

The Fox and The Camel



Long ago, in a land far away, flowed a breezy and sparkling river named Ratna. Her waters ran deep and steady. But something was very peculiar about the river...

Half the year around, the land on one side of the river would be dry and barren, where no crops would grow... while the other side would be lush and blooming with exquisite flowers and fruits. It was almost as if the abundant side of the river would transform into a magnificent utopic garden. Mango, Banyan and Mahogany trees would stand tall and evergreen flowers of Zinnias, Hibiscus, Bakul would be in full bloom. Life was blissful on this side.

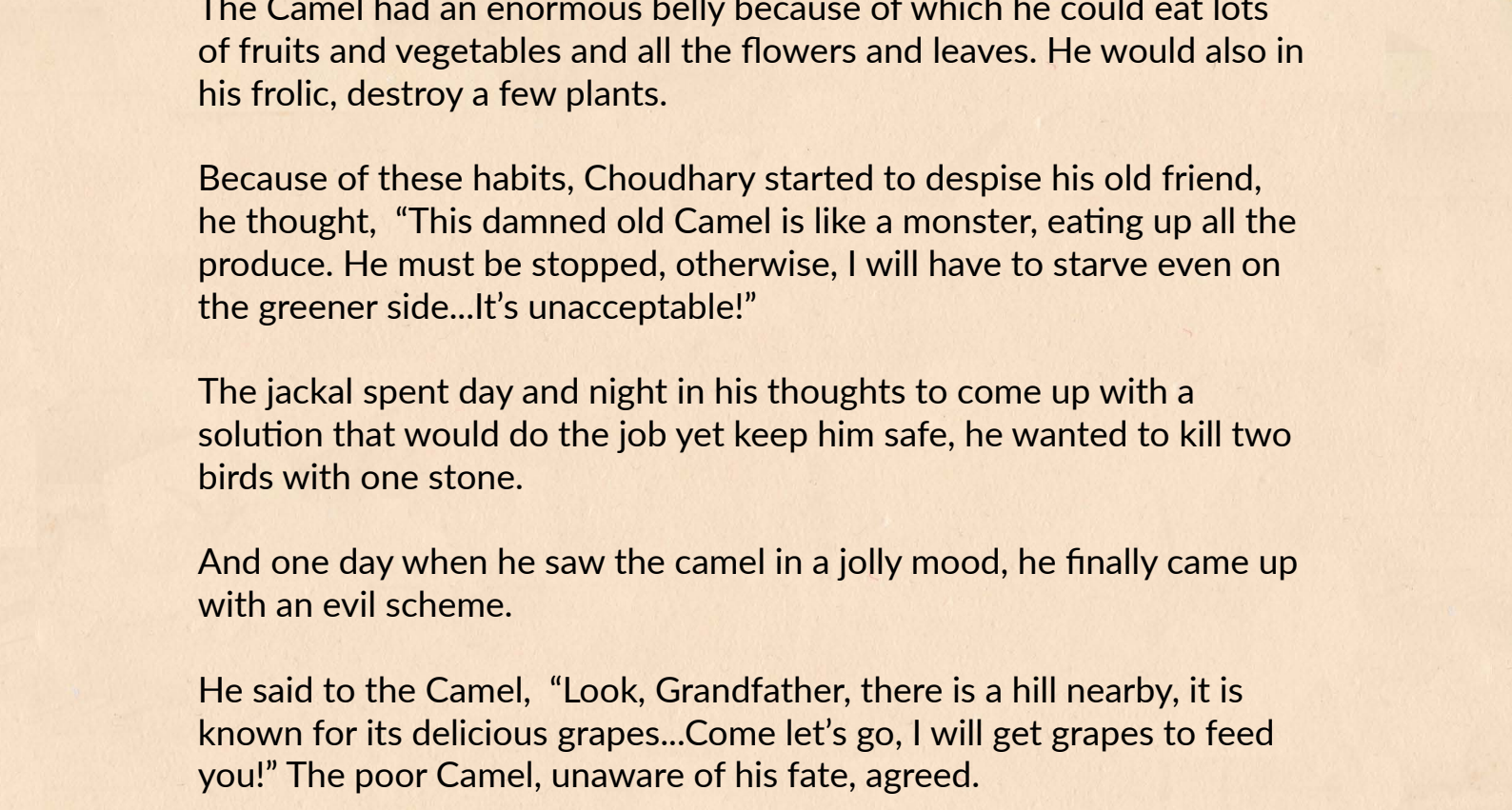
But life was dark and bleak on the other side.

There lived a conniving Jackal on the deserted side of the river, his name was Choudhary. Choudhary wanted to desperately cross the river to get to the luscious side but he couldn't swim that far. He thought, "Alas! I cannot dive into the river and swim towards the other side, I will drown in Ratna's deep waters...I must come up with a plan!"

Suddenly he noticed his old friend, Camel, resting under the sun. He went up to his long-necked friend, whom he lovingly called his grandfather and said, "My dear old Grandfather, Jai Hind!"

The camel, alarmed and miffed after being disturbed in his slumber, grumbled and said, "Jai Hind Choudhary! What's the matter?". But Choudhary was smart, he quickly struck up a thoughtful conversation with the old Camel and politely asked him, "My sweet Grandfather, let's go to the greener side. We will have a lot of fun... we will eat, drink, play and roam about the entire day. Life will be beautiful again!"

The old Camel, swayed by Choudhary's flights of fancy, agreed and they both set out towards the other side of the river.



The river tides would rise very high, but the Camel wasn't afraid. He was as steady as the river Ratna herself and carried the jackal on his back with utmost patience. After a few hours, they finally reached the other side.

There they ate all the savoury and delicious fruits and flowers and roamed around in reverie.

The Camel had an enormous belly because of which he could eat lots of fruits and vegetables and all the flowers and leaves. He would also in his frills, destroy a few plants.

Because of these habits, Choudhary started to despise his old friend, he thought, "This damned old Camel is like a monster, eating up all the produce. He must be stopped, otherwise, I will have to starve even on the greener side...It's unacceptable!"

The jackal spent day and night in his thoughts to come up with a solution that would do the job yet keep him safe, he wanted to kill two birds with one stone.

And one day when he saw the camel in a jolly mood, he finally came up with an evil scheme.

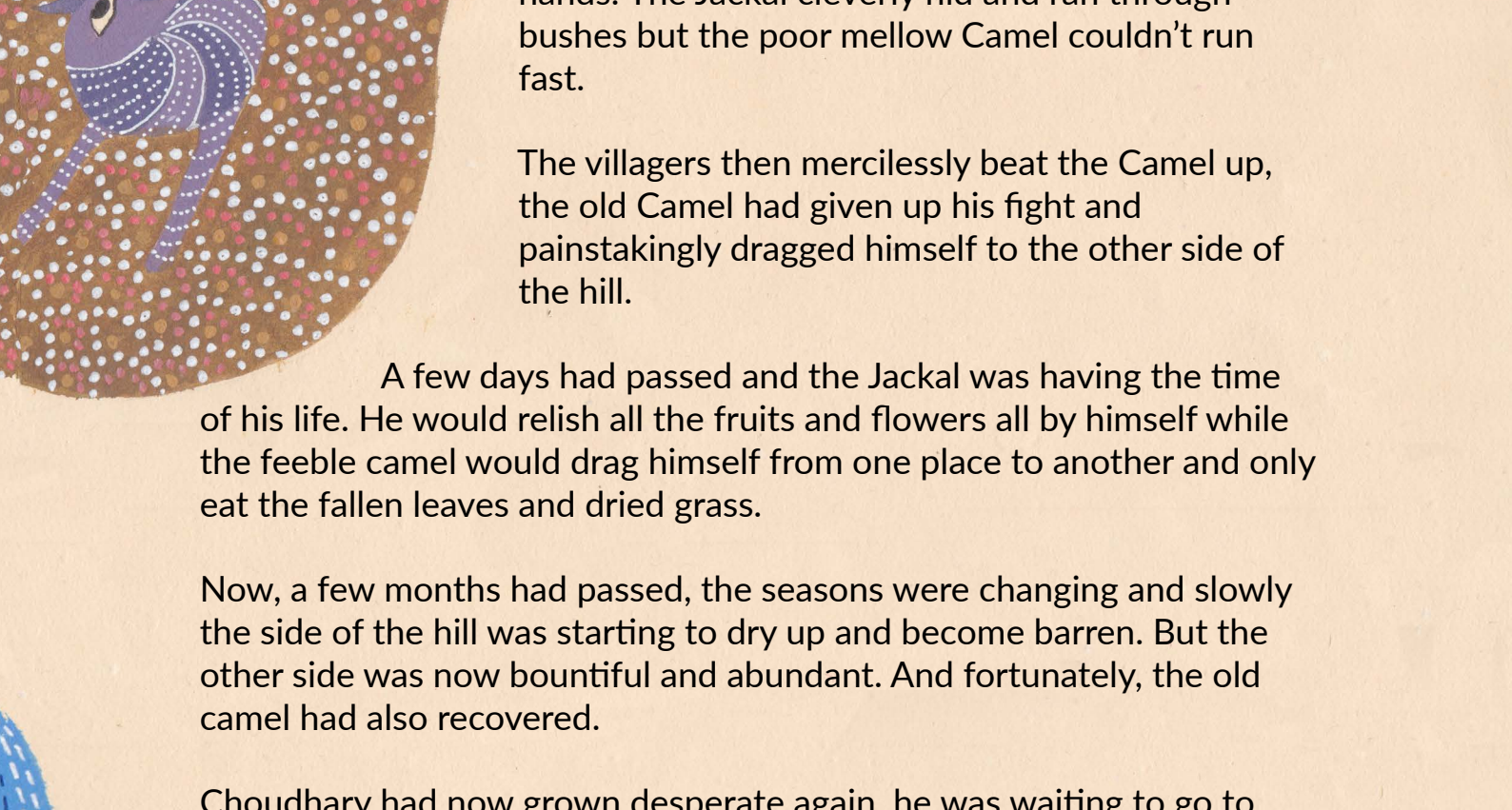
He said to the Camel, "Look, Grandfather, there is a hill nearby, it is known for its delicious grapes...Come let's go, I will get grapes to feed you!" The poor Camel, unaware of his fate, agreed.

On the other side of the hill, there was a small village and the people from the village took great care of their trees and put great effort in maintaining their gardens.

Choudhary lured the Camel towards the village and then towards the grape gardens. The jackal was quick on his feet and in a flash, ate all the grapes. And when his belly was full, he loudly burped and said, "Grandfather, my stomach is full to the brim and now I feel like howling" The Camel, alarmed by Choudhary's idea said, "Oh Choudhary, have you gone crazy? Upon hearing your howls, the villagers will come running and then they will beat us up!"

But this was precisely what the conniving Jackal wanted. With a wicked grin on his face, he said,

"Grandfather, are the howls supposed to be stopped? It's what the heart wants."



And as soon as he said this, he began howling, "Hooo...hooo...hoo..."

Startled by the howls, the villagers came running towards the garden with sticks in their hands. The Jackal cleverly hid and ran through bushes but the poor mellow Camel couldn't run fast.

The villagers then mercilessly beat the Camel up, the old Camel had given up his fight and painstakingly dragged himself to the other side of the hill.

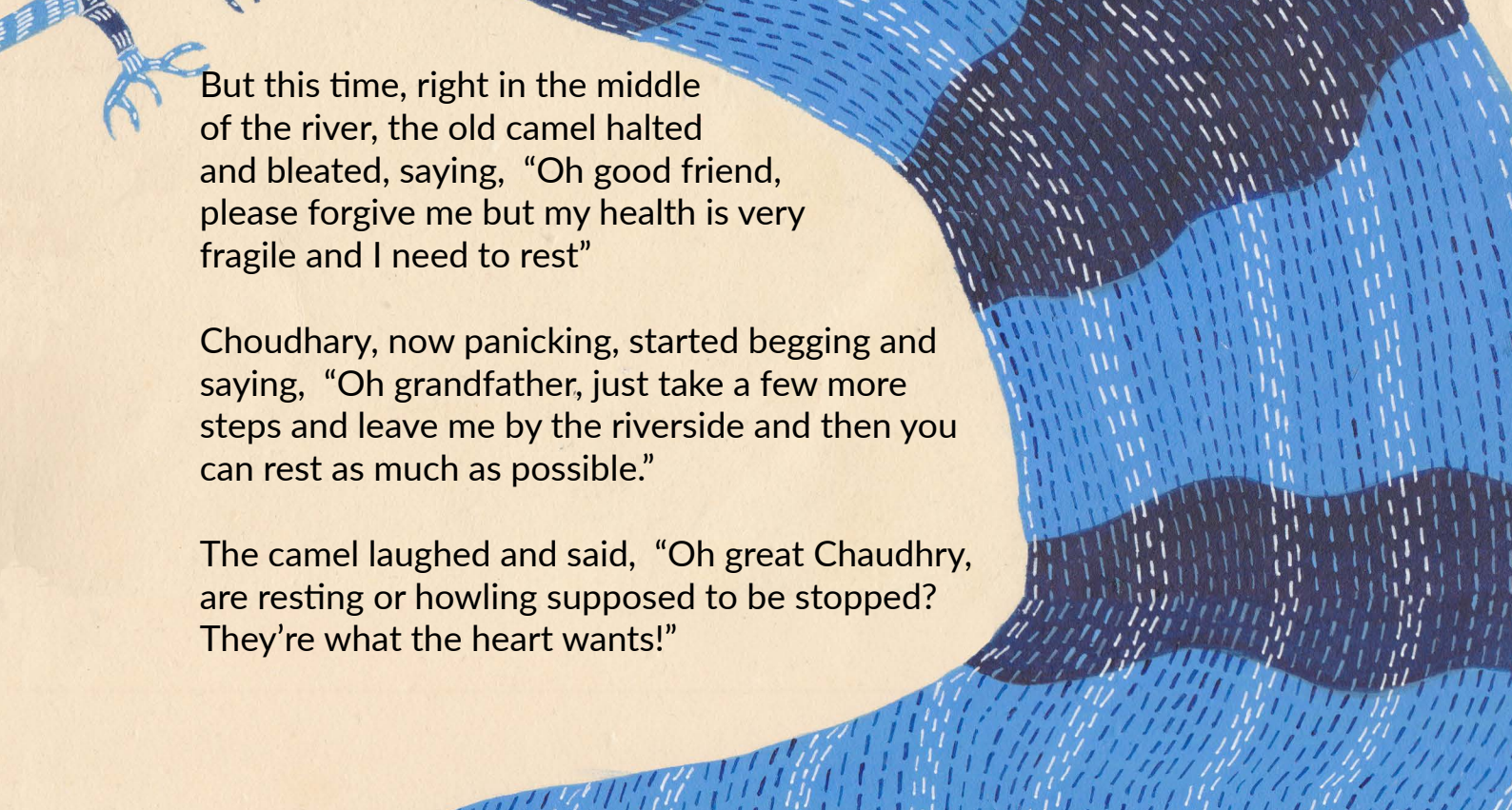
A few days had passed and the Jackal was having the time of his life. He would relish all the fruits and flowers all by himself while the feeble Camel would drag himself from one place to another and only eat the fallen leaves and dried grass.

Now, a few months had passed, the seasons were changing and slowly the side of the hill was starting to dry up and become barren. But the other side was now bountiful and abundant. And fortunately, the old camel had also recovered.

Choudhary had now grown desperate again, he was waiting to go to the other side of the river. One day when he noticed that the Camel was healthy and happy, he went up to him and politely said, "Dearest Grandfather, let's go back to our land."

The camel only smiled. The Jackal again said, "Grandfather, our time in the foreign land was very well spent but what happened with you really saddened me." The camel subtly smiled and said, "Oh, Chaudhry! Don't think too much of it... this is what was written in the law of life."

Just as before, the Camel very lovingly mounted the jackal on his back and set off into the river.



But this time, right in the middle of the river, the old camel halted and bleated, saying, "Oh good friend, please forgive me but my health is very fragile and I need to rest"

Choudhary, now panicking, started begging and saying, "Oh grandfather, just take a few more steps and leave me by the riverside and then you can rest as much as possible."

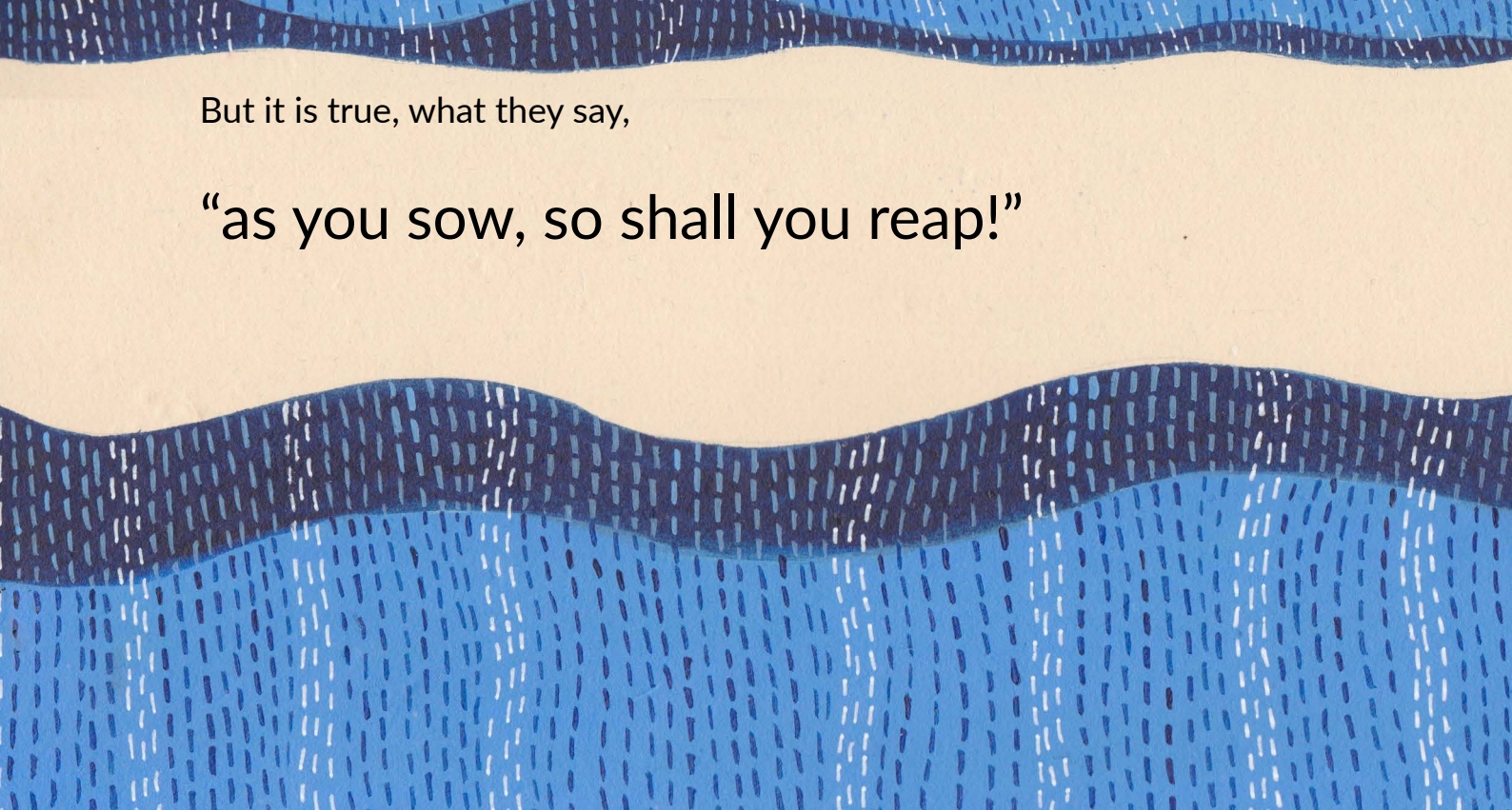
The camel laughed and said, "Oh great Chaudhry, are resting or howling supposed to be stopped? They're what the heart wants!"

The jackal understood exactly what was being said. He folded his hands in front of the camel, crying and said, "My dearest grandfather, please forgive me. I feel sad that I didn't listen to you then but it is true that I did not want to cause you any harm."

The camel laughed out loud and said, "Chaudhry, I too don't want to cause you any harm, I simply want to rest."

Choudhary cried and begged for mercy but the camel did not pay any heed. And then, in the middle of the river, he sat down and began to rest.

The hapless Jackal then flowed away along with the tide of the river Ratna and only the Lord Nibbani which pier he landed on.



But it is true, what they say,

"as you sow, so shall you reap!"

