

Save The Egyptian Toad



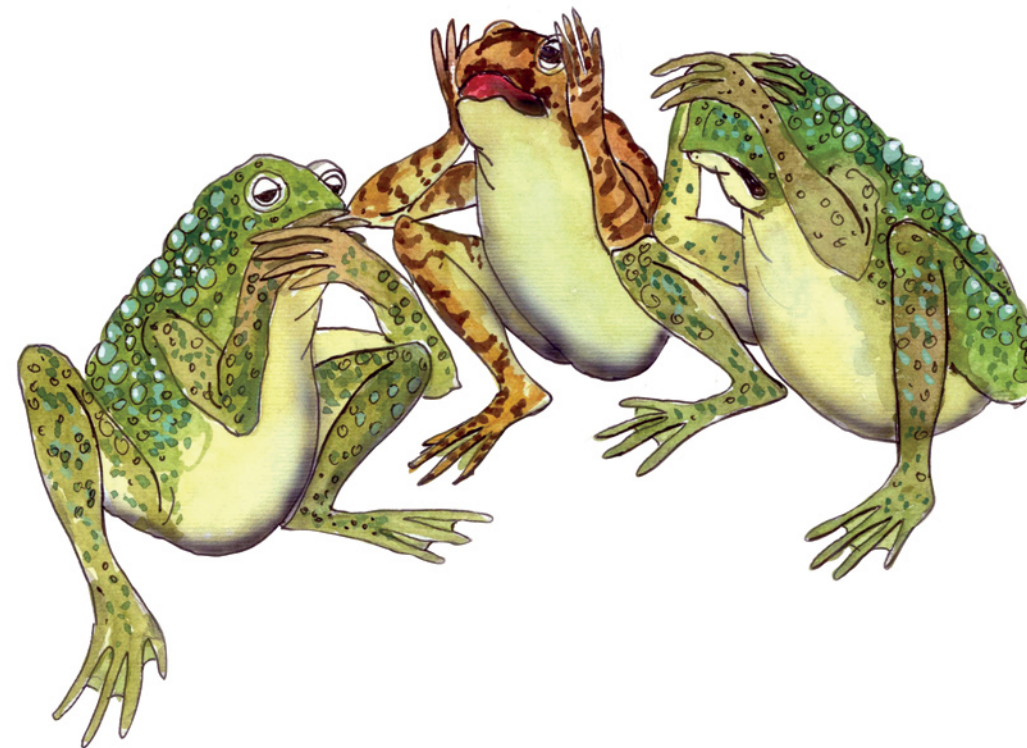
BIODIVERSITY MONITORING & ASSESSMENT PROJECT (BioMAP)

Address : 30 Misr Helwan road, Al Maadi,
EAAA building , 7th floor , Cairo, Egypt.
Telephone / Fax : +202 5265887
Mobile : +2 012 7466368
E-mail : info@biomapegypt.org
Web site: www.biomapegypt.org



Egyptian Bufo

The Egyptian Toad



By:
Samy Zalot Francis Gilbert
Nancy Haridy

Translated By: Salma Samy

Illustration: Ahmed Amin



The toads in Egypt are subject to continuous over-harvesting. They are collected from fields and different habitats for dissection, as a part of the practical courses of various departments in universities. Collection started from the establishment of the first Egyptian university until now. This puts populations under threat of extinction from the demands for huge numbers from the universities. At current rates of collection, toads will disappear from Egypt in the near future.

Egyptian Bufo is a story that takes us on a journey into a life of one toad, as imagined by the authors. The story tries to make young people between the ages of 10 and 16 aware of the dangers threatening toads. We hope to make it clear how serious the issue is, and to contribute to saving one of the most helpful creatures in the Egyptian environment.

We would like to bring to your attention the fact that the story contains some violent and upsetting events due to the nature of the problem.

Therefore we want teachers and parents to tell the story to children in a simple way after reading it, to try to minimize the impact of what can be a disturbing story.

The authors

Egyptian Bufo

The Egyptian Toad

By:

Samy Zalat

Francis Gilbert

Nancy Haridy

Translated By: Salma Samy



Revision

Moustafa Fouda
Yakoub Al Sharooni

Illustration
Ahmed Amin

Graphic
Ahmed Yakoub



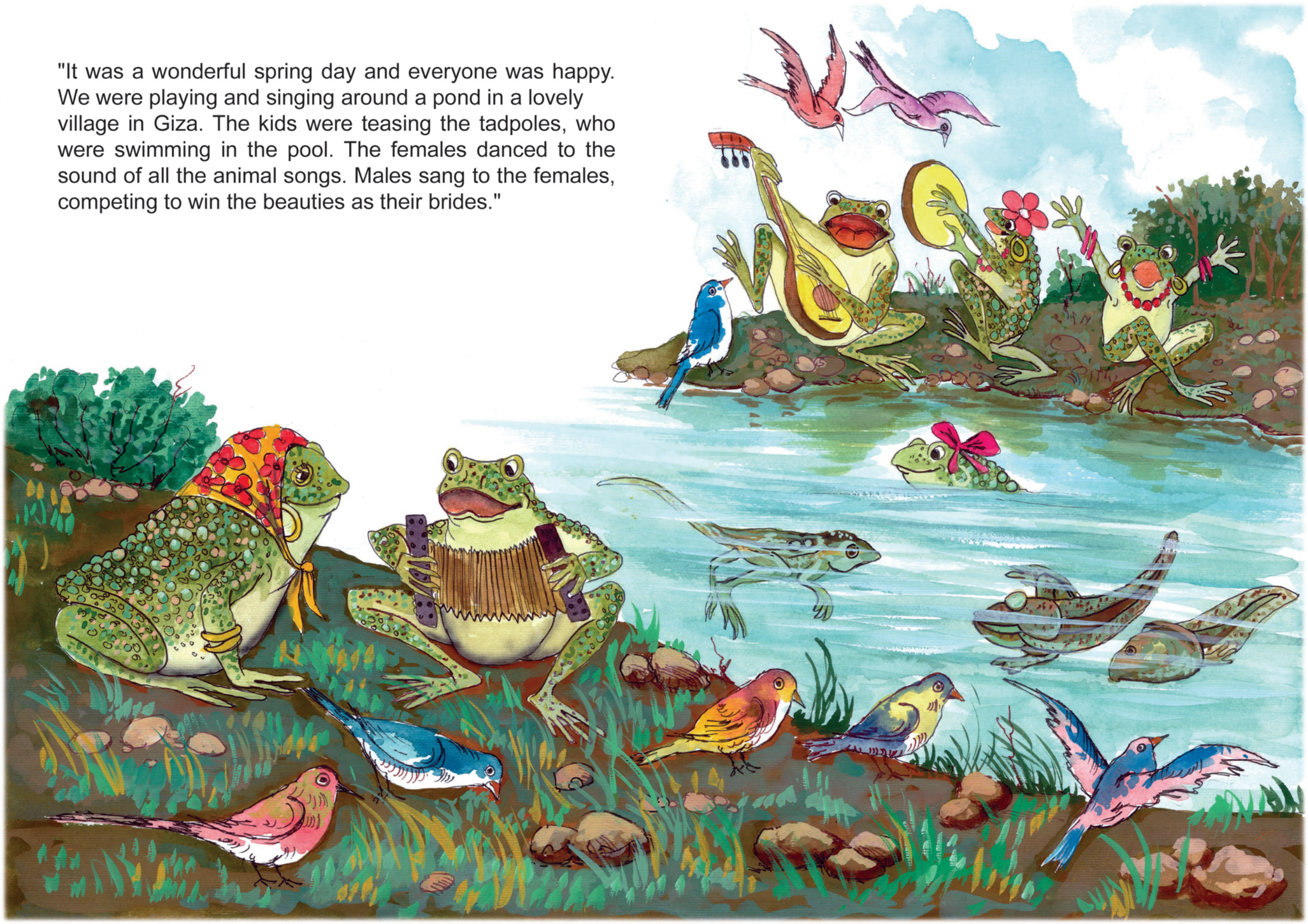
King Bufo is the king of the Egyptian toads. Their story goes back to Ancient times, to the reign of the great King Khufu. The pharaohs glorified and honoured these toads for their significant role in the environment. They showed this by drawing them on the walls of their temples and tombs.

Bufo the Great never imagined that his life would end tragically, yet he found himself lying on his deathbed, suffering from a severe disease. His friends and family gathered around him, waiting for his final moments to come. Leading this gathering was his dearest life-long friend Rana, king of the frogs.

Rana started to tell the tale of what he, Bufo and their friends had been through over the last few days. He told the gathering all about the horrors Bufo the Great had faced.

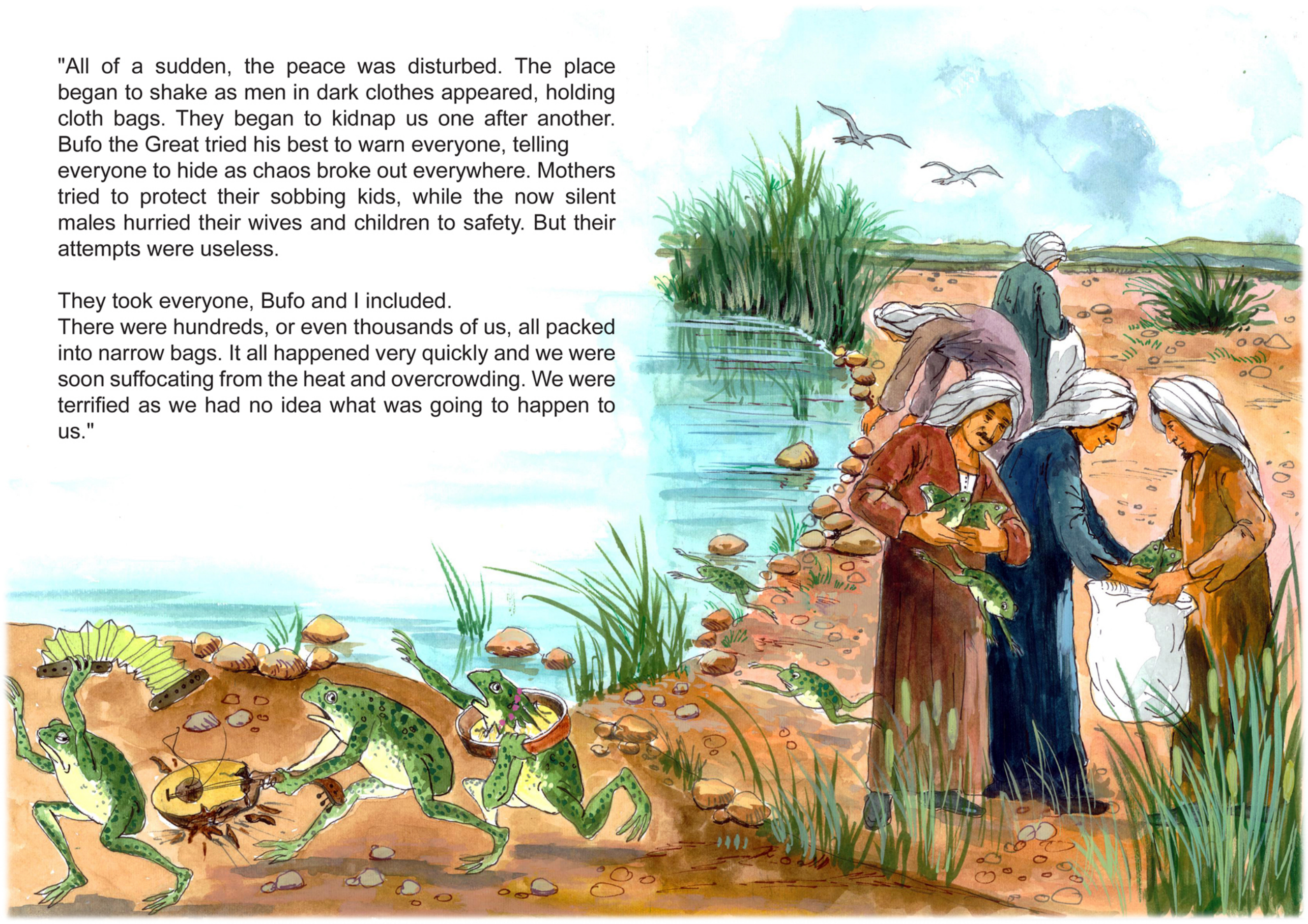


"It was a wonderful spring day and everyone was happy. We were playing and singing around a pond in a lovely village in Giza. The kids were teasing the tadpoles, who were swimming in the pool. The females danced to the sound of all the animal songs. Males sang to the females, competing to win the beauties as their brides."



"All of a sudden, the peace was disturbed. The place began to shake as men in dark clothes appeared, holding cloth bags. They began to kidnap us one after another. Bufo the Great tried his best to warn everyone, telling everyone to hide as chaos broke out everywhere. Mothers tried to protect their sobbing kids, while the now silent males hurried their wives and children to safety. But their attempts were useless.

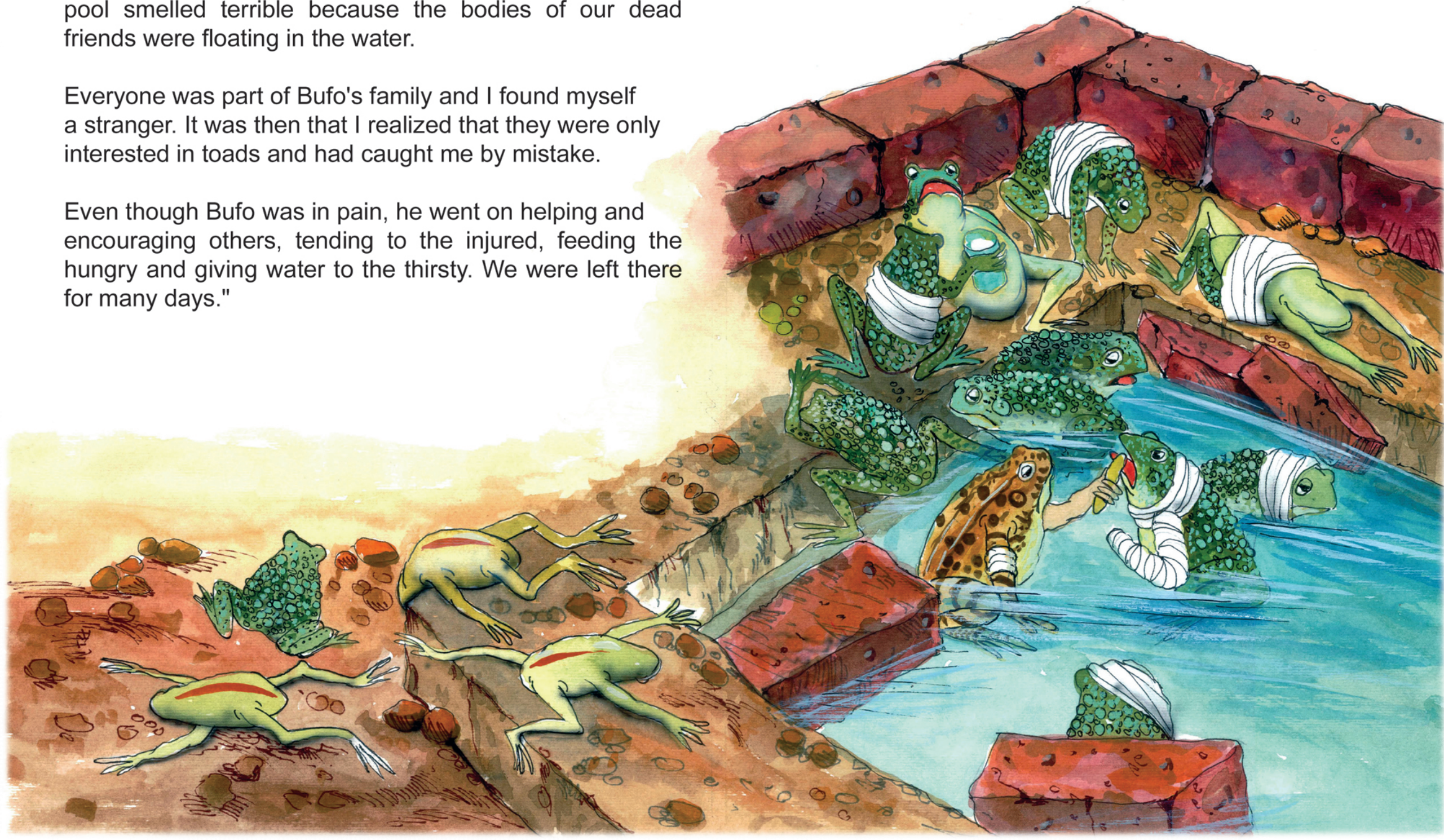
They took everyone, Bufo and I included. There were hundreds, or even thousands of us, all packed into narrow bags. It all happened very quickly and we were soon suffocating from the heat and overcrowding. We were terrified as we had no idea what was going to happen to us."



"Suddenly, the bags were opened and we were dropped into a four-walled pool made of strange material. It was not like home, where we enjoy clean air and clear water, and can meet all our animal and plant friends. The pool smelled terrible because the bodies of our dead friends were floating in the water.

Everyone was part of Bufo's family and I found myself a stranger. It was then that I realized that they were only interested in toads and had caught me by mistake.

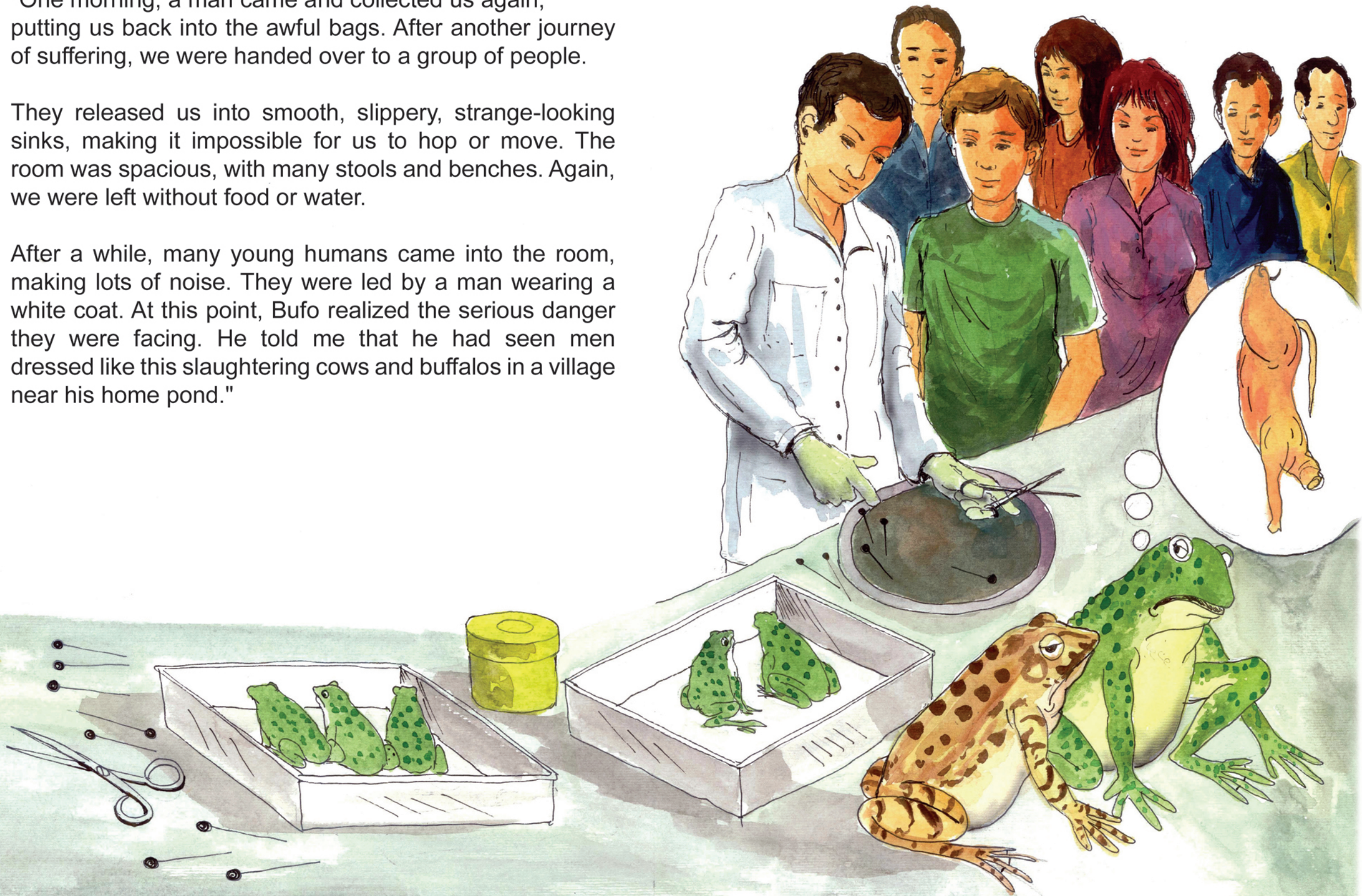
Even though Bufo was in pain, he went on helping and encouraging others, tending to the injured, feeding the hungry and giving water to the thirsty. We were left there for many days."



"One morning, a man came and collected us again, putting us back into the awful bags. After another journey of suffering, we were handed over to a group of people.

They released us into smooth, slippery, strange-looking sinks, making it impossible for us to hop or move. The room was spacious, with many stools and benches. Again, we were left without food or water.

After a while, many young humans came into the room, making lots of noise. They were led by a man wearing a white coat. At this point, Bufo realized the serious danger they were facing. He told me that he had seen men dressed like this slaughtering cows and buffalos in a village near his home pond."



"Terrified, all the toads tried to hide in the pool, but Bufo and I lifted our heads to find out what was going on. We watched as the young people queued and took their seats in complete silence.

The man in the white coat, whom they called "Doctor", stood up and addressed the class from a wooden stage: "Today, we are going to study the digestive system of the toad.

With the help of the technicians, you will numb your toad with chloroform..."

The man went on to explain how to cut our bodies into little pieces.

The toads heard this and were filled with panic.

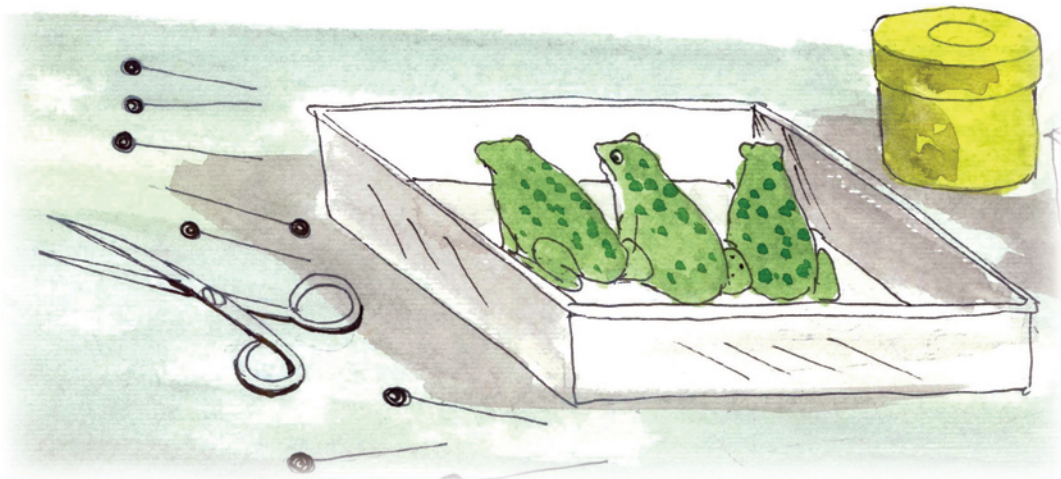
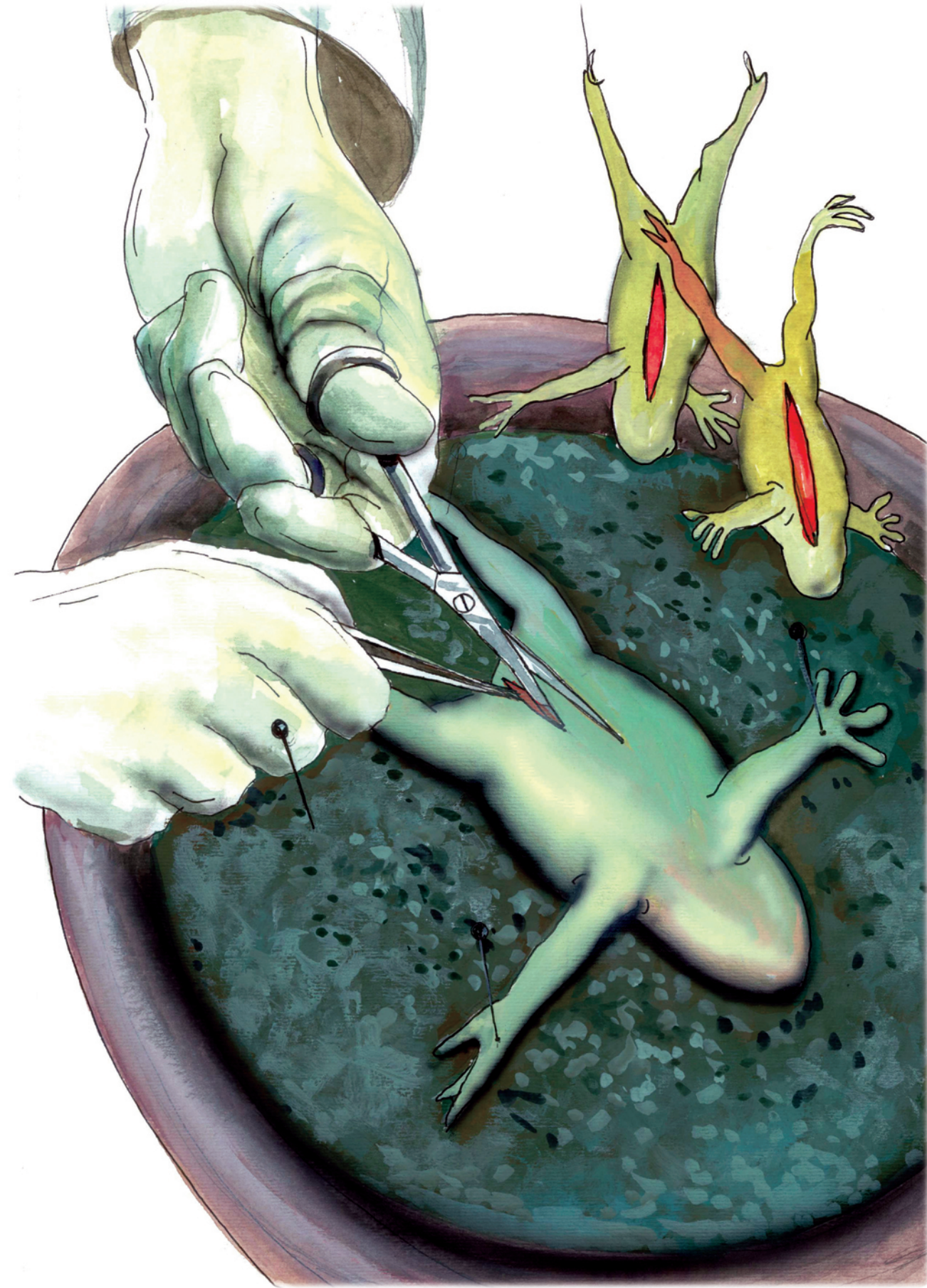
Some put their hands over their ears, not wanting to hear what was about to happen to them, while others gasped in horror.

Some closed their eyes, not wanting to look at the place where they would be tortured.

They were devastated at the prospect of losing their lives..."



"The students stood and approached the sinks to choose one each for dissection. I noticed that they chose the fatter toads, leaving the slim, little ones behind. I was picked by a student who took me to the professor to ask why I was different from the others. The Professor told the student that I am of a different species, and that he should pick another one. The student then returned me to the sink, which was now empty. They were all gone, even my friend Bufo. I couldn't stand it in that sink. The students paid no attention to me, and so I was able to move through the rows of desks, hopping in and out of the sinks and between the students' legs, all the time looking for Bufo. During this search, I saw many horrors: the students were killing many of my friends."



"I looked everywhere, and finally found Bufo stretched out in one of the dishes, pinned by his arms and legs. As soon as the student stepped towards him, Bufo leaped up, removing the pins that held him down. The student jumped out of his seat when he saw this, crying out to his friends about how his toad unpinned himself and got away. But he didn't know that his toad was Bufo the Great!

Bufo jumped down and I hurried to help him. He was very tired and badly injured. We both hopped through the students feet until we found a drain and leaped into it. I tried my best to help Bufo get out of sight and leave that place."



"We went through a long, filthy smelly tunnel until we reached a vast space filled with water. There, we found many injured toads in very bad shape. Despite his pain, Bufo ran to help the injured.

Bufo then noticed a light coming from somewhere. He guided us all to its source which turned out to be the sun. We found ourselves in a place overgrown with herbs and weeds. We walked and walked and along our way, we came across smelly, disgusting dumps filled with the bodies of our slaughtered friends. They were cut up and covered with flies, left for the cats and dogs to eat. It made us very sad that the humans didn't even bother to bury them hygienically."



"We walked for days until we arrived here at this pond. Bufo was in a very bad way, but he kept resisting. Since our return, he has been in this bed, showing no signs of getting better. I don't know if he ever will!"

As soon as Rana finished these last words, Bufo moved his legs and opened his eyes. He then courageously got out of bed.

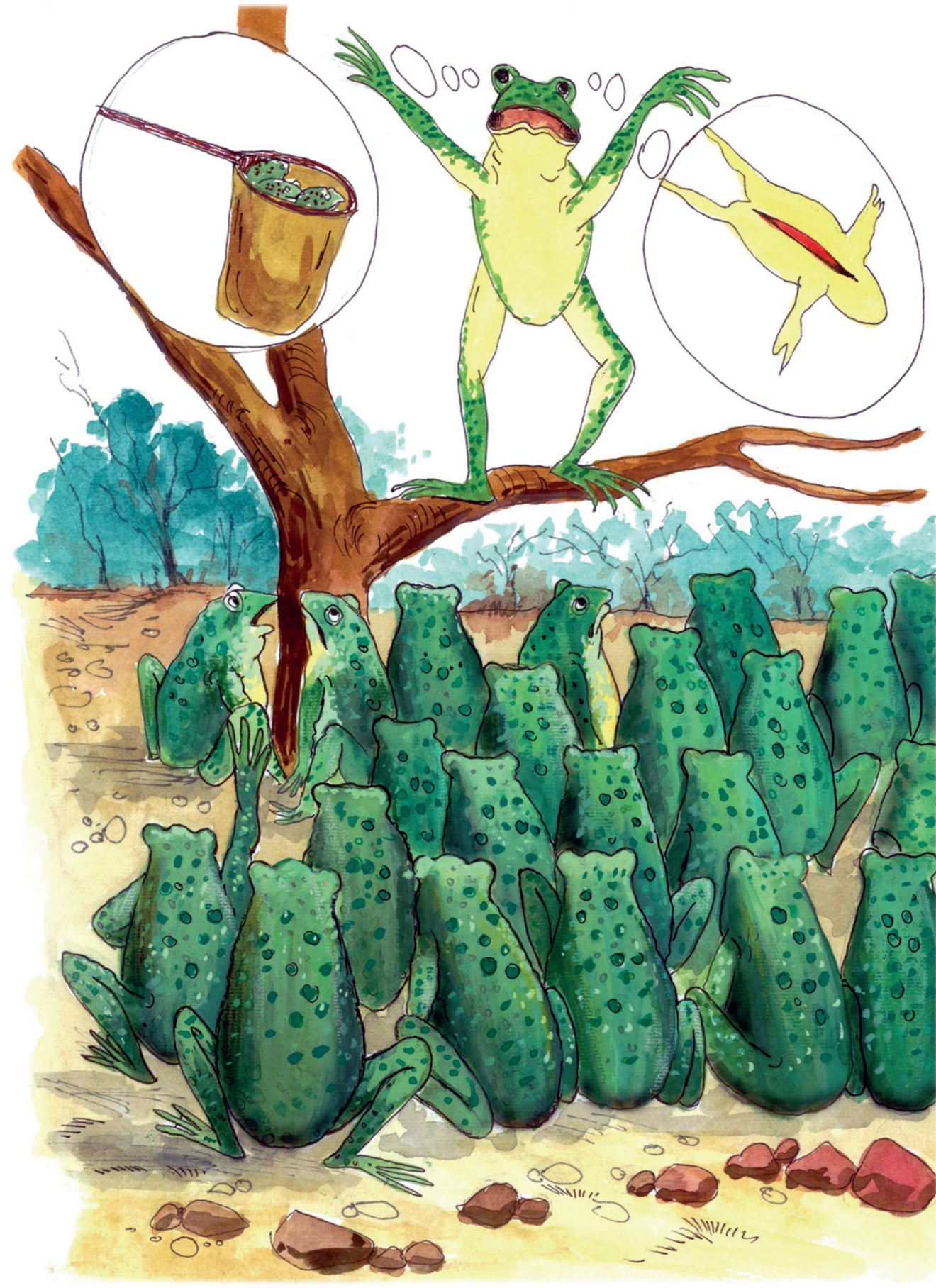
The moment his feet touched the floor, all the toads cried out and carried him on their shoulders. They took him out to a wide square, holding signs and protesting: "Pan the killing of Bufo in Laboratories ... Pan the killing of Bufo in Laboratories ... Pan the killing of Bufo in Laboratories ..."



Bufo stepped down and started his speech: "First, I would like to thank you all for helping me in my hour of need. We all know that man thinks he is the master of all creatures. We also know that scientific and medical development is important for humans and other organisms. Therefore, we understand that we can be used to contribute to this process, but it does not need to be done in this brutish manner.

It is unacceptable for us to be collected from the fields in such huge numbers, just to be dissected. Animals should not be killed without regard for religious law or International scientific agreements. It is not right for our bodies to be thrown out onto the streets for birds and stray animals. By doing this, man is polluting the environment in which he and other creatures live.

If dissection is truly necessary for the good of all creatures, then we can only accept it under one condition: that it is done according to the rules, in such a way as to fulfil scientific goals, while keeping us safe from extinction."

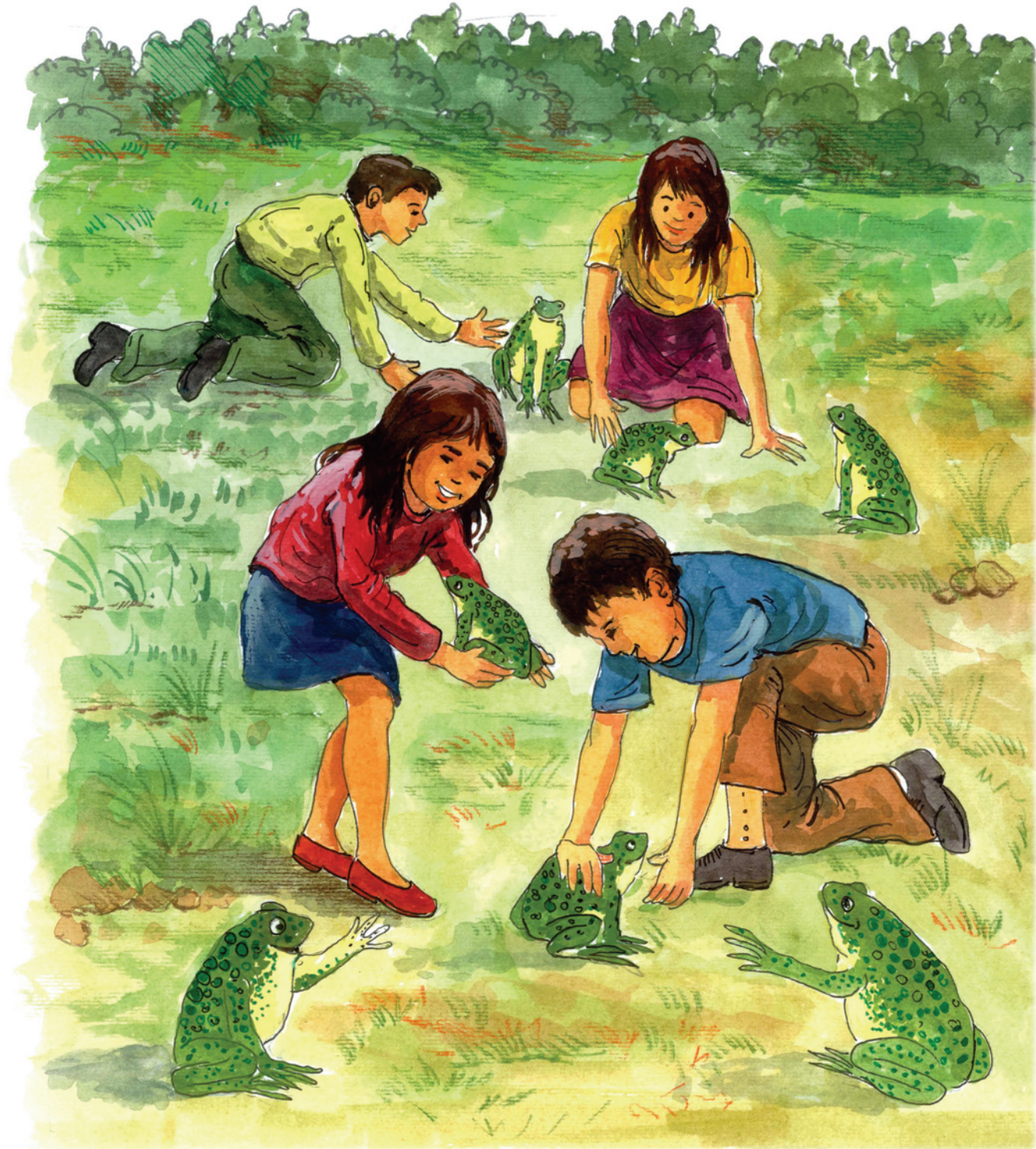


At that moment, a toad stated "But humans claim that there is no real alternative to the dissection of animals!" Bufo replied "This is true, but they can follow some suggestions to solve the problem: Only students of certain subjects, such as medicine and biology, should be allowed to dissect us, as long as it is worthwhile. Fewer toads need be used, as each one can demonstrate multiple organ systems. They could also practice dissection techniques on computers. It is also possible to breed us in special houses. All these methods can help protect us wild toads from extinction. My final request is that our bodies be disposed of in a hygienic and respectful way."

"And what do we do if Man does not follow these rules?" asked another toad. "There are many things we can do to make man's life more difficult.

We can stop eating the thousands, or even millions of flies and mosquitoes, until everywhere is covered in these harmful insects. They will, in turn, viciously attack humans. Then, humans will be forced to use more and more insecticides and poisonous chemicals to get rid of them. Doing this will increase pollution levels in their food."

Now you can see the effects we have on humans and the environment! We hope to find among you some people interested in helping us. We just want to live safely and happily, together with Man, on Planet Earth.



Extra information:

- The toad is a vertebrate amphibian; it can live both on land and in water.
- Toads are different from frogs; toads have wrinkled skin and short hind legs that allow them to walk rather than jump. Frogs have a longer body and long hind legs.
- Toads can live farther from water than most frogs, as they have dry warty skin unlike the smooth skin of frogs.
- Toads have tiny tongues and have to snap at their food using their mouth. They often will stalk their food, much like a cat...creeping up to it
- Females recognize males through the distinctive sounds they produce.
- Females lay a large number of eggs in water, which are enveloped in a gelatinous cover. Tadpoles hatch from the eggs to start their lives. Tadpoles breathe through outer gills, and after a while, a fin-like tail grows.
- This little creature later changes into an adult toad that breathes partially through two lungs.
- A toad lays about 4000 eggs at a time.

Strange and interesting:

- Toads exist in all continents except for Antarctica.
- The heaviest toad is found in the west of Africa, and it weighs more than 4.5 kg. It is a favorite dish there, as people like the taste. The lightest occurs in the west of Africa as well.
- A toad cannot breathe with its mouth open; if opened by force, it dies.
- Frogs have special ears connected to their lungs. When they hear noises, not only do the eardrums vibrate, but so do the lungs.
- Toads can not see stationary things; they only see things moving or jumping, connected with their remarkable ability to hop.
- While eating, a toad's eyes get bigger and slightly closed in order to help it push the food down its mouth.
- A toad is able to change its skin colour to match the surrounding environment.
- Toads vary in size, ranging between 1 and 30 cm.
- The Golden toad is the most poisonous toad in the world. It occurs to the west of the Andes in Colombia, and does not occur in Egypt. The skin of one toad could kill about 1000 people.

Problems facing Bufo:

- Why are frogs and toads important?
 1. Toads eat a lot of insects that harm man and plants.
 2. They are a source of food; the fleshy hind legs of frogs are considered a delicacy in many countries.

Who are the enemies of toads?

- Toads have many enemies, such as foxes, bats, mice, birds, turtles, snakes as well as man.
- Man destroys toad habitats through building houses, as well as polluting and poisoning the water where they exist.
- Toads are used in dissection at schools and universities.



Threats to toads in the habitats of Egypt:

1. The excessive use of pesticides results in the chemicals flowing into streams, polluting drains and destroying places where toads reproduce, killing the eggs and tadpoles, and sometimes causing deformations to the whole animal.
2. Toad habitats are subject to destruction due to human activities, particularly the large amounts of construction currently going on.
3. Changes to and fragmentation of ecosystems by human water uses, destruction of vegetation, road building and other human activities.
4. Systematic collection of toads, especially *Bufo regularis* (the hero of our story) for purposes of teaching and research in Egyptian universities.

What can I do to help the toads?

1. If dissection is part of your study, try to use the least number possible.
2. Talk to teachers and friends at school and university about the importance of following scientific, hygiene and religious rules for dissection.
3. Never kill an animal except when really necessary, when you are sure it is for the good of man and other creatures sharing the planet.
4. Toads spend most of their lives on land, and therefore need cover provided by long weeds, thick trees and bushes in order to find food and shelter.
5. Try to contribute to keeping ponds and water streams clean from garbage and other wastes.



QUESTIONS:

1. Who is Egyptian Bufo?
2. Where does Bufo live?
3. How did the collectors kidnap Bufo?
4. Describe the pool into which the collectors put Bufo.
5. What did the students do to the toads?
6. How did the toads react once they heard what was going to happen to them?
7. How was Bufo when Rana found him?
8. Do humans bury the toads hygienically after dissection?
9. Do you agree to the toads protest against dissection? How can we help them?
10. How should Man treat frogs and other animals?
11. How are toads important to the environment?

Egyptian Bufo



" Also available: The clay animation of this story featuring new characters"

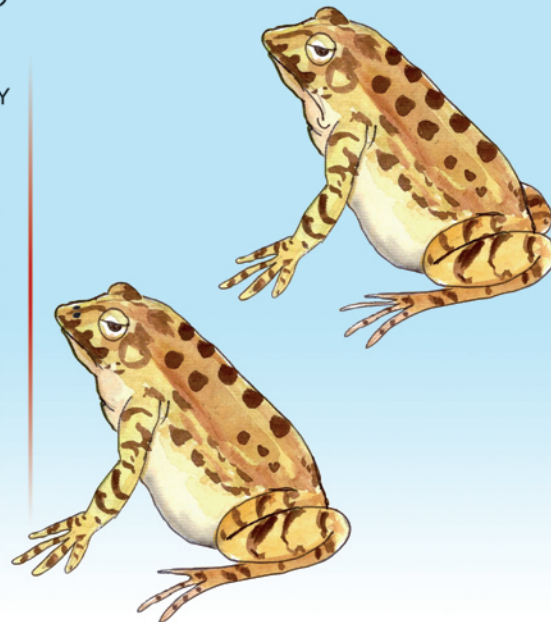
- GAMES -

SHADE THE WORDS ,
TO FIND OUT THE SECRET WORD

AMPHIBIANS - STUDENT - FROG - PIN - POND
WATER - SCIENCE - MOSQUITO - LABORATORY
HOP - DISSECT - FLIES - EGG - JUMP - LAND

A	M	P	H	I	B	I	A	N	S
L	A	B	O	R	A	T	O	R	Y
S	F	R	O	G	W	A	T	E	R
T	F	M	O	S	Q	U	I	T	O
U	L	P	D	I	S	S	E	C	T
D	I	L	A	N	D	E	G	G	
E	E	N	S	C	I	E	N	C	E
N	S	H	O	P	T	O	A	D	
T	P	O	N	D	J	U	M	P	

Find out five difference between
the two frogs :



This work is a part of the BioMAP project,
The Ministry of State for Environmental Affairs, funded by
The Italian government in cooperation with the UNDP.



Coming Soon
"Miss turtle journey to Egypt"