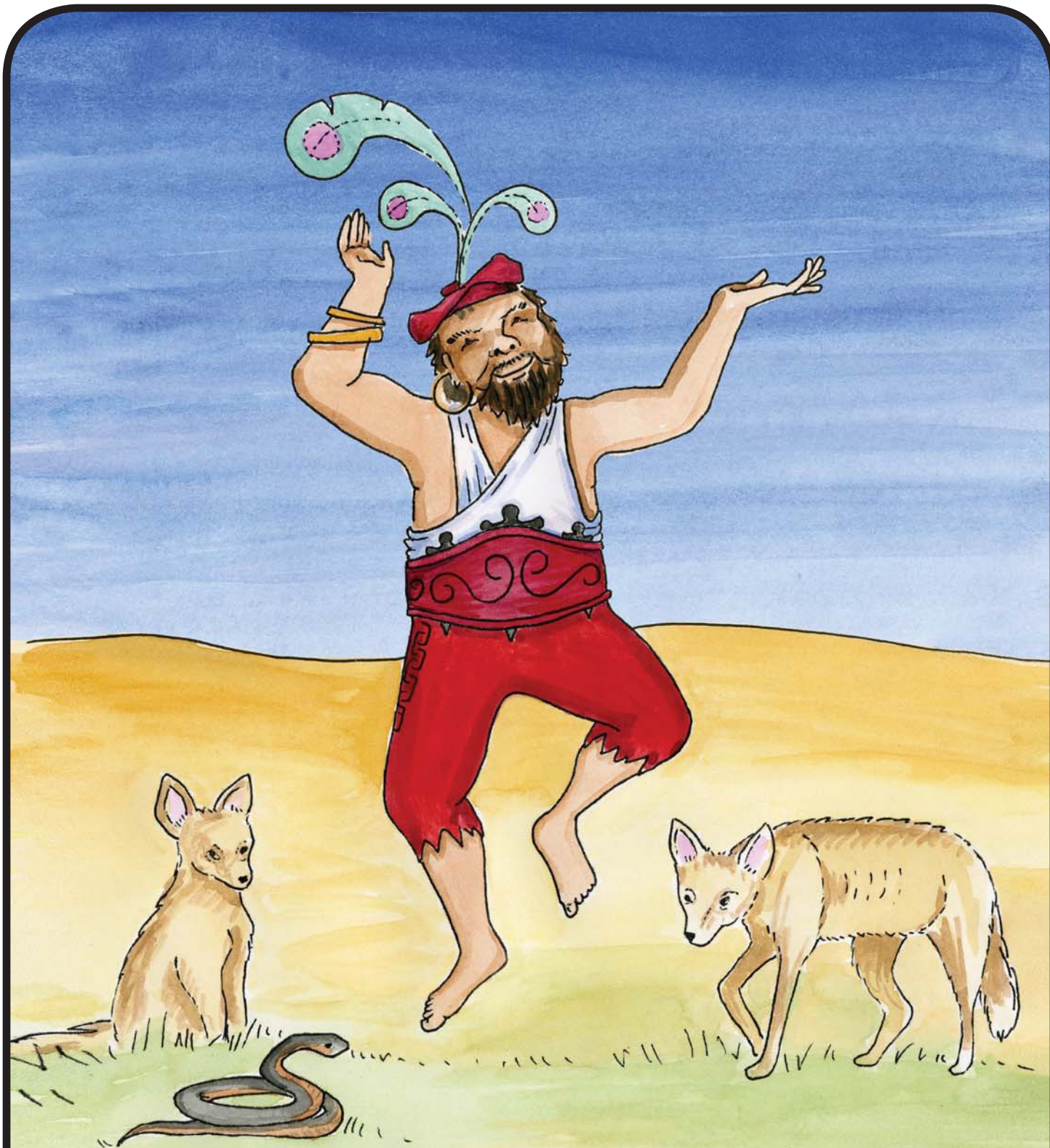


story by
Karl Heinrich Waggenerl

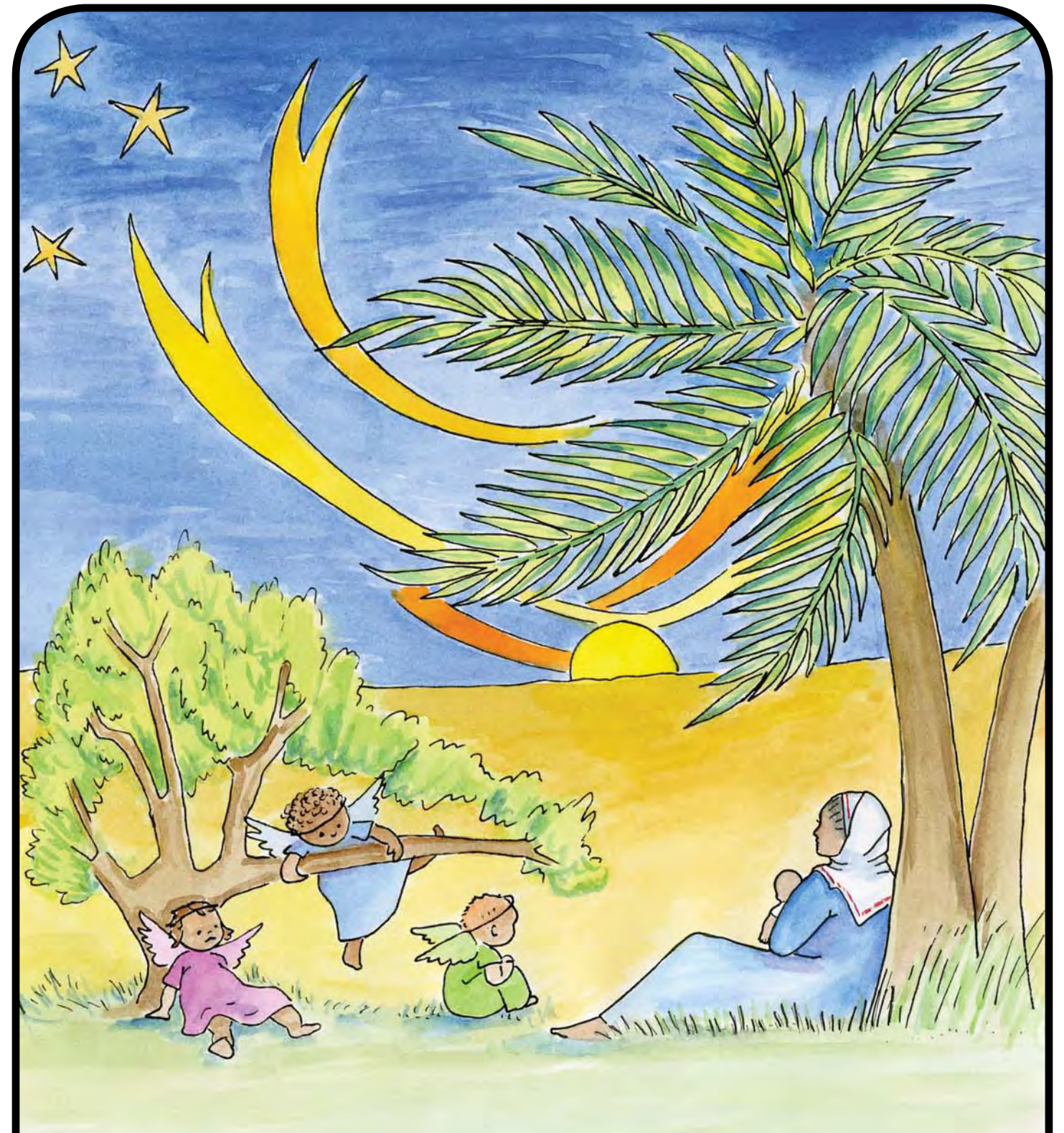
illustrations by Matina Horning



Finally the robber sank exhausted at Mary's feet and promptly fell asleep.

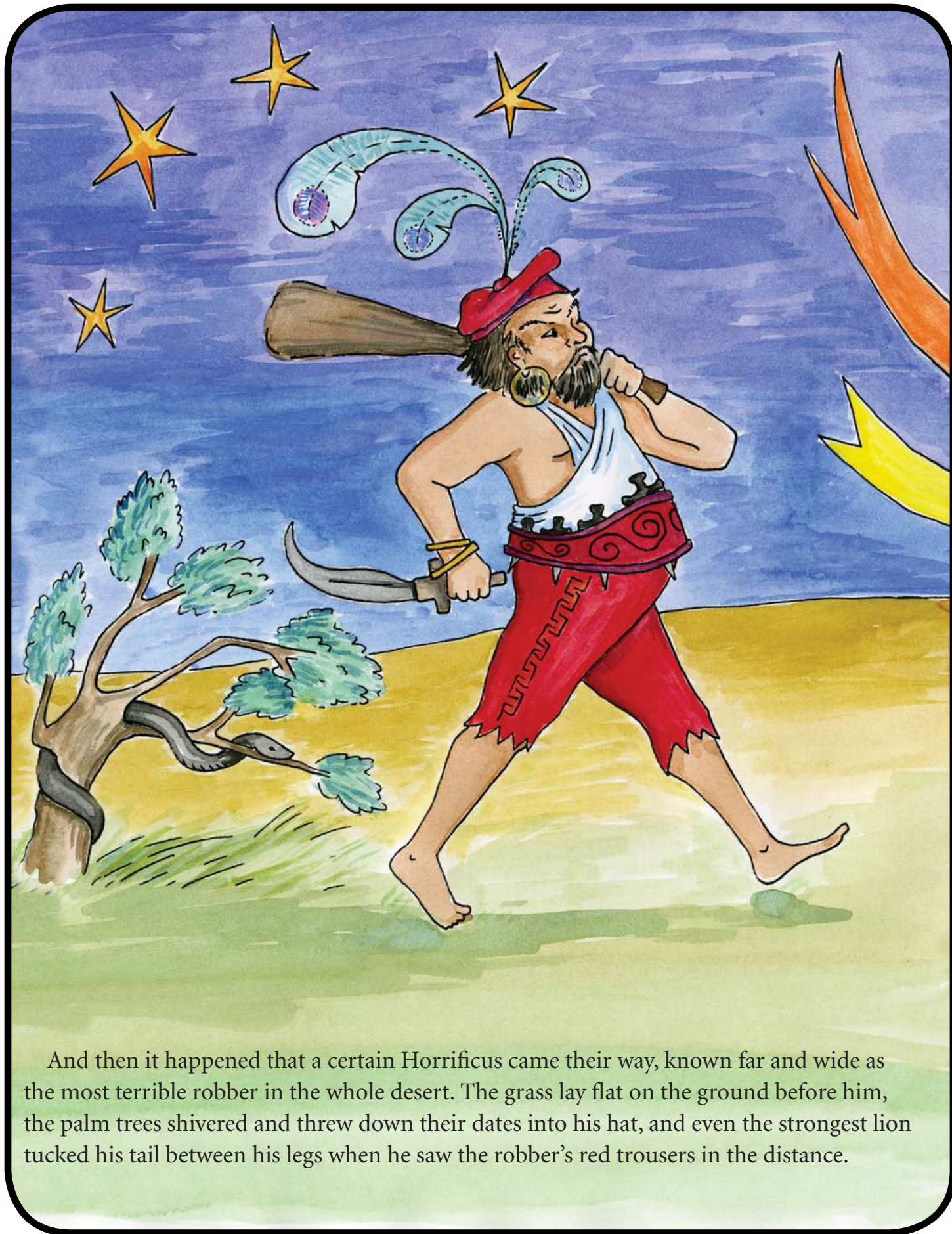


So skillfully the robber danced, so magnificent was he to watch with his earrings, his embroidered belt and the beautiful feathers in his hat, that Mother Mary's eyes began to shine. Even the animals from the desert came creeping up to see. The kingly rattlesnake, the kangaroo rat, and the jackal all stood around in a circle and beat out the rhythm on the sand with their tails.

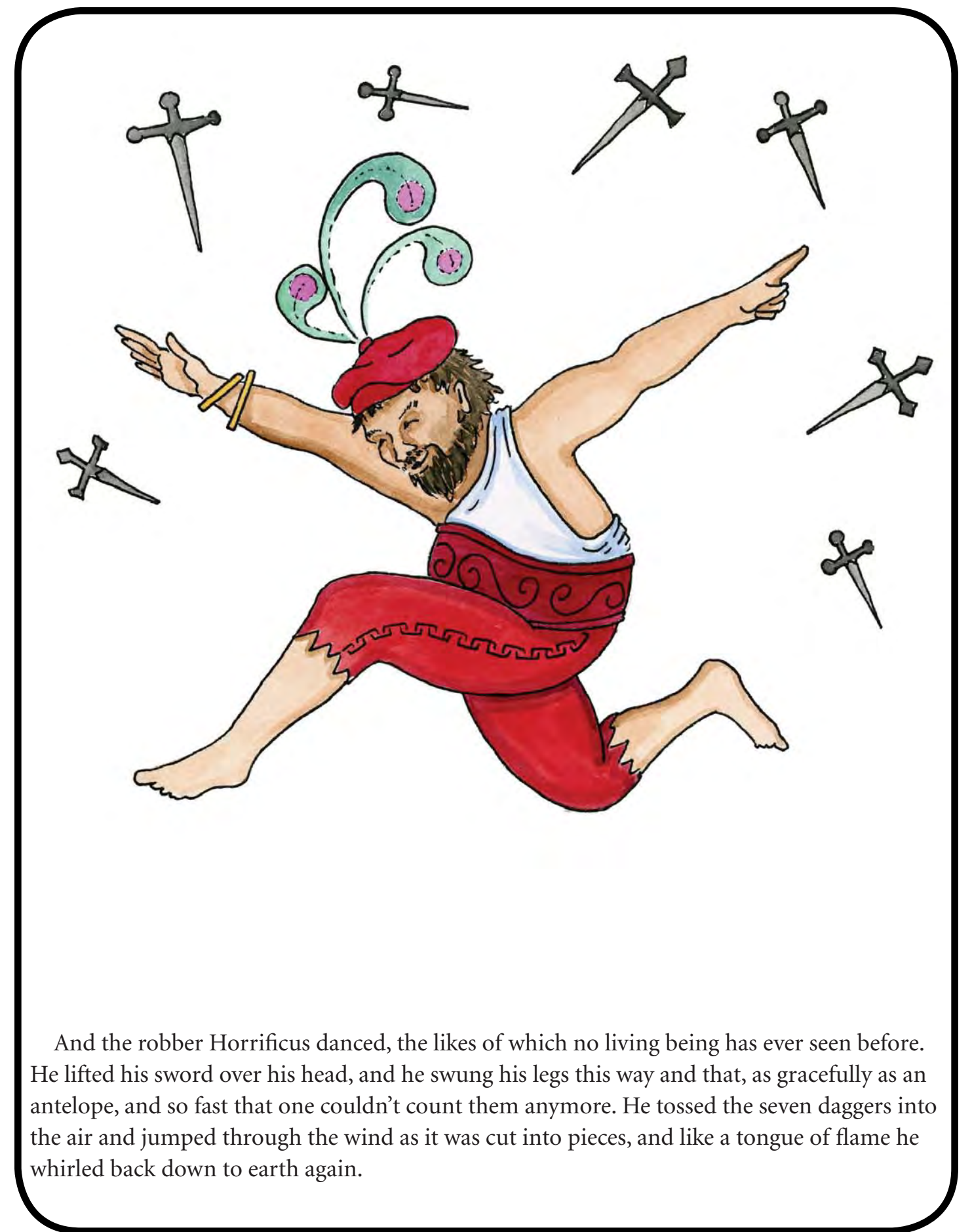


Towards evening, after having rested well, Joseph and Mary wanted to travel on to Egypt. But Joseph took the donkey and rode on ahead over a little hill to inquire about the way. "It can't be far to Egypt now," he thought.

In the meantime, Mary waited under a group of palm trees, with the child on her lap.



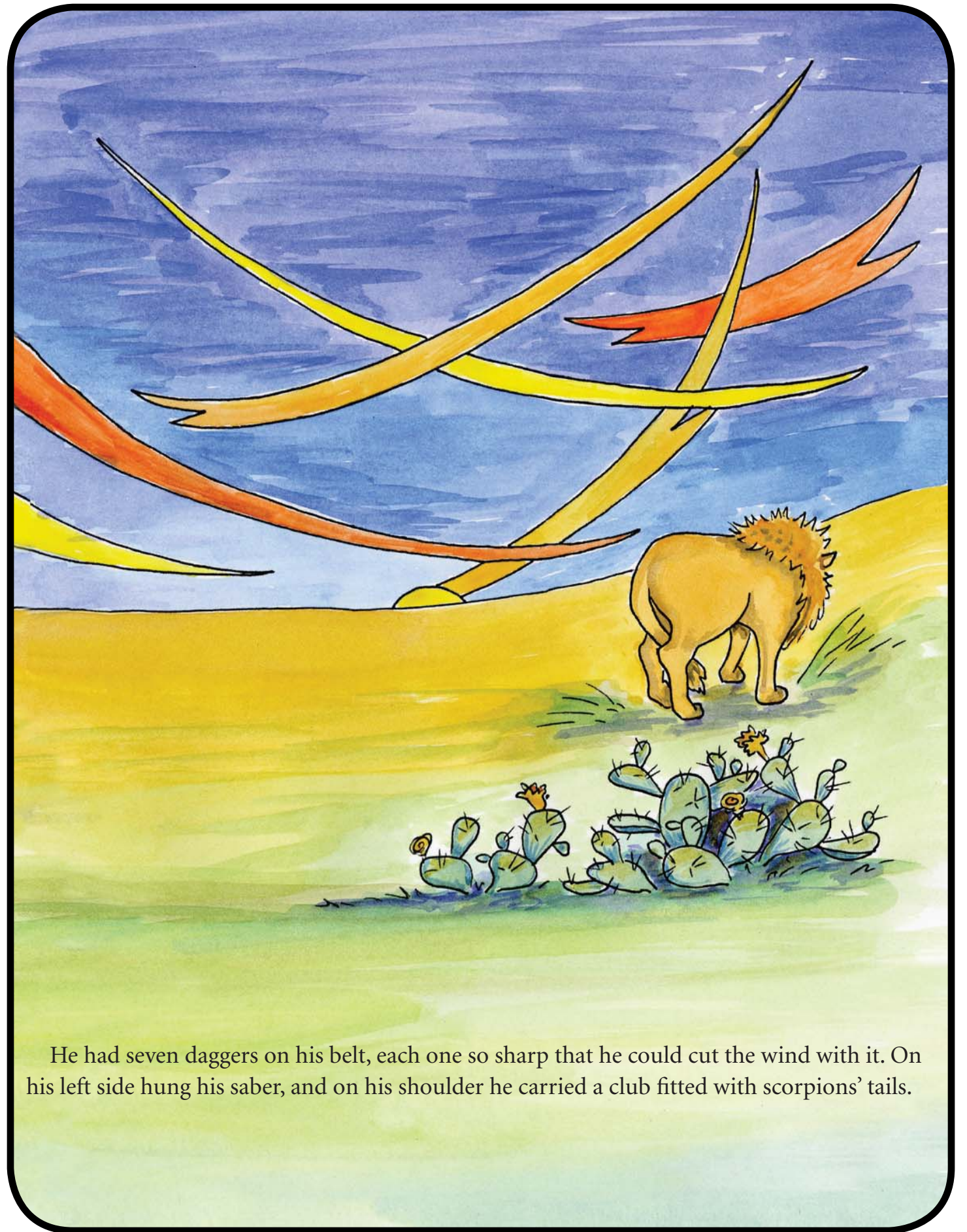
And then it happened that a certain Horrificus came their way, known far and wide as the most terrible robber in the whole desert. The grass lay flat on the ground before him, the palm trees shivered and threw down their dates into his hat, and even the strongest lion tucked his tail between his legs when he saw the robber's red trousers in the distance.



And the robber Horrificus danced, the likes of which no living being has ever seen before. He lifted his sword over his head, and he swung his legs this way and that, as gracefully as an antelope, and so fast that one couldn't count them anymore. He tossed the seven daggers into the air and jumped through the wind as it was cut into pieces, and like a tongue of flame he whirled back down to earth again.



After pausing a moment to gather his wits, he said, "I would like to give your little boy a present, but I have only stolen goods in my pocket. So if it pleases you, I would like to dance for him!"



He had seven daggers on his belt, each one so sharp that he could cut the wind with it. On his left side hung his saber, and on his shoulder he carried a club fitted with scorpions' tails.



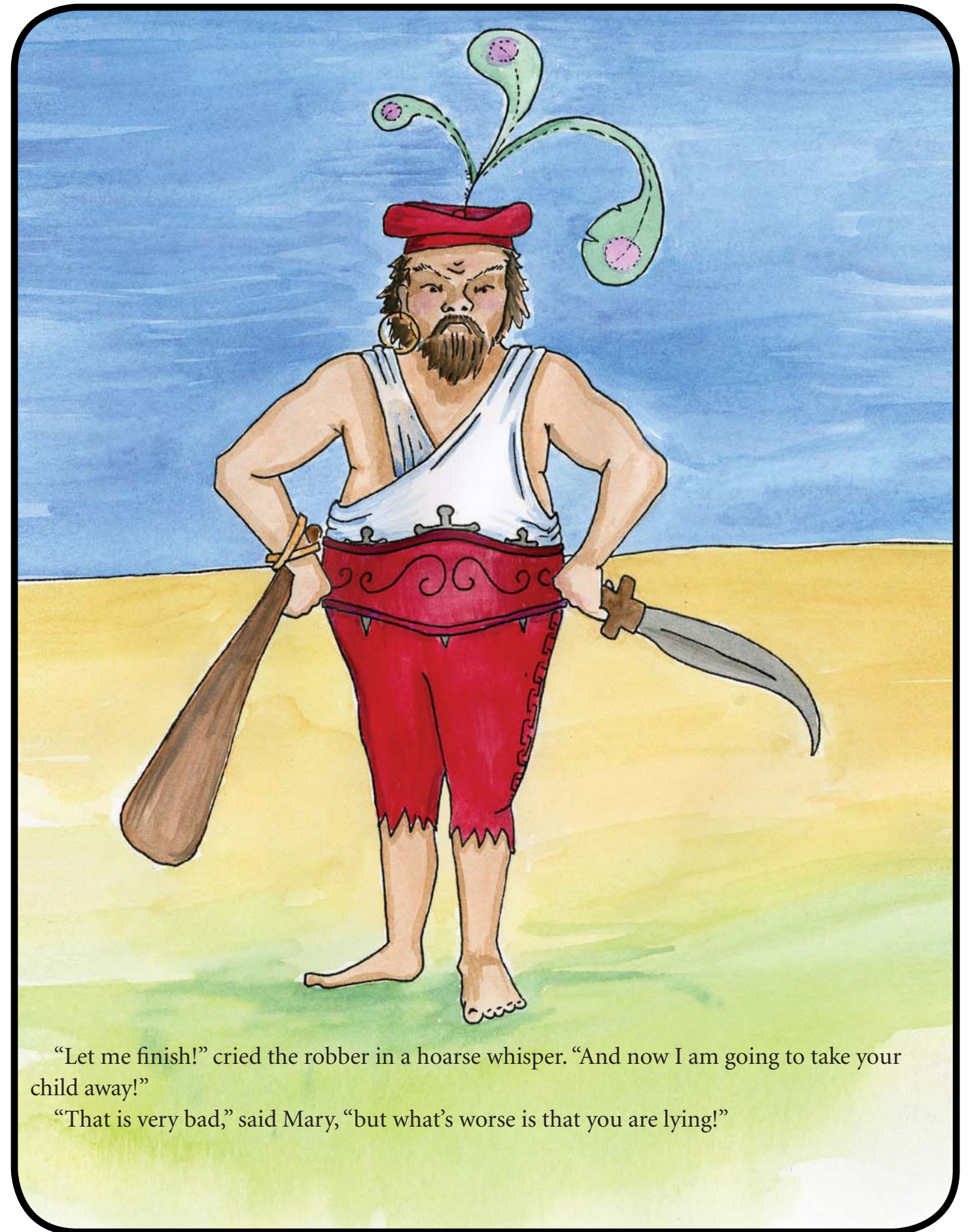
“Ha!” roared the robber, pulling his saber.
“Good evening,” said Mary. “Not so loud, please; the baby is sleeping.”
This took the robber’s breath away. In his embarrassment, he clipped off the top of a thistle with his sword. “I am the robber Horrificus,” he snarled. “I have done many terrible deeds ...”
“May God forgive you!” Mary said.



And as he grew older, they all ran the other way and dropped everything they had, as soon as they saw him coming. So Horrificus lived fairly well, and gained a dreadful reputation although he could never take anything from anyone, let alone hurt them. And so it felt very good to this terrible robber that he had finally found someone who was not afraid of him.

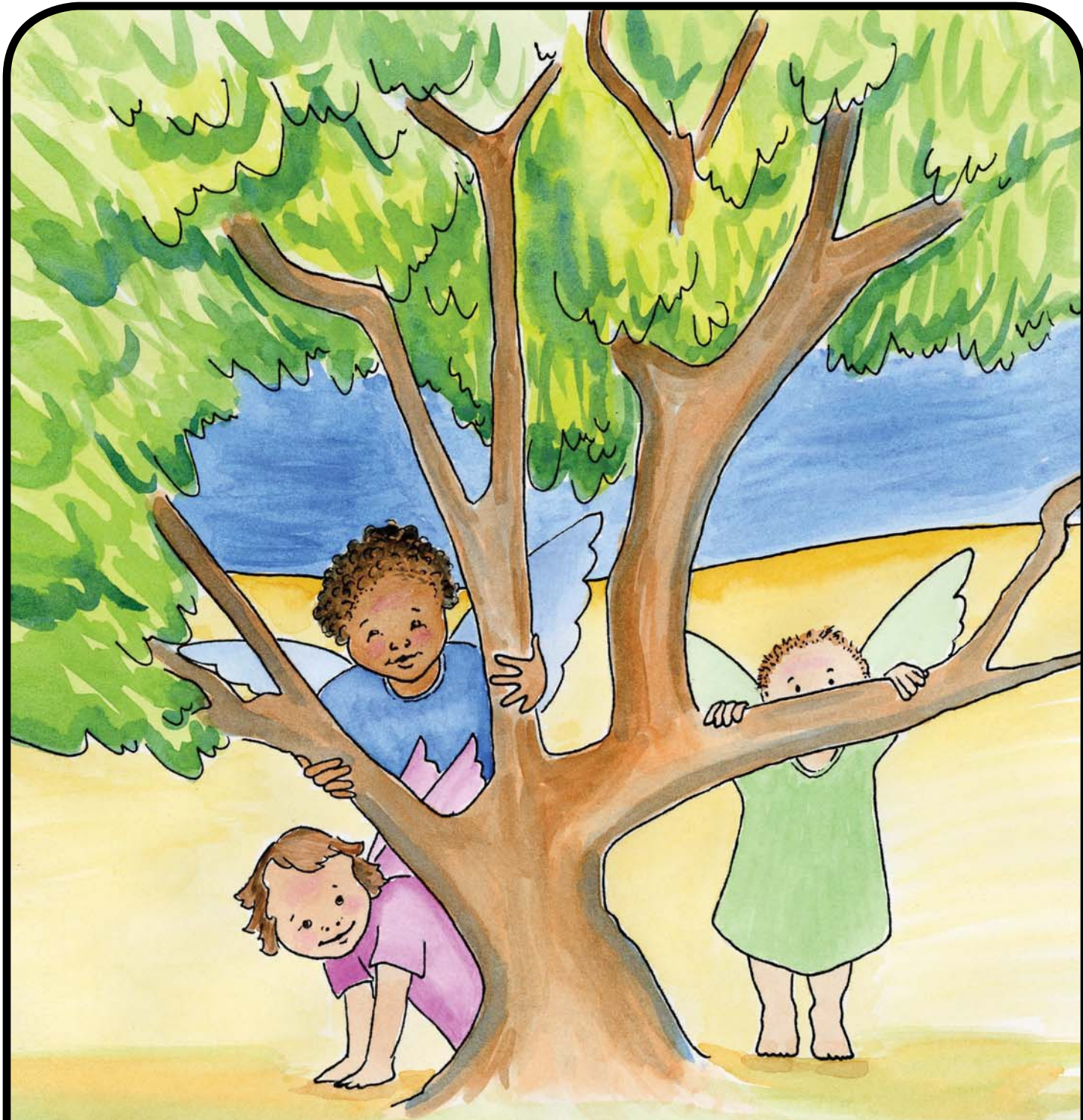


To be called brother! That went to the robber's heart, because, to tell the truth, his heart was as soft as wax. You see, when he was still a baby, people had already come to peek at him and said, "Woe to us! Doesn't he look like a robber?"

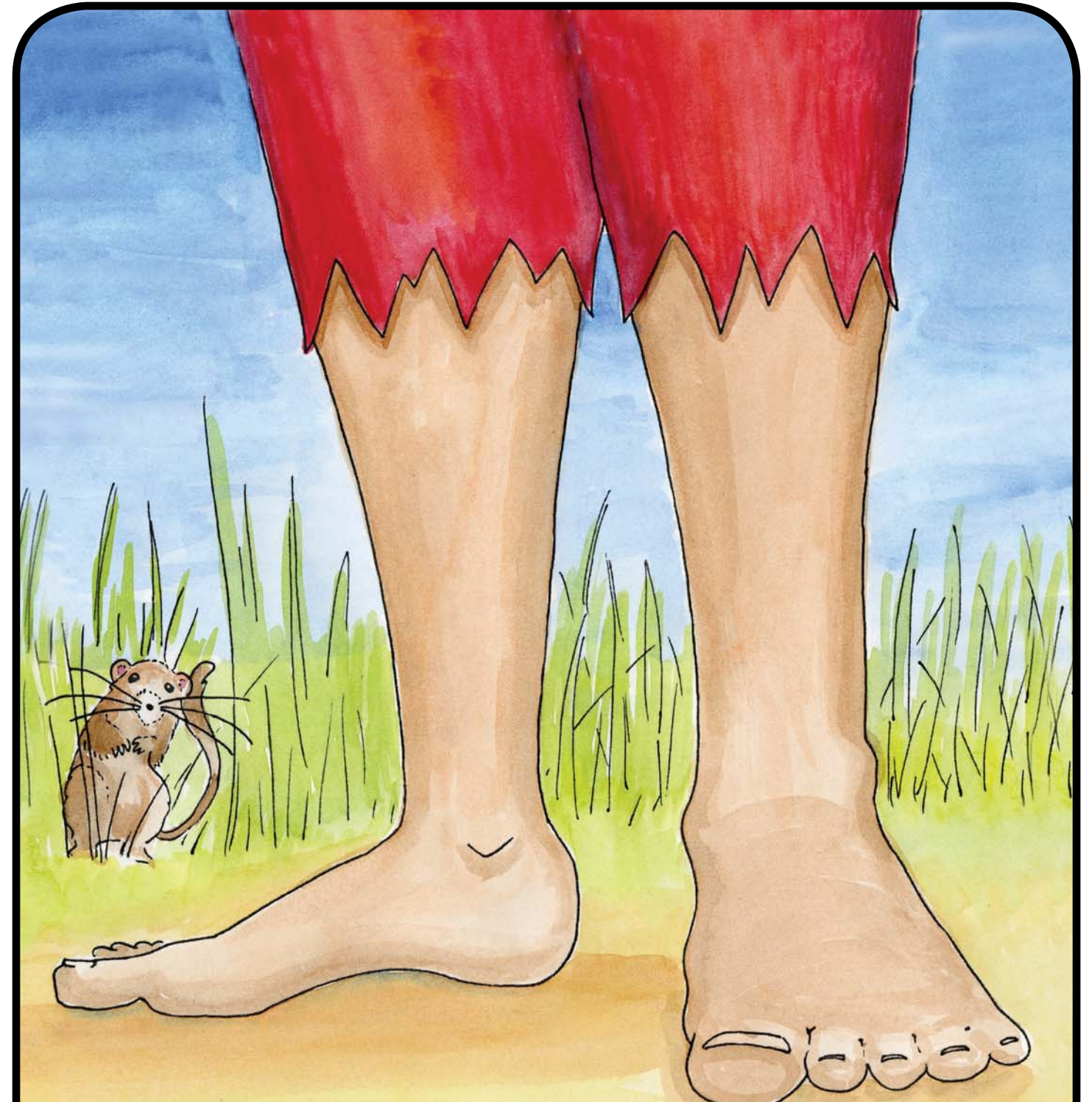


"Let me finish!" cried the robber in a hoarse whisper. "And now I am going to take your child away!"

"That is very bad," said Mary, "but what's worse is that you are lying!"



At this moment a chuckling could be heard in a nearby bush, and the robber jumped straight into the air with shock. Never before had anyone dared to laugh in his presence. It was only the little angels who had been traveling with the baby. At first they had fled away, but now they were sitting together in the low branches, to see what would happen.



“Are you not afraid of me?” asked the robber in a small voice.
“Oh, Brother Horrificus,” Mary said, “what a funny man you are!”