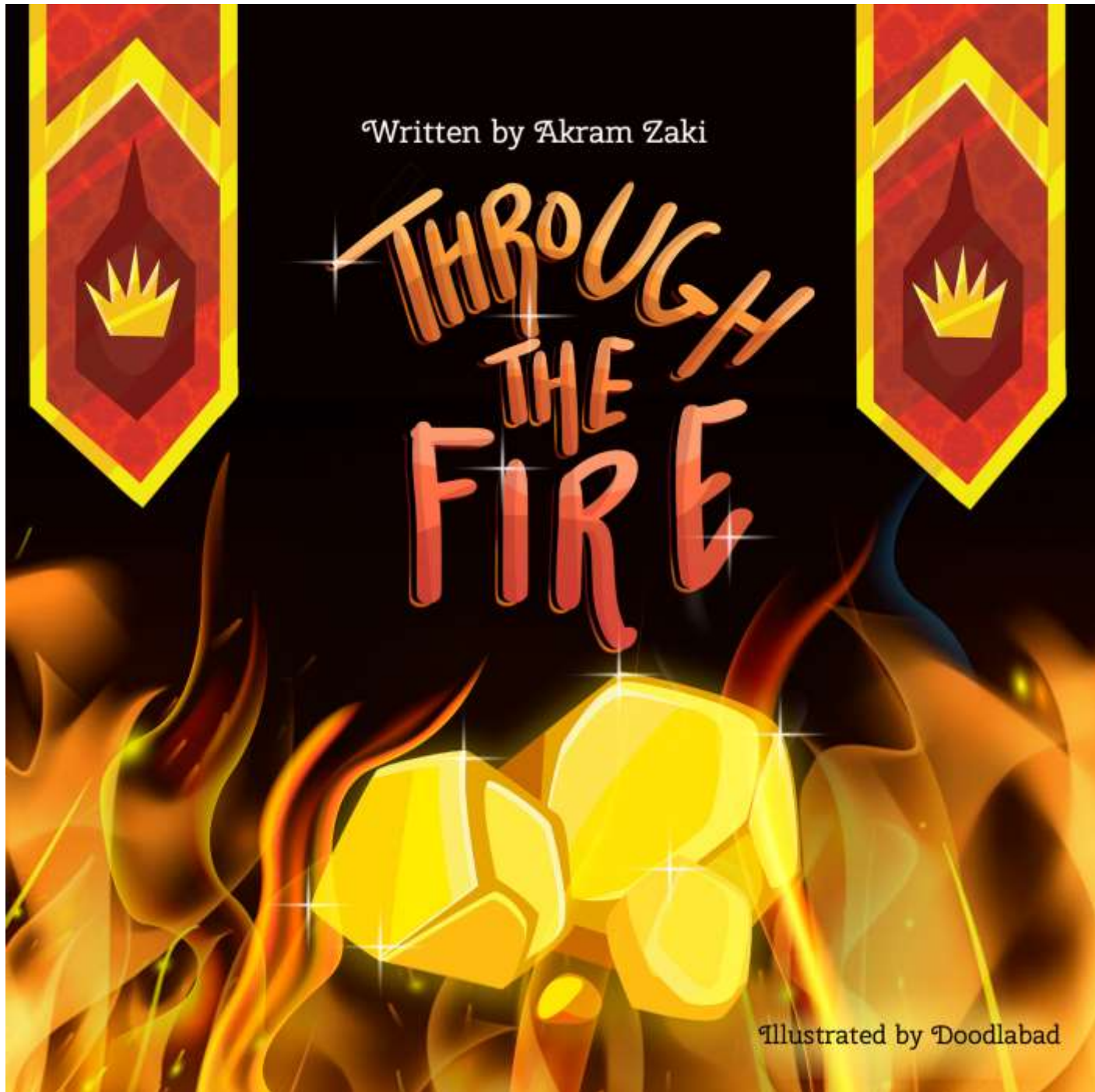


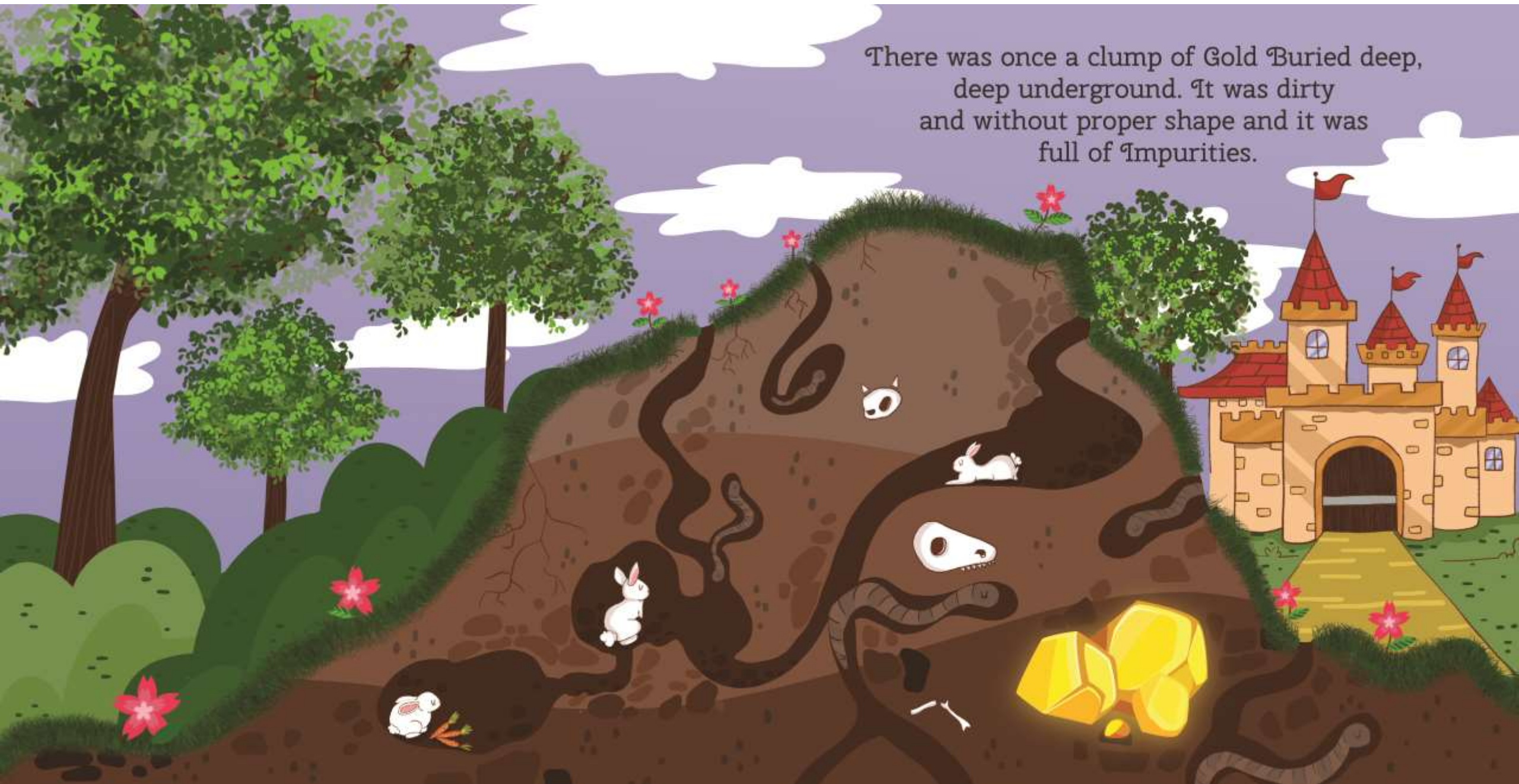
Written by Akram Zaki

THROUGH THE FIRE

Illustrated by Doodlabad



There was once a clump of Gold Buried deep,
deep underground. It was dirty
and without proper shape and it was
full of Impurities.



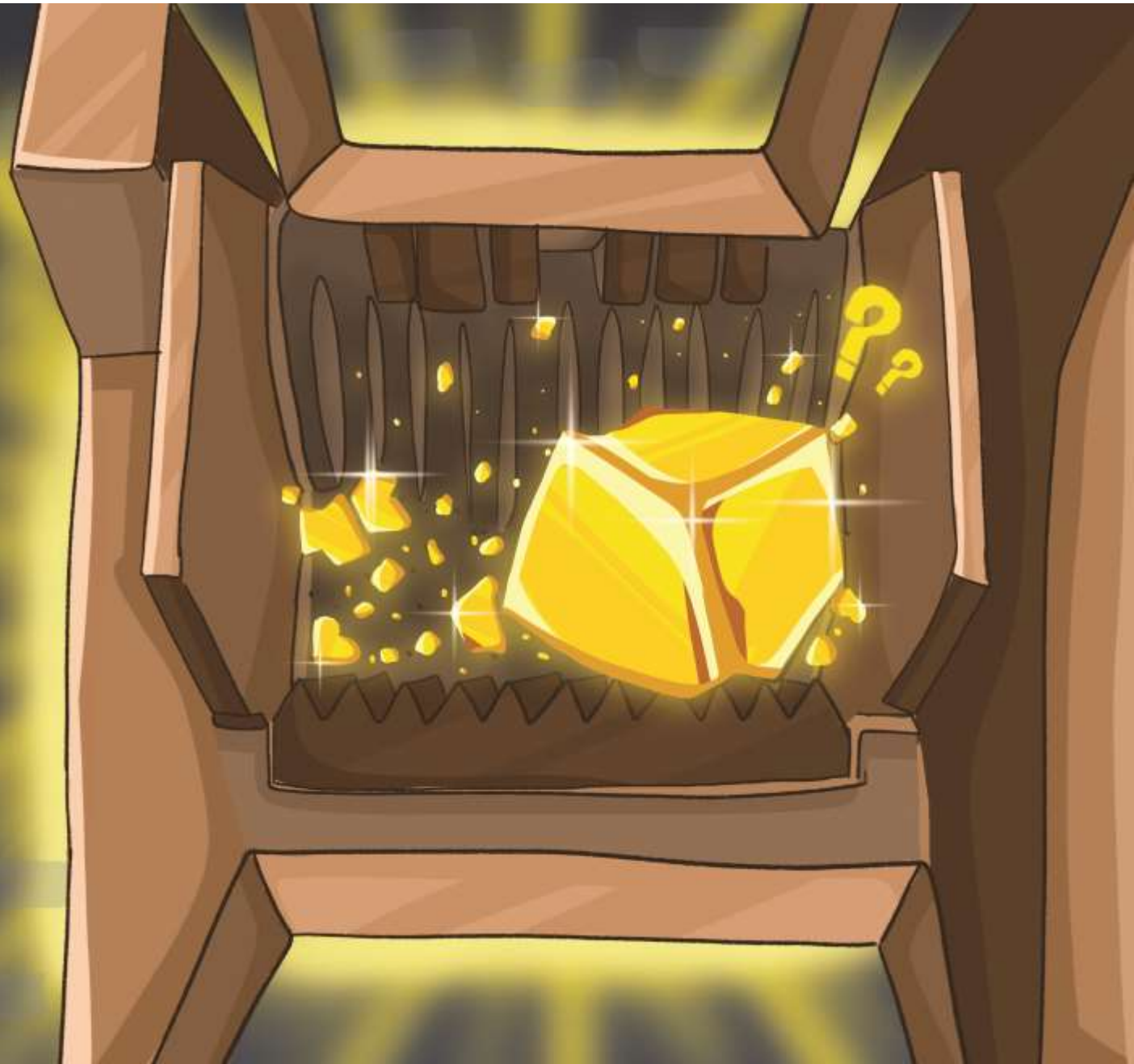


One day a man came with a shovel and dug out the big clump of gold. He placed it into a large container of water, where sharp pointy brushes scraped the clump and scraped and scraped.

The clump wondered who this man was and why he was scraping him. Soon the scraping stopped and the clump was feeling very sore.

The man returned and picked up the clump and placed him on another machine. This one had a big flat floor and many rectangle roofs. The roofs were going up and down very fast crushing everything they would land on.

The clump was very frightened and soon began to think that the man who put him here was very wicked indeed.





After being painfully crushed the clump, or now pieces of the clump, lay in a bucket. “What more could the wicked man do” he wondered as the man returned. The man carried the bucket to a large room and poured out the pieces of the clump into a large clay bowl on the floor and then left. The room began to heat up and the clump realized it was a furnace. The clump screamed in pain as he began to melt. Hours later the clump woke up to find himself in another room.



He was not as hot as before but
was still glowing slightly red.
But then the horrible man came back.

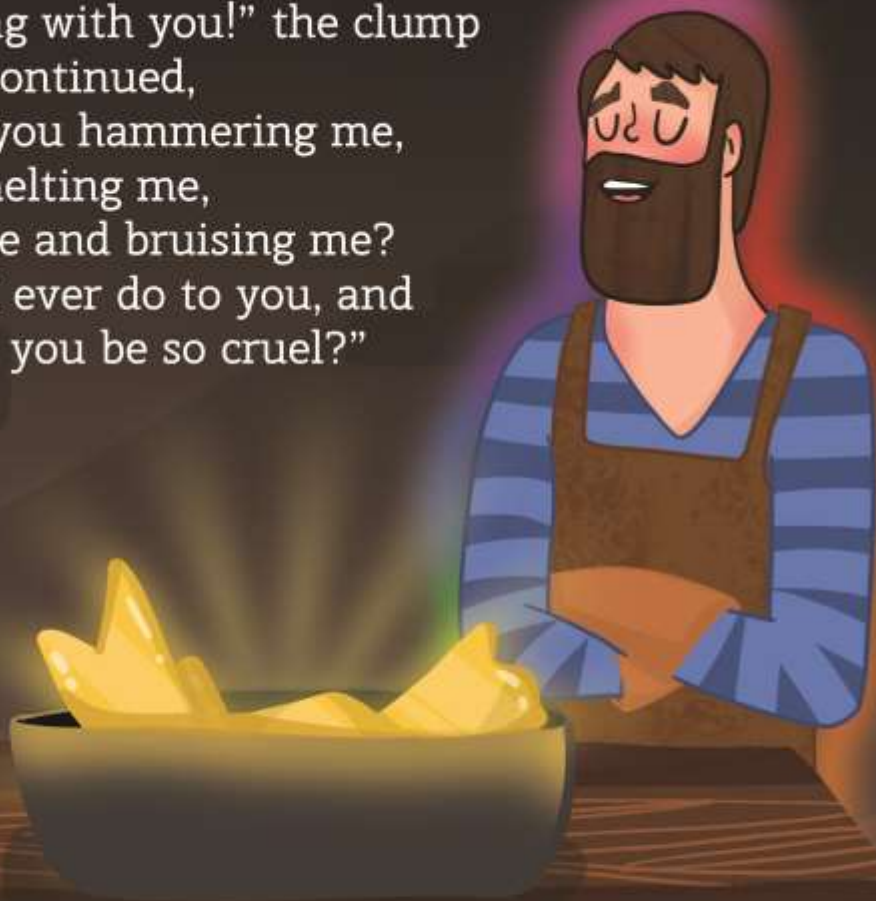
This time with a big hammer..
The clump was really starting to wonder what
he did to deserve all this and how
any one could be so mean and nasty.

The man began to hammer away at the clump, heat him back up with a flaming torch, hammer again and again until the lump had had enough.

“STOP IT!!!” he yelled. The man looked up, slightly surprised that such a loud yell could come from a small clump.



“What is wrong with you!” the clump continued,
“Why are you hammering me,
melting me,
crushing me and bruising me?
What did I ever do to you, and
how could you be so cruel?”



The man smiled,
turned around and
walked to the other
side of the room.




He returned holding a mirror which he showed the clump. The clump looked into the mirror and stared. He stared at the mirror for a long time for he was no longer looking at a clump of dirty, muddy gold that he used to be, but now he was staring at a beautiful golden crown.

“You see,” the Man began.

“I am a craftsman for the king.”



I found you in the ground and decided to make you into a crown for his majesty. But I had to clean you first. That is what the brushes were for. Then I had to get rid of the impurities inside you that is why I crushed and melted you. Then I had to shape you and mould you into a crown.



That is why I hammered you. I didn't mean for it to hurt, but it was the only way I could make you into a crown. The clump thought to himself for a while.

Perhaps the craftsman was right. It had hurt a lot, being scraped, crushed and hammered, but now he was something precious to the king.



So the clump became
the king's crown.
And he was
thankful to the
craftsmen who
had helped him.

The End.