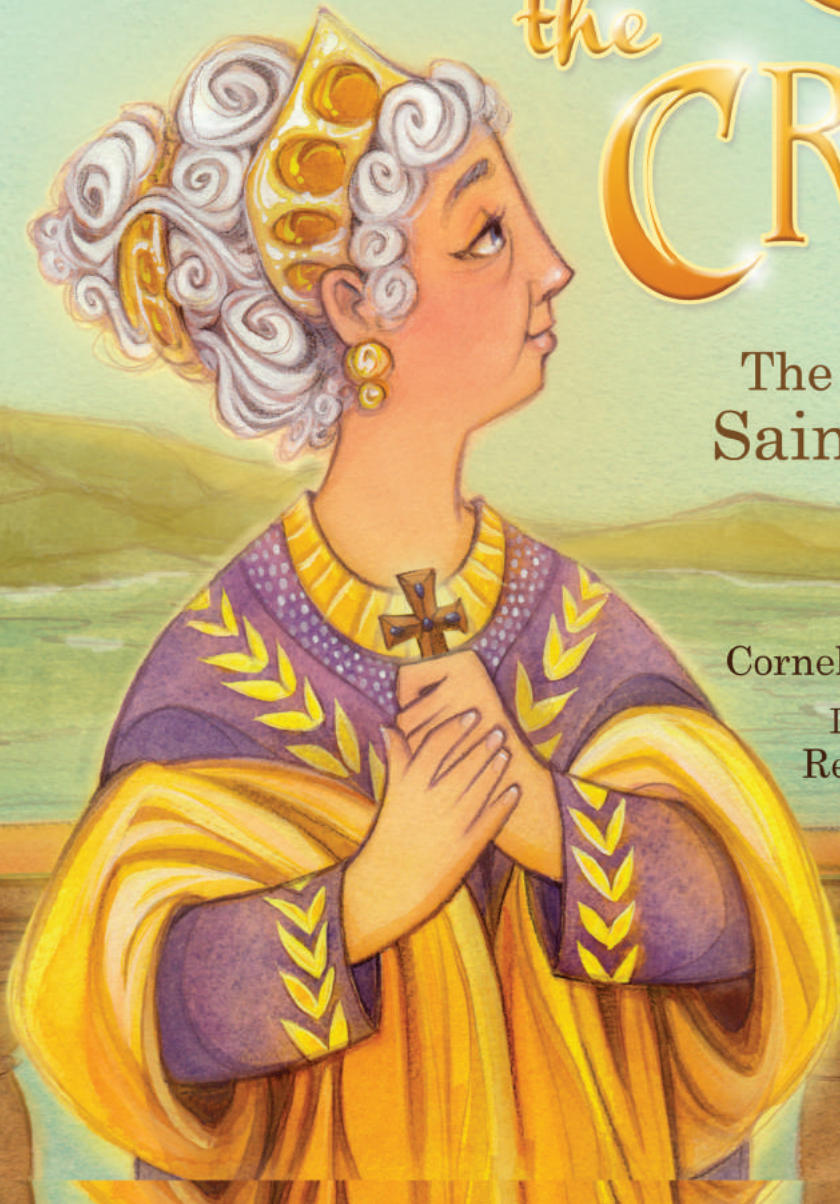


the
QUEEN &
the
CROSS

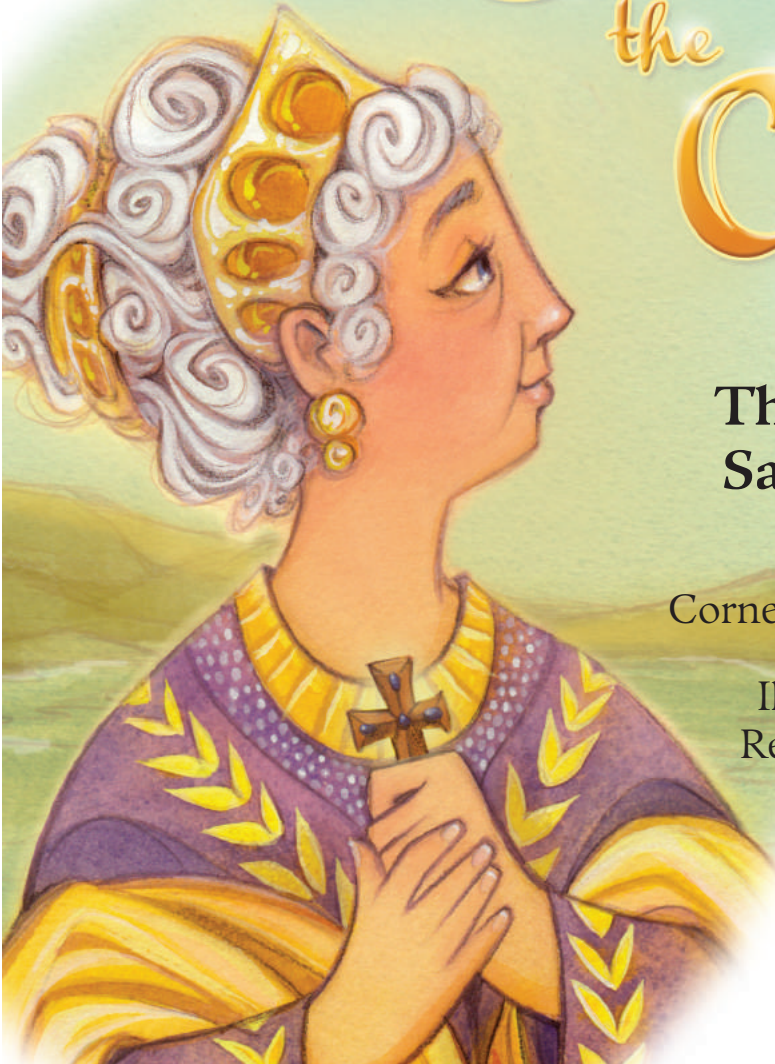
The Story of
Saint Helen

Written by
Cornelia Mary Bilinsky

Illustrated by
Rebecca Stuhff



the
QUEEN &
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**The Story of
Saint Helen**

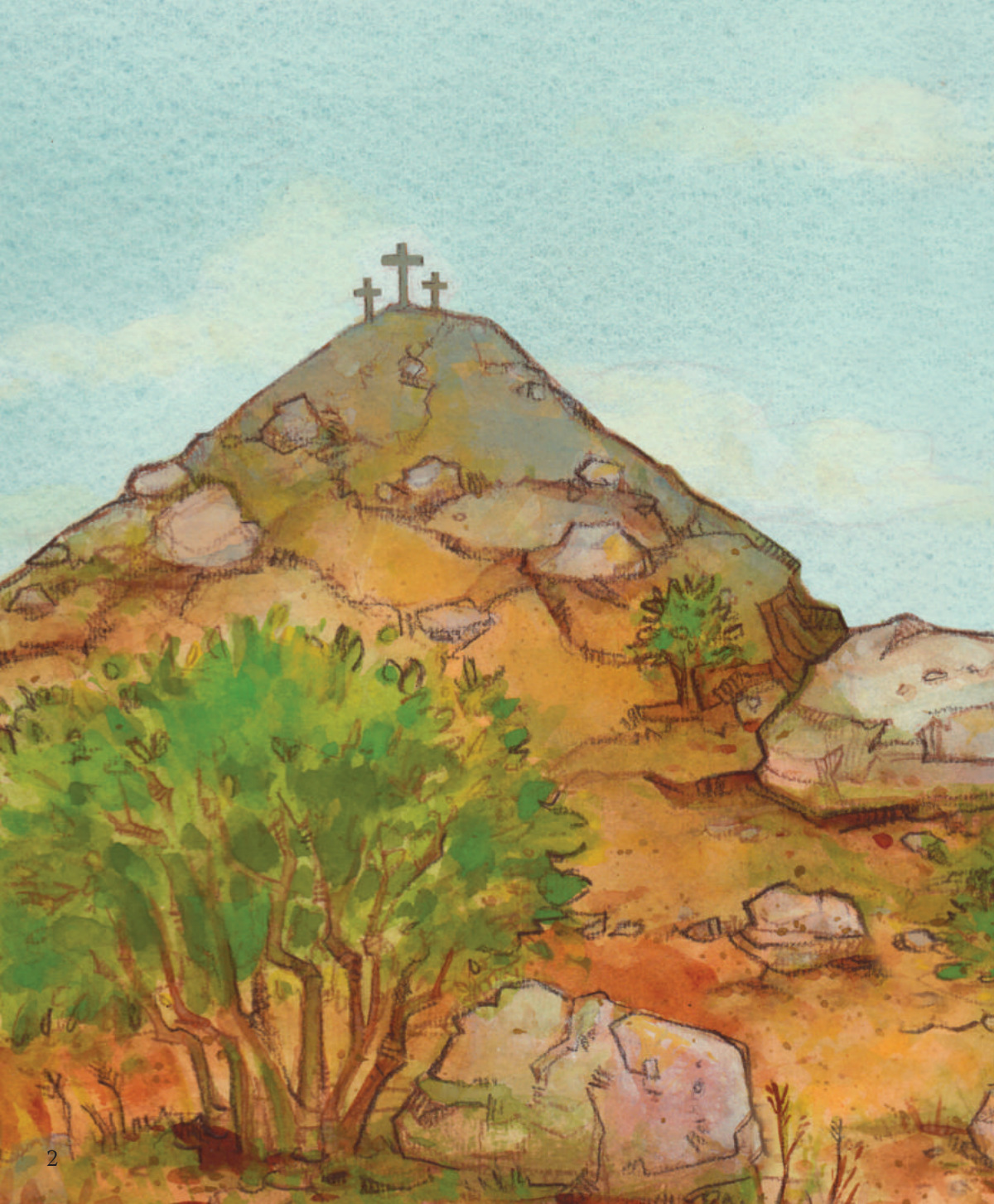
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Dear Lord

Jesus Christ,
as we look upon
your holy cross,
grant us the grace
to see clearly what Saint Helen saw when at last
she found the precious wood on which you so
willingly gave your life: the great love in your
outstretched arms,
the deep sorrow
in your sacred heart
because of our sins,
forgiveness whispered
through dying lips,
and the promise that
this was not the end
but the beginning,
the dawn of your
holy resurrection
and new life for all
of us. Help us to treasure
your cross above all things,
and honor it in all the small
crosses you ask us to carry as we follow you.

Amen.



*All Christians know that Jesus died on the cross
a long, long time ago. And all Christians know that
Jesus was taken down from the cross, buried in a
tomb, and on the third day rose again to new life.
But does anyone know what happened to the cross
on which Jesus died?*



Queen Helen finished her evening prayers but remained standing with her hands clasped. Her eyes were fixed on the wooden cross hanging beside her bed. It had been given to her by the priest who had baptized her fifteen years before. Since that day, Queen Helen had faithfully offered her daily prayers before the cross. It gave her great comfort to see it, to touch it, and to kiss it.



Tonight, however, the elderly queen felt very restless. Something was on her mind and would not go away.

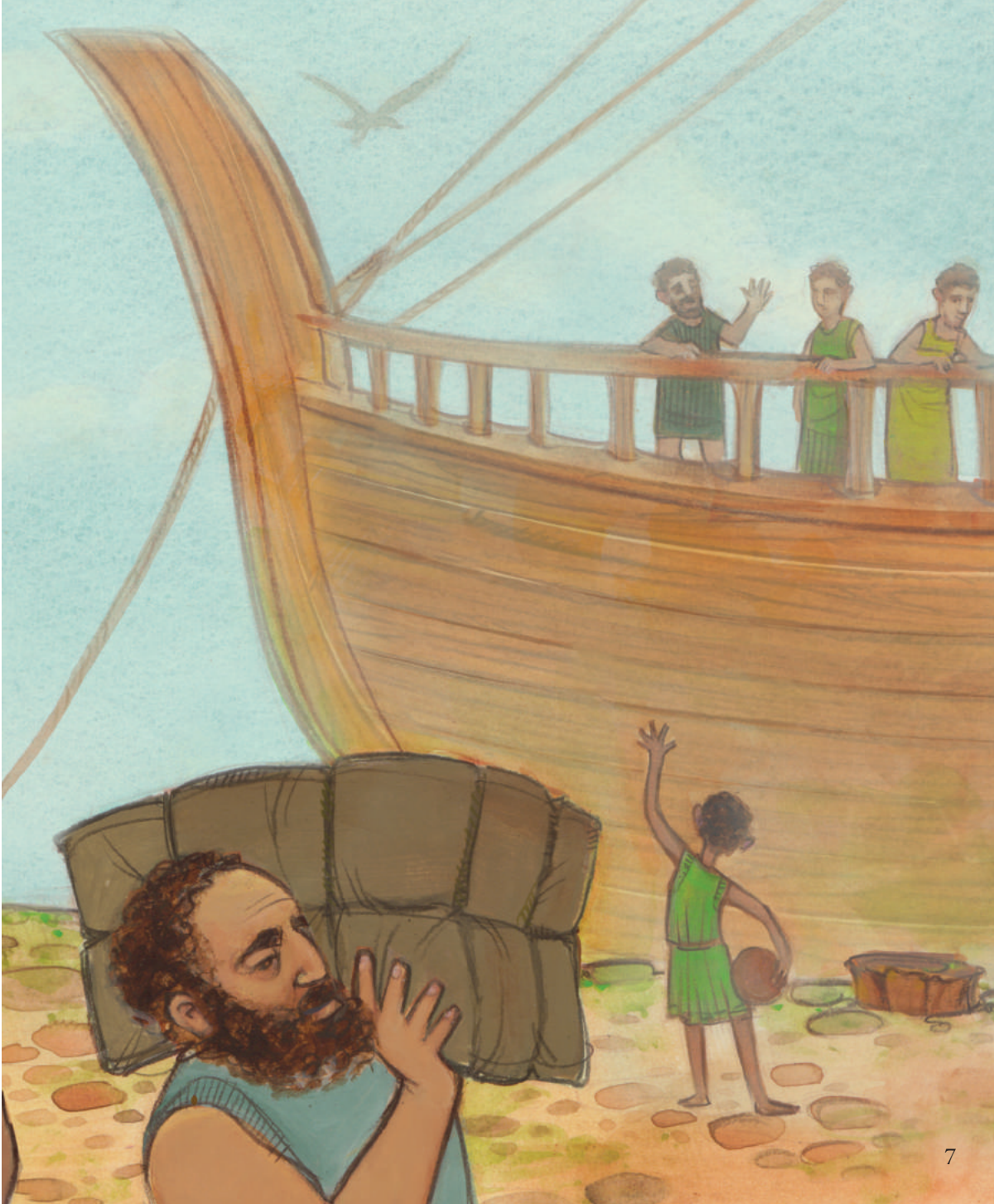
This cross is very precious to me, she thought, but the true cross on which Jesus died is even more precious! How I would love to kiss the wood on which my Savior gave his life!

When she finally went to bed, Queen Helen had made up her mind. *I will go to the Holy Land and search for the holy cross!*



With the blessing of her son, the Emperor Constantine, Queen Helen made her preparations. She gathered a company of good friends and workers. Together they set sail on a journey from Rome to Palestine. After many days, they arrived in Jerusalem.







Immediately Queen Helen went to visit Bishop Macarius, the leader of the Christian church in Jerusalem.

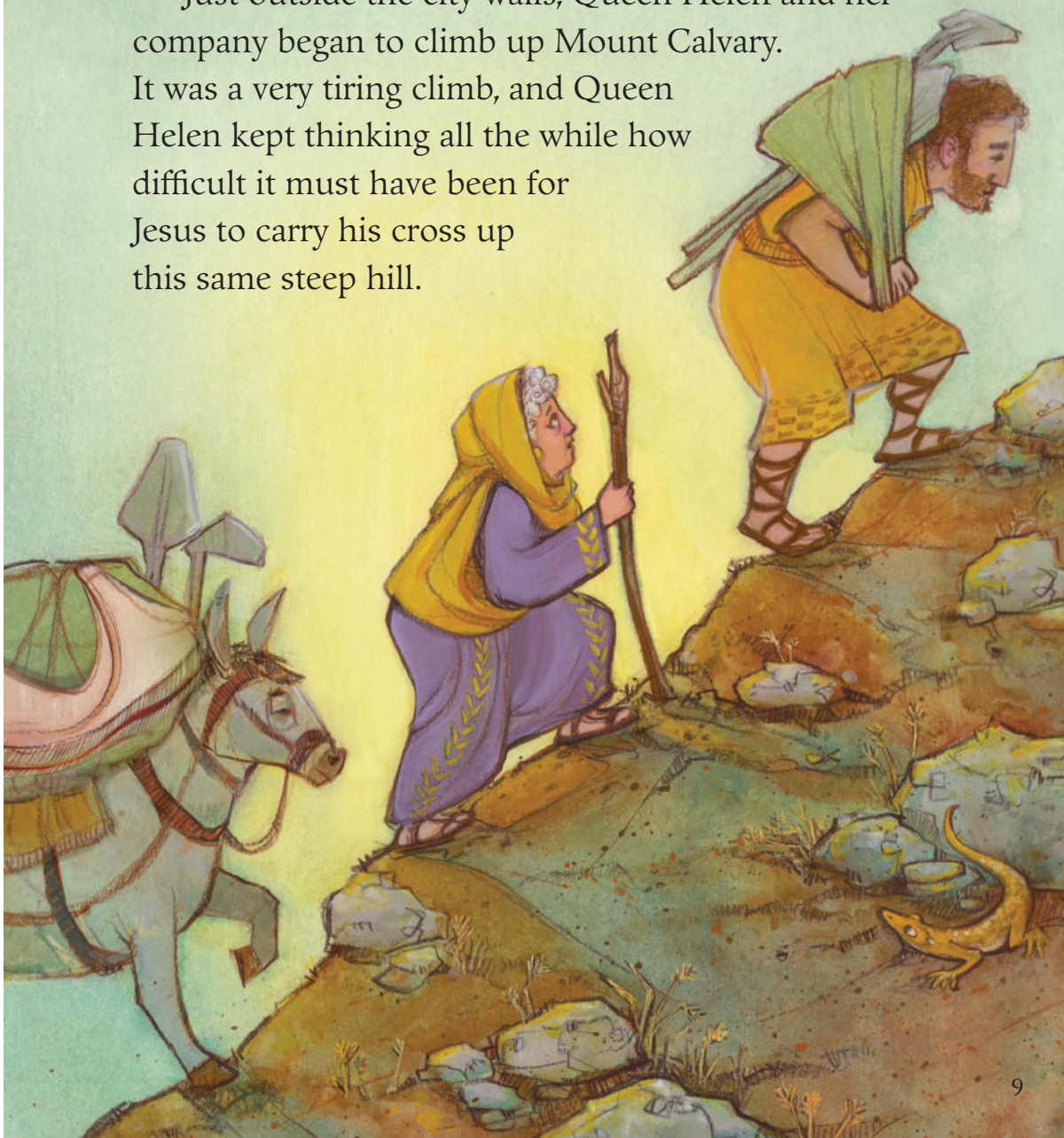
“I have come to find the cross on which Jesus died” she announced.

“It’s been three hundred years since Jesus was crucified!” Macarius said. “His cross was lost long ago. . . .”

“Then we must start looking for it!” the queen insisted.

The bishop smiled. “Perhaps you should begin your search on Mount Calvary. That is where Jesus died.”

Just outside the city walls, Queen Helen and her company began to climb up Mount Calvary. It was a very tiring climb, and Queen Helen kept thinking all the while how difficult it must have been for Jesus to carry his cross up this same steep hill.





When they reached the top, Queen Helen looked around in dismay. Everywhere there were huge piles of rubble, broken bricks, stones, sand, and dirt.

“With all this rubbish, how do you expect us to find a cross that was lost three hundred years ago?” the workers complained.

“We’ll have to dig until we find it,” Queen Helen answered.

“But where should we begin?” they asked. “Everything is in ruins!”