



To Adam the artist—KA • For Herman, John O and John S, with a debt of gratitude—BW

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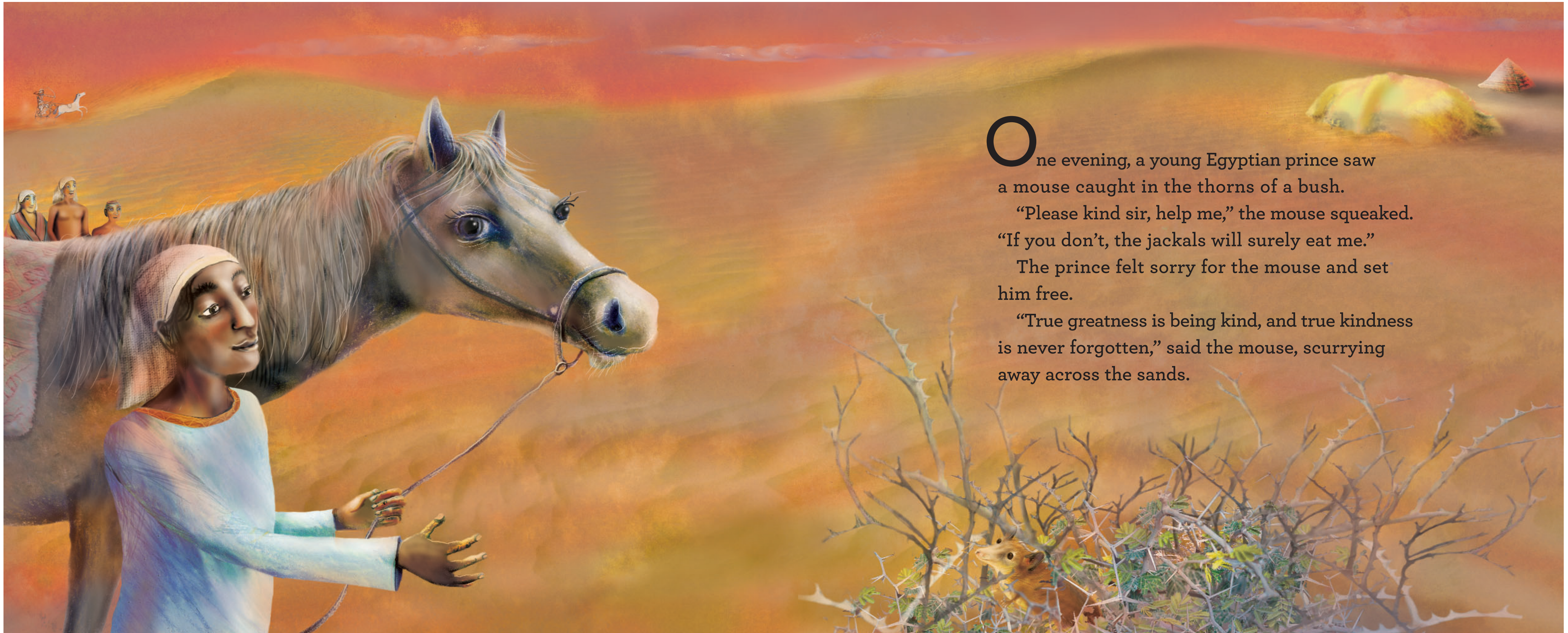
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The Mouse Who Saved Egypt

Karim Alrawi *illustrated by* Bee Willey



VANCOUVER • LONDON



One evening, a young Egyptian prince saw a mouse caught in the thorns of a bush.

“Please kind sir, help me,” the mouse squeaked. “If you don’t, the jackals will surely eat me.”

The prince felt sorry for the mouse and set him free.

“True greatness is being kind, and true kindness is never forgotten,” said the mouse, scurrying away across the sands.





The young prince dreamt that the sun god spoke to him:

*I, Amon-Ra, give life to this land,
Yet, my image lies buried deep in the sand.
Neglected, forgotten, banished from sight,
I'll make him pharaoh who brings it to light.*





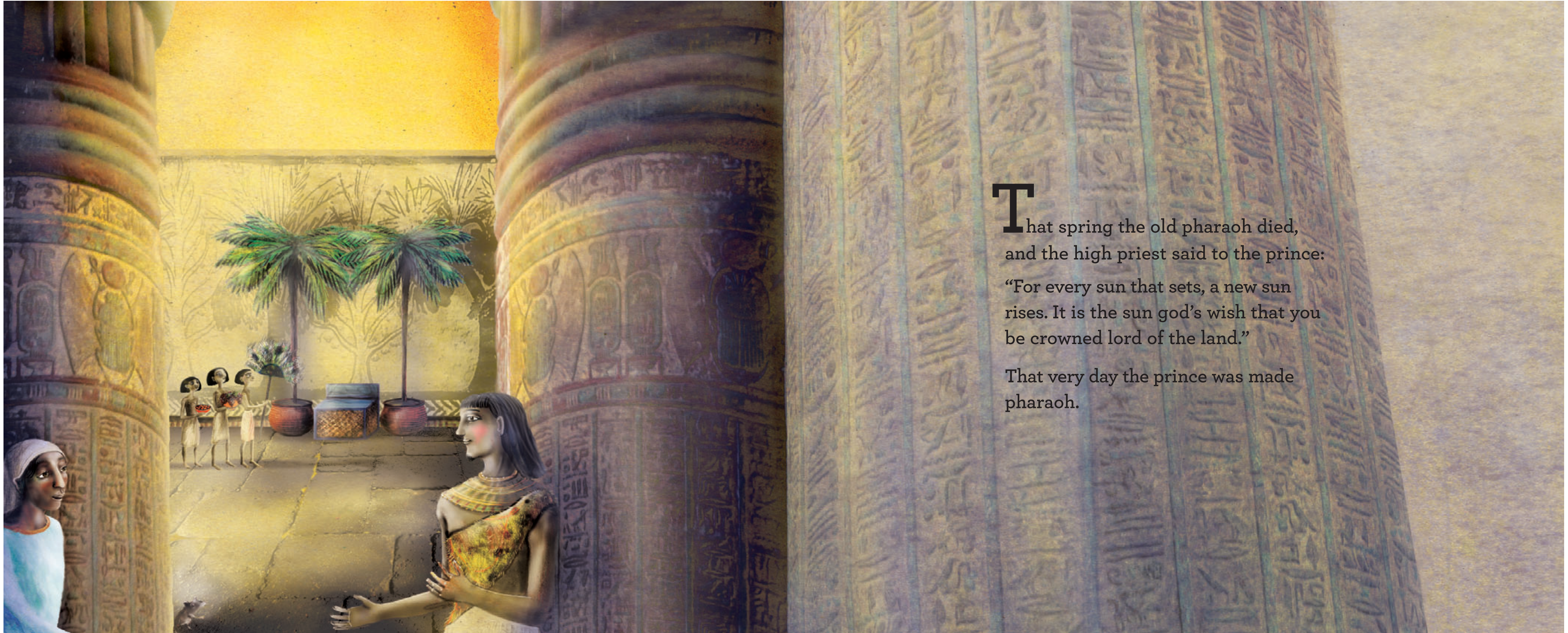
When the prince awoke, he tried to imagine what the sun god's words meant, *Could the sun god be that great rock rising out of the sand?*





On returning to the palace, the young prince ordered that the sand be cleared from around the great rock. Working day and night, workmen uncovered a giant stone sphinx, part man and part lion—the sacred image of the sun god, Ra.





That spring the old pharaoh died,
and the high priest said to the prince:
“For every sun that sets, a new sun
rises. It is the sun god’s wish that you
be crowned lord of the land.”

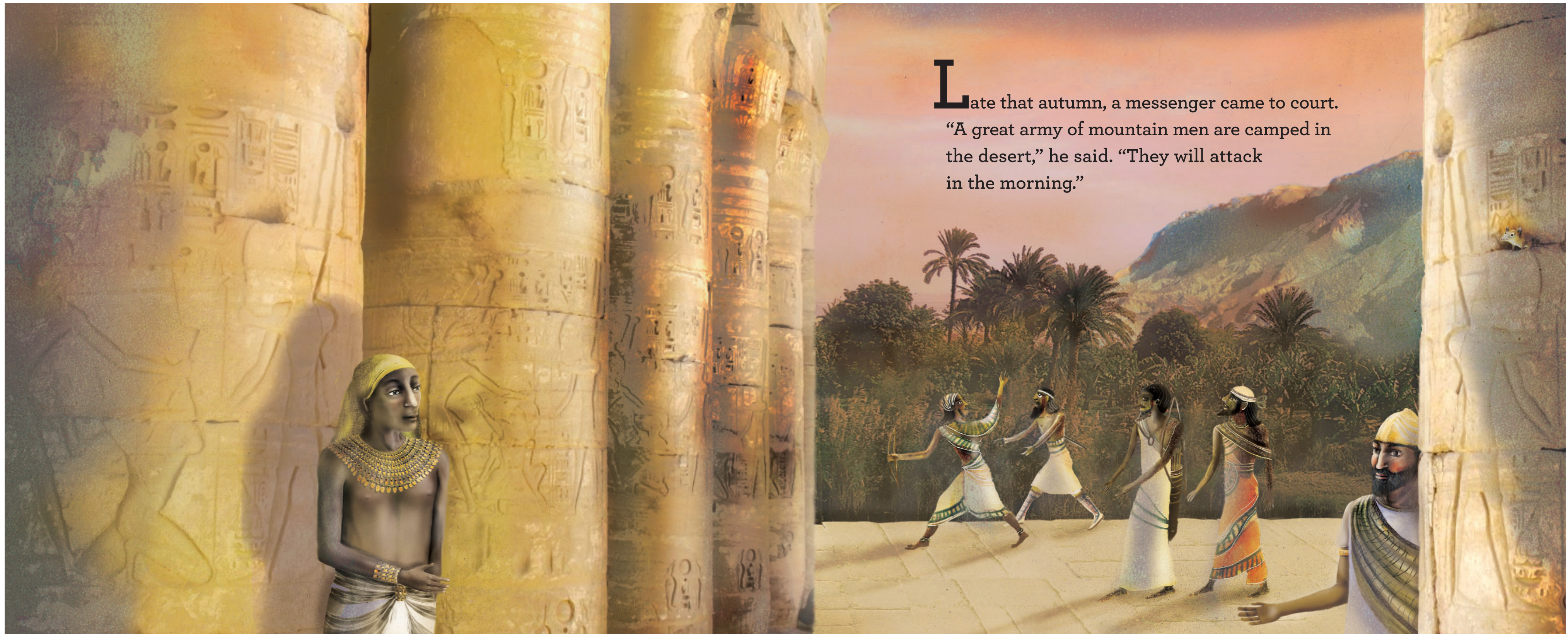
That very day the prince was made
pharaoh.



The young pharaoh ruled kindly and wisely, always mindful of

the sun god's blessings. The country prospered, and the mice ate well.





Late that autumn, a messenger came to court.
“A great army of mountain men are camped in
the desert,” he said. “They will attack
in the morning.”





The pharaoh prayed to the sun god. “Please, protect us from the mountain men.”

The sun god answered:

*Every kind act is a seed sown;
Aiding others with their troubles
Reaps help with one’s own.*





The mouse heard the pharaoh's prayer.
"The kind man who rescued me from the
thorns needs our help," he said to his friends.





Late that night, thousands of tiny mice set off across the desert. While the mountain men slept, the mice chewed through the leather of their bows, their saddles and the straps of their shields.





In the morning, the mountain men could not tie their sandals, and their clothes fell off. The mice had eaten through their laces and belts. They could not saddle their horses, nor lift their shields, nor draw their bows. When they saw the pharaoh leading his soldiers, the enemy fled.





At the foot of the stone sphinx, the young pharaoh built a temple to the sun god. Inside he placed a golden mouse to remind the people of Egypt that acts of kindness will always be rewarded—though sometimes in unexpected ways.

