**The Magic Garden of the Poor**

Long ago, there were two friends. One was a farmer and the other was a shepherd. One day, disaster struck and a terrible disease killed all the shepherd's sheep. His friend, the farmer, didn't hesitate to help. He gave half his land to the shepherd so that he could become a farmer, too. While the shepherd was digging in his new fields, he found a chest full of gold. He took it to the farmer.

“You are rich, my friend,” he said. “I found this gold on your land.”

“Ah,” replied the farmer, “but it is your land now, so you are the rich one.”

The two men could not agree, so they took their problem to a wise man. The wise man asked his four students what to do. The first said that the shepherd found the gold in the ground, so he should put it back in the ground. The second said that the men brought the gold to the wise man, so it should belong to the wise man. The third said that the ground was part of the nation, which belonged to the Khan, so they should give the gold to the Khan. The wise man didn't like any of these answers, so he turned to the last student.

“I think, because neither the farmer nor the shepherd wants the gold, we should use it to make a garden for poor people, where they can come to rest and find food.”

“An excellent idea!” cried the wise man, and the farmer and the shepherd agreed. “As it was your idea,” he added, addressing the student, “you can go to the city and buy the seeds, and I will give you the land.”

So the student left for the city. He was on his way to buy the seeds when he saw a caravan of camels passing by. It carried hundreds of birds, all tied upside-down by their feet. The student felt so sorry for the birds that he offered to buy them at once, and he gave the camel driver all the gold. Then he set the birds free and they flew into the sky.

He turned and left for home, but when he saw the land where he was supposed to plant the seeds, he fell to the ground.

“What have I done?” he cried. “I have failed in my task! I was supposed to bring seeds to make a beautiful garden, but I spent all the gold on setting the birds free!”

The birds flying by heard the student's cries, and they passed the message to others. Then, from every corner of the land, birds came carrying seeds of every kind. They planted them on the wise man's land and a beautiful garden sprang up. Poor people came from far and wide to eat the amazing fruit that grew there. At night, the ones who had no homes, slept peacefully under the trees. Rich people, too, heard about this amazing place and they travelled for days to see it. When they arrived, however, the gates slammed shut and the walls grew higher. The garden possessed a strange magic and no one could enter except those who needed help.