Yasmin's Parcels



SKYLARKS

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Chapter One

Yasmin nibbled at the piece of bread in her hand. She was eating slowly, trying to make it last. She knew there was no more food in the house. She looked at the rest of her family. They were all so pale and thin. Mama and Papa and six little brothers and sisters were all

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squashed into the two dark rooms of their home. Papa was lying on the bed. Mama was rocking the baby in her arms.

"If only Papa's back would get better," sighed Mama. "Then he could find a job."

"And we wouldn't all be so hungry," said Yasmin.

She finished her bread.

"I wonder how your Grandmama is," said Mama.

"I think I'll go round and see her," said Yasmin.

It was very hot outside, but Yasmin hurried along the dusty streets. Soon she reached the tiny old cottage and pushed open the door.

"Hello, Grandmama," she called.

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"How are you today?"

"Very well, thank you."

Grandmama's voice sounded croaky and weak and Yasmin noticed how old and ill she looked. Grandmama was hungry, too.

I wish I had something to give her, thought Yasmin.

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After a little while, Yasmin went home. She sat in the corner, thinking. What could she do to help? Suddenly, she had an idea.

"I'm the oldest child in the family," she said to herself. "My family is starving. I must go and find some food."

She jumped up and ran to the door.

"I'm going out," she said.

"Don't be long," said Papa.

"No, Papa."

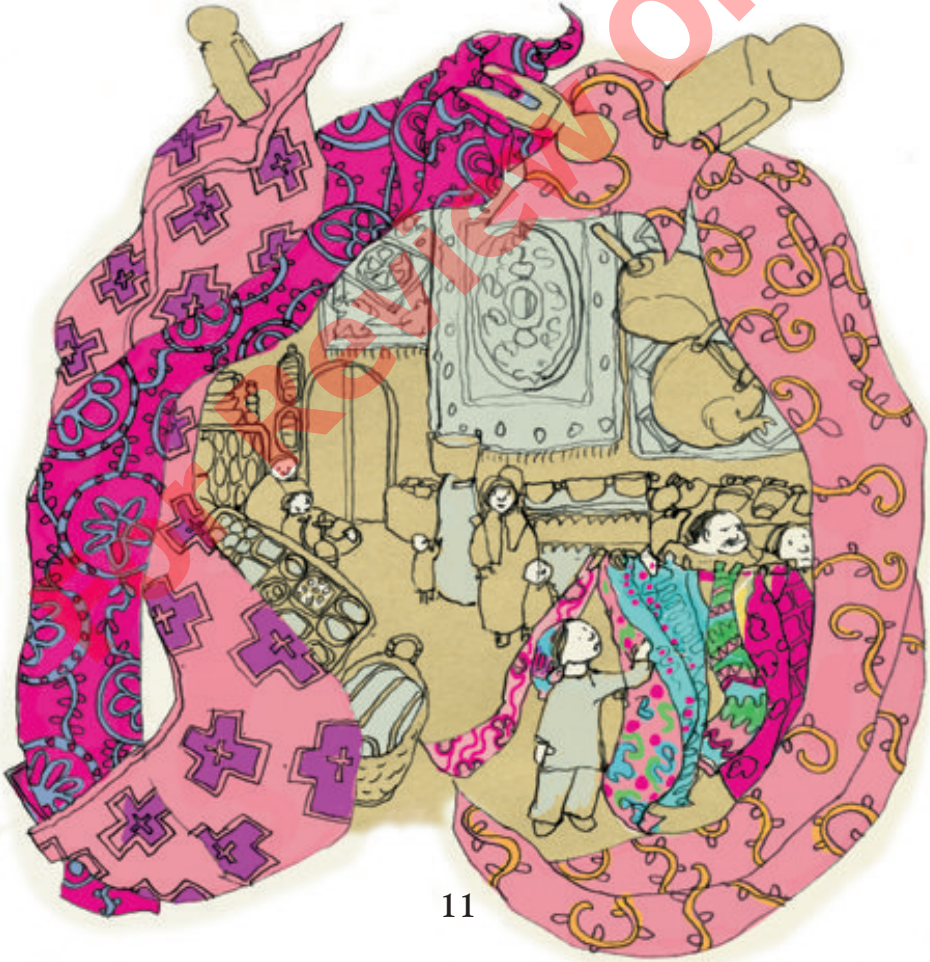
"Keep away from strangers," said Mama.

"Yes, Mama," called Yasmin as she went out into the street.

Yasmin walked into the town. First, she searched through rubbish bins, but she found nothing to eat there. So she went to the market place. She let her

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fingers trail through the beautiful fluttery silk scarves that rich people bought. She saw pottery jugs, colourful clothes, reed baskets, leather sandals and woven cloths, but she didn't find any food.



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Suddenly, she stopped. There in front of her was a small door that she had never noticed before. The door was ajar so she peeped inside.

"Come in," called an old crackly voice. It made Yasmin jump. She remembered what Mama had told her and she stepped back.

"Who are you?" she called.



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