بلدية دبي
Dubai Municipality

HAMDAN
in Ras Al Khor Wildlife Sanctuary

The large notice board towered over Hamdan as he read through what seemed like a never ending list of rules.

Hamdan hated rules, and he loved to break them. He broke rules at home, in school, and he had every intention of breaking them here at the Ras Al Khor Wildlife Sanctuary in Dubai.

Hamdan felt his father’s hand on his head as he ruffled his hair, “Okay son, make sure to read the rules and remember them before we go in”

Some of the rules made the sanctuary seem boring, thought Hamdan, like “No collecting any living creature”, “No cutting or removing plants”, and “No destroying geological formations”.

Others didn’t even make sense to him, like “No introducing alien species or materials” and “No generating noise”. Grown ups didn’t know how to have fun, Hamdan thought to himself, but he did, and he planned to do just that, rules or no rules. The thought put a mischievous grin on his face.

Hamdan did not know why his parents had brought him to the sanctuary, and he didn’t really care, he thought animals were cool and wanted to see the flamingoes that Ras Al Khor was famous for.

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After a while of wandering through the sanctuary's beautiful wetland scenery, a flash of bright pink caught Hamdan's eye.

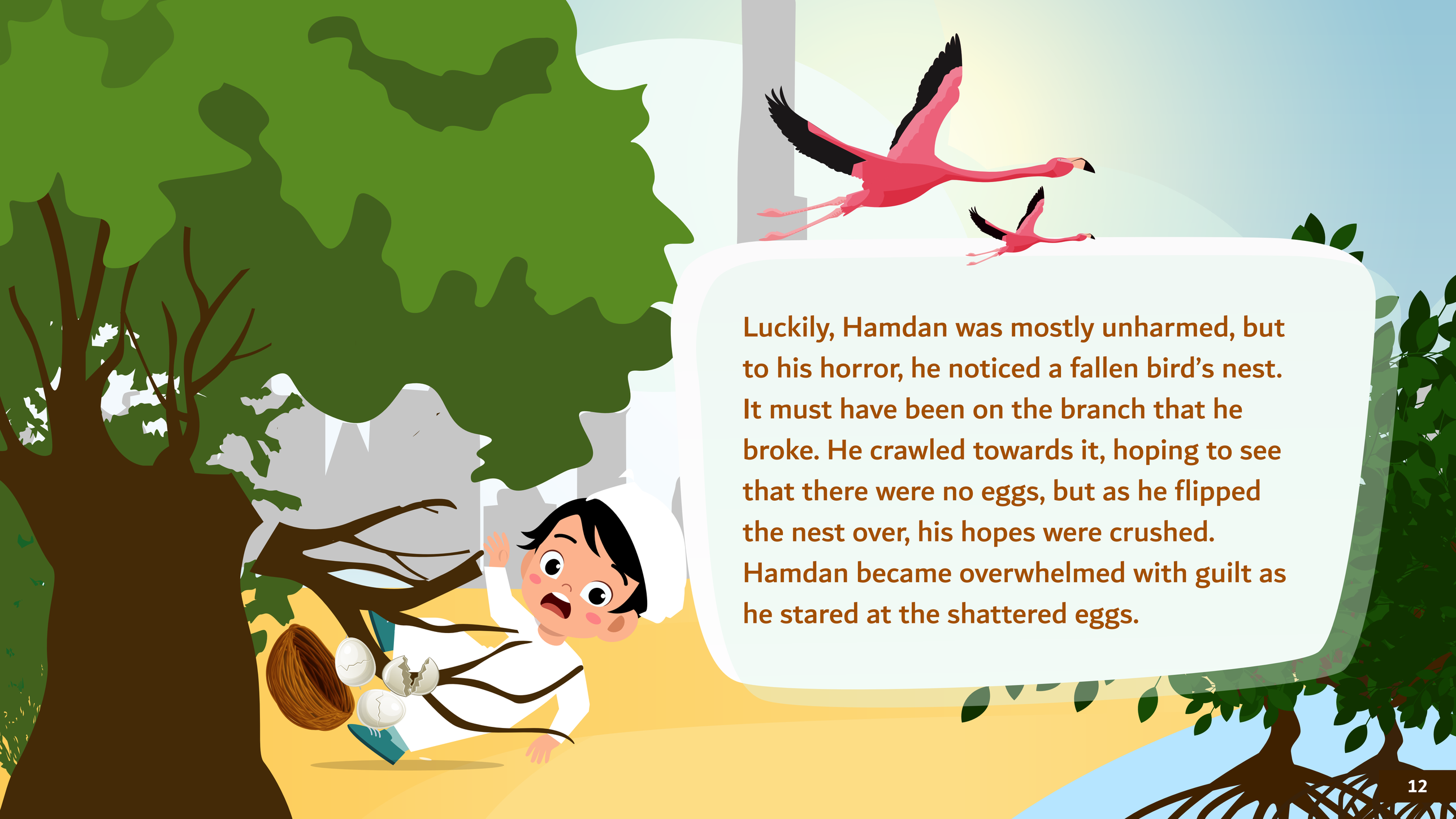
"Look mom, there they are, the flamingoes!"

He yelled before running off on his own towards them. He jumped down into the shallow water to get a better look. He moved quickly, as he remembered from the rules that this wasn't allowed. The flamingoes were awesome! **"They're huge!"** he exclaimed, the birds looked around 5 feet tall up close.

“Hamdan, wait!”
Yelled his mother, but it was too late; Hamdan was gone, and soon found himself a long way away from his parents or anyone else.

Hamdan wanted a better view, perhaps a view from higher up, he pondered. He spotted a nearby tree with long branches, knowing that climbing it would be against the rules, but he couldn’t resist a chance at that perfect view.

He ran over to the tree and began to climb. When he climbed high enough to reach a nearby branch, he leapt to grab it. To his surprise, the branch was not thick enough to support his weight and snapped, sending him tumbling down to the ground.



Luckily, Hamdan was mostly unharmed, but to his horror, he noticed a fallen bird's nest. It must have been on the branch that he broke. He crawled towards it, hoping to see that there were no eggs, but as he flipped the nest over, his hopes were crushed. Hamdan became overwhelmed with guilt as he stared at the shattered eggs.

“Hamdan! Are you okay?!” yelled his mother
As she and his father ran over to him.
He was covered in mud and tears.
His parents hugged him. “ **I’m sorry mom and dad, I didn’t mean to...,”** said Hamdan, sobbing. **“It’s okay”**, said his mother comfortingly, **“Let’s go get you cleaned up.”**

After this incident, Hamdan and his family walked back through the sanctuary. After what seemed like hours of silence.

Adel cleared his throat, **“Hamdan, do you know what rules are for?”**

Hamdan didn't say anything, but he was listening intently. **“Rules aren’t placed to stop you from having fun, they are to protect you and others around you”.**

Here in the Ras Al Khor Wildlife Sanctuary, the rules are there to protect the animals that live here and the birds that use this area as a migratory resting spot.

It's often difficult for animals to find a refuge away from humans, and this is one of the places that they can feel like they are living in their natural habitat.

"This is their home, and we want to protect it for their sake, do you understand?"

“Dad, tell me some more about the rules in the sanctuary,” asked Hamdan.
“Sure,” said Adel, “No destroying geological formation, do you know what that means?” Hamdan shook his head, “It means that you shouldn’t push rocks off where they are resting or dig in the sand, things like that.”
إتلاف التكوينات الجيولوجية
Destroying geologial formation

“But why?” Hamdan asked “Because many animals live in small caves in the rocks or holes in the sand, and you could crush them or trap them if you do that.”
“Another rule, no cutting or removing plants.” Adel began,
قطع/اقتلاع النباتات
Cutting/Removing Plants

Hamdan interrupted, **“Because birds live on trees!”** They laughed, **“Exactly, and they depend on trees for many other things, like shade and food”** said his Dad.

“Okay, what about this one...” and they continued talking about the rules for the rest of their long walk.

وقوف السيارات خارج النطاق المخصص
Parking outside the designated areas

أخذ ية كائنات حية
Collecting any living creature

إدخال كائنات/مواد غريبة
Introducing alien species/materials

تلويث الترب/المياه/الهواء بأي شكل من الأشكال
Polluting Soil/Water/Air in any way

إحداث الضجيج
Generating noises

امة ية م ني دون ترخيص من بلدية دبي
Constructing building without proper permit from Dubai Municipality

Hamdan realized the importance of following the rules of Ras Al Khor Wildlife Sanctuary to keep the plants and animals safe and happy, and the sanctuary clean.

He also decided he should follow the rules his parents have at home, and his teachers rules at school.

Sometimes his rebellious ways would return, but he found that asking why a rule exists helped him understand why he should follow it.
Hamdan thought to himself how important Protected Areas were and why we should all support the animals and plants in them. He very much hoped when he grew up he could work as a wildlife officer and come here every day.