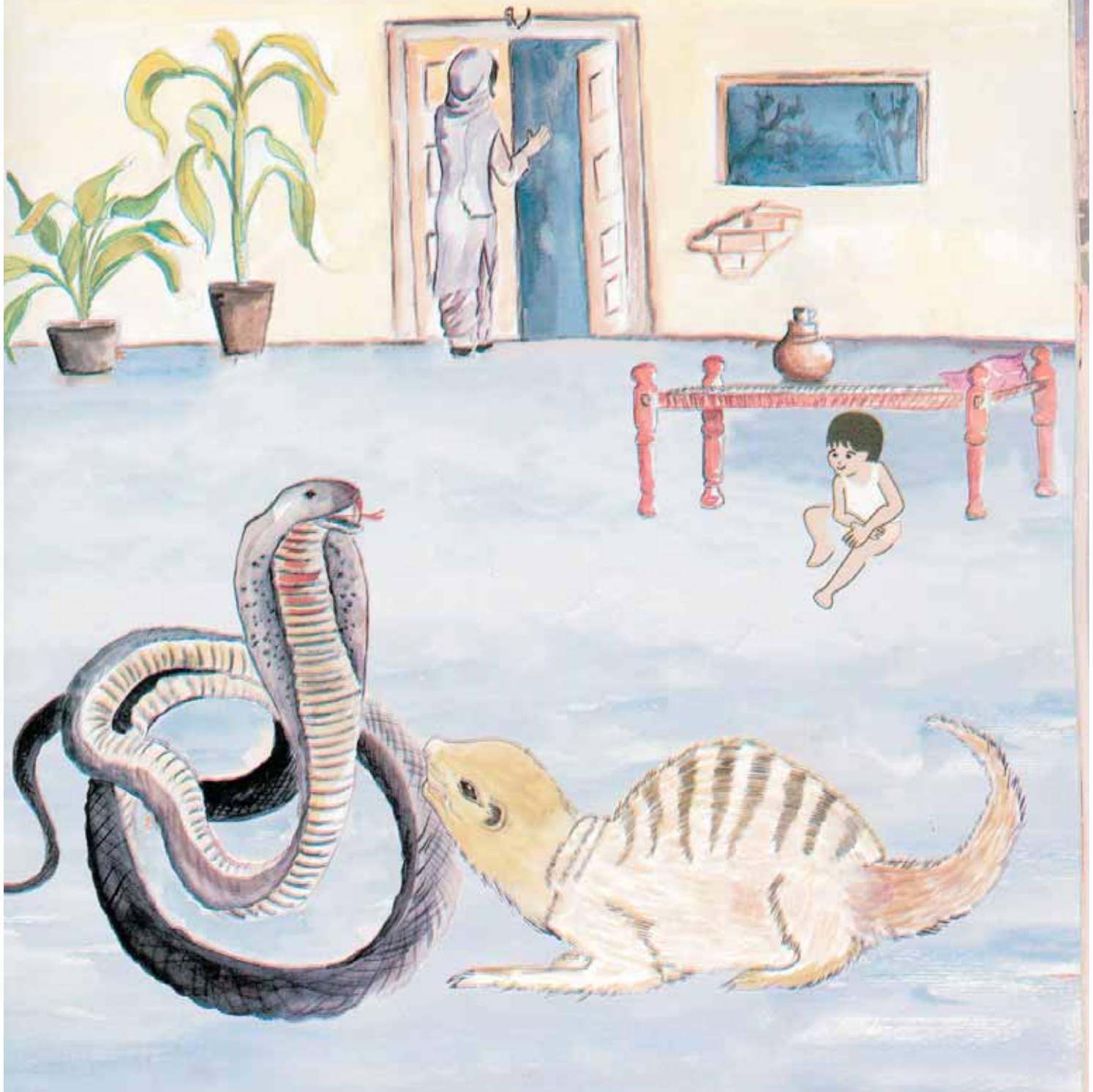


Haste makes waste



There was a law in the kingdom that everyone had to learn a skill and be good at it. It did not matter if a person was rich or poor, the king made sure everyone learnt a skill and helped their children learn one too. But alas the king's own son was the only person in the kingdom who had never learnt a skill and was not good at anything. The king would always explain to his son that even God liked people who learnt a good skill and tried to excel at it. But the king's advice fell on deaf ears. His son was very lazy and very stubborn. Eventually the king became so annoyed with his son's laziness that he threw him out of the royal palace and told him never to enter the gates unless he learnt a valuable skill.

The king's son, who was humiliated and thrown out, began to think that it was not necessary to learn a skill. He was the prince of the kingdom and everyone would treat him well. All the subjects would feed him and take good care of him and he would never have to go through the trouble of learning any skill ever. But he was very wrong. Every house that he went to, every door that he knocked he was turned down. People were willing to help him but not for long. After all, he did not contribute or help in anyway as he was not good at anything. Soon the king's son had nowhere to go and nothing to eat.

One day he came across an ironsmith who was making something out of iron. His work fascinated the king's son and the prince went up to the ironsmith and asked him if he would teach him his trade. The ironsmith agreed and the king's son became his apprentice. But it was hard work. The ironsmith would make the prince work very hard all day but also taught him many things. In a few months the prince became so adept at his trade that he began making his own tools. Word spread around so fast of the prince learning a skill that in no time the king heard the good news too.

The king sent for one of his messengers to call his son to the royal palace. The prince presented himself towards his father. The king asked his son if he had learnt a skill to which the prince gladly replied that he did and that he was very good at it. The king was overjoyed at this and he allowed his son back to royal palace.