

short pants with big ears and reddish, mongoloid eyes. He was pointing his forefinger at Omar whose kuffiya was hanging down to the ground. Saliva drooled from his half-open mouth and his chin was rapidly becoming wet. Suddenly he realized that many eyes were watching him. He stopped his laughing and stuck out his long tongue.

«Oh, this is mad Hamada. Hamada! Hamada! Hamada! Come over here!» The children were delighted at the coming fun while their leader was rearranging his kuffiya after being insulted by Hamada's impudence.

Hamada quickly changed his bewildered face to a smile and began tottering toward the group, turning to all sides. The boys laughed and surrounded him, pinching his cheeks and mocking his outstretched tongue. Hamada was confused, alternately smiling and wrinkling his forehead.

«Hamada will be Sharon!» Omar shouted with self-confidence now that he had resolved one problem.

«Yes, yes, yes, Hamada will be Sharon,» the children agitated. While Hamada watched them embarrassed, some children had already started to shoot at him which annoyed him very much. Then he approached Omar, touching his kuffiya.

«Drop it, Hamada! It is not for you. You are Sharon. Omar was furious but Hamada stubbornly tried to drag away his kuffiya.

«Kill him! Kill him! Sharon wants to steal our kuffiya.» Omar exhorted his soldiers to improve their patriotism: «Don't let him put us to shame.»

Hamada got very excited. Omar and the other boys began to beat him, but he endured their blows, still clutching his corner of the kuffiya. Then he burst into tears.

«Airplanes!» somebody cried out, hearing the sound of a car on the neighboring street.

Amna was startled, intending to run, but she quickly calmed down and coldly noted that she was not in Saida anymore.

it from reality.

The boys were already in their shelters. Only Omar and Hamada were left in the dust, rolling over and over, each tugging at his corner of the kuffiya. Amna felt that the situation might turn into something very serious and she jumped up to separate the two brave fighters. She had pain in her toe but still she was very quickly above the wrestlers' heads.

«Stand up, both of you,» she ordered them sharply. They were still fighting but with less energy, having been surprised by her interference.

«And give me the kuffiya,» she was resolute, pulling at the third corner of the kuffiya until she had dragged it from their hands.

«Stand up quickly!» she urged them while they were trying to place their palms on the sandy ground to push themselves up. Their fingers were still convulsed and they were watching each other like harassed wolves. Hamada was crying silently.

«Sharon got help,» somebody cried from the shelter, intending to keep up the game.

«Look at Hamada, how he is crying,» another voice mocked, but with a deflated passion for play.

Hamada was startled to hear his name and then wiped his nose on his sleeve. His face was soiled by tear stains.

«Come out, you who are mocking your friend,» Amna was provoking him, watching the direction where the voice had come from. Nobody moved. Then she turned to Omar, «That was very nasty of you.» Omar cast his eyes down.

«We were only playing. Somebody had to be Sharon,» he hesitantly justified their behavior.

«But you violated your friend,» she countered his argument.

The boys were coming out of their shelters, interested in the conversation. Seeing that he was no longer being attacked, Hamada smiled at Omar in a friendly way, peering into his face. Omar tried to understand what he wanted.

«This is your kuffiya, Omar.» Amna ended their silent dialogue. Omar took it and energetically put it around Hamada's neck.

«It's for Hamada,» he said firmly. The children cheered their support for the new friendship, and Hamada got very thrilled about this new situation.

«As you like,» Amna shrugged her shoulders with a smile and then looked at her watch. «Oh, I'm late,» she said to herself, intending to go.

«Are you collecting help for our wounded fedayeen?» the bowlegged boy asked her.

«Yes,» she answered.

«I know you...I have seen you many times.» He was proud of having any relation to her, as she had gained a sort of respect from the others.

«Oh, really?» muttered Amna sunk in her own thoughts.

«But we haven't anything to send them,» Omar excused, finding this moment suitable for repairing the bad impression he had left on her.

«Never mind, never mind.» Amna was in a hurry. «It's important that you think about them.» She wanted to leave when Hamada took off the kuffiya and handed it to her. She understood from his eyes what he wanted.

«Yes, Hamada, it will be our Ramadan present to the wounded fighters,» the boys exclaimed support of Hamada's gesture.

«I will give it to them with great pleasure,» Amna promised and then disappeared in a cloud of dust with their valuable present. For a long time she could hear children's voices as they began a new game. But this time, nobody was the enemy, because nobody wanted to be.

