

CLASSICS

STORYUISION

John Bunyan's

*Pilgrim's*

*Progress*

Part Six

For teens and adults

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Reaching a cool clear river, Christian and Hopeful refreshed themselves. This was what Israel's King David had called the river of God - but Jesus' apostle John called it "the river of the water of life." Both men drank deeply before going on.



Soon the path left the riverside and became very rough. When the men noticed a meadow close by, they chose the grassy track. They had entered By-Path meadow. Little by little, it led them out of the right way.

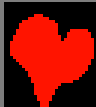


A great storm arose, bringing torrential rain which flooded the meadow.

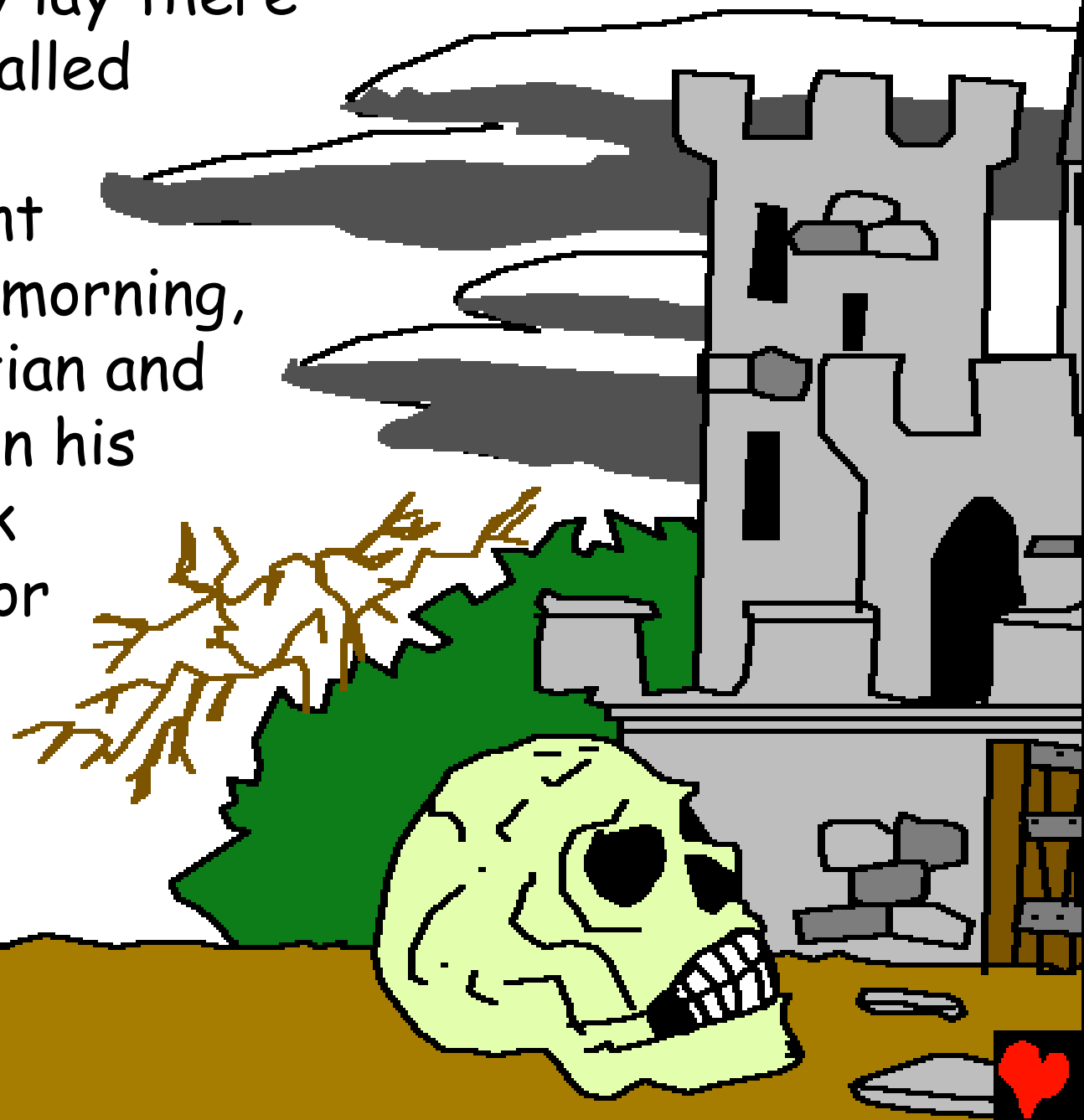
The pilgrims had no idea how to retrace their steps.

Christian, who had taken the lead in choosing By-Path meadow, begged Hopeful's forgiveness.

Crawling under a wall, the pair tried to sleep.

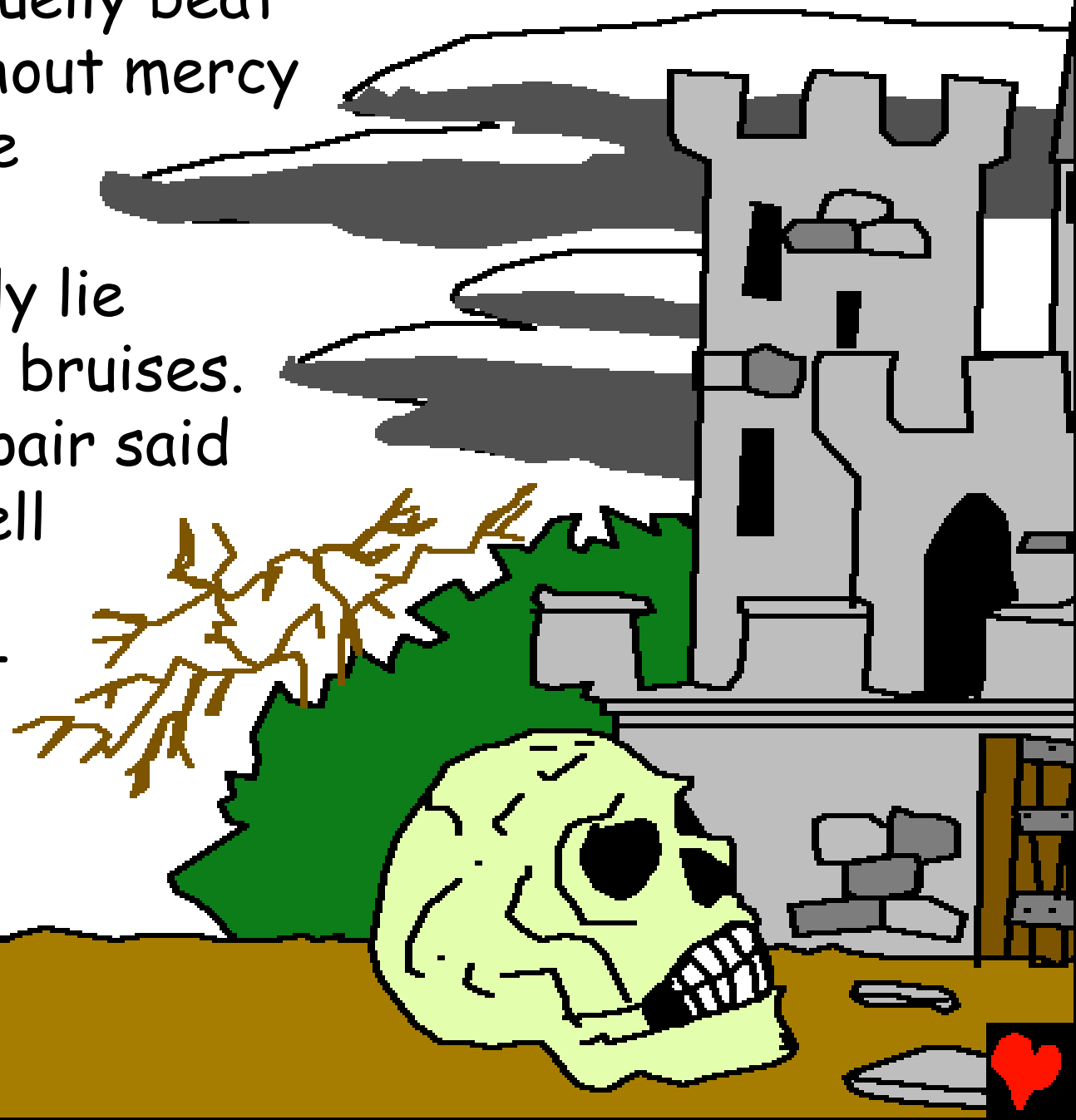


Near where they lay there was a fortress called Doubting Castle, belonging to Giant Despair. In the morning, he caught Christian and Hopeful asleep on his grounds and took them captive. For three days they lay uncared for in his dungeon.



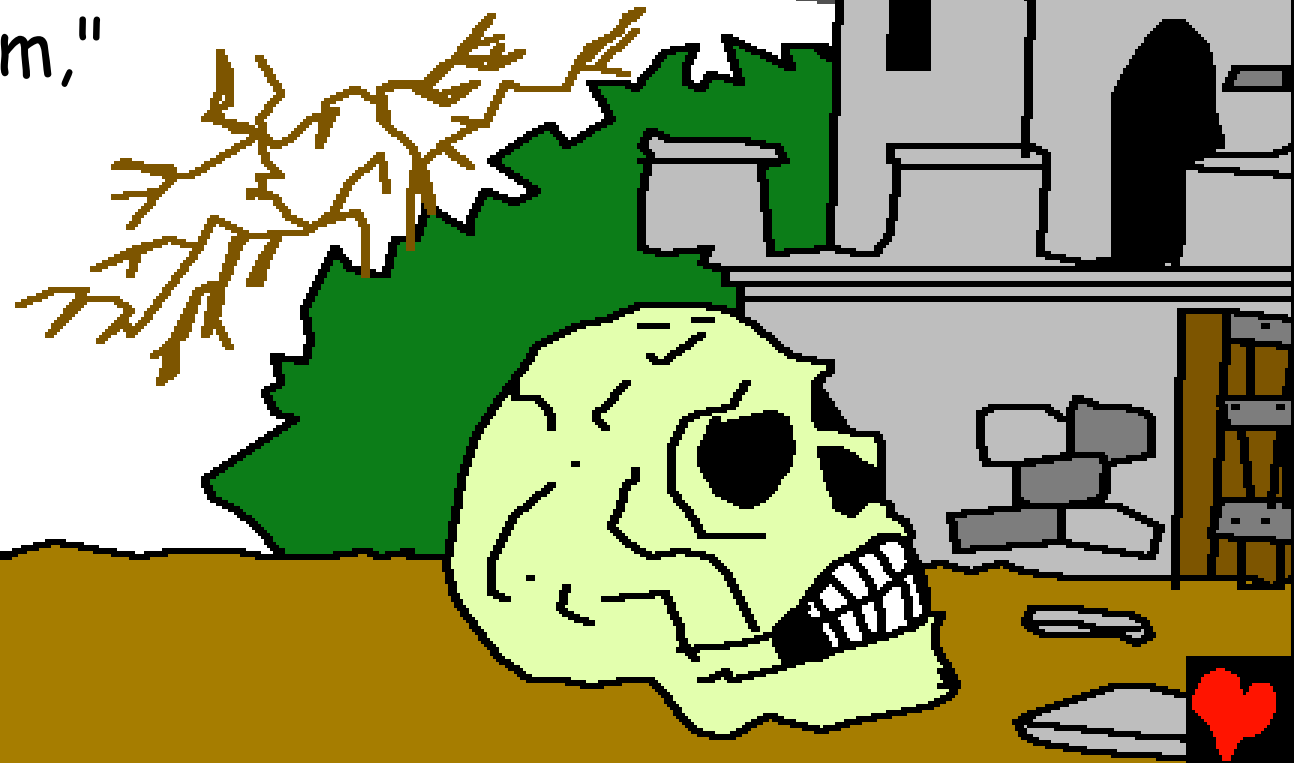
Giant Despair cruelly beat the pilgrims without mercy though they gave him no reason.

They could hardly lie down because of bruises. Then, Giant Despair said they might as well kill themselves - they'd never get out. Both were sorely tempted.

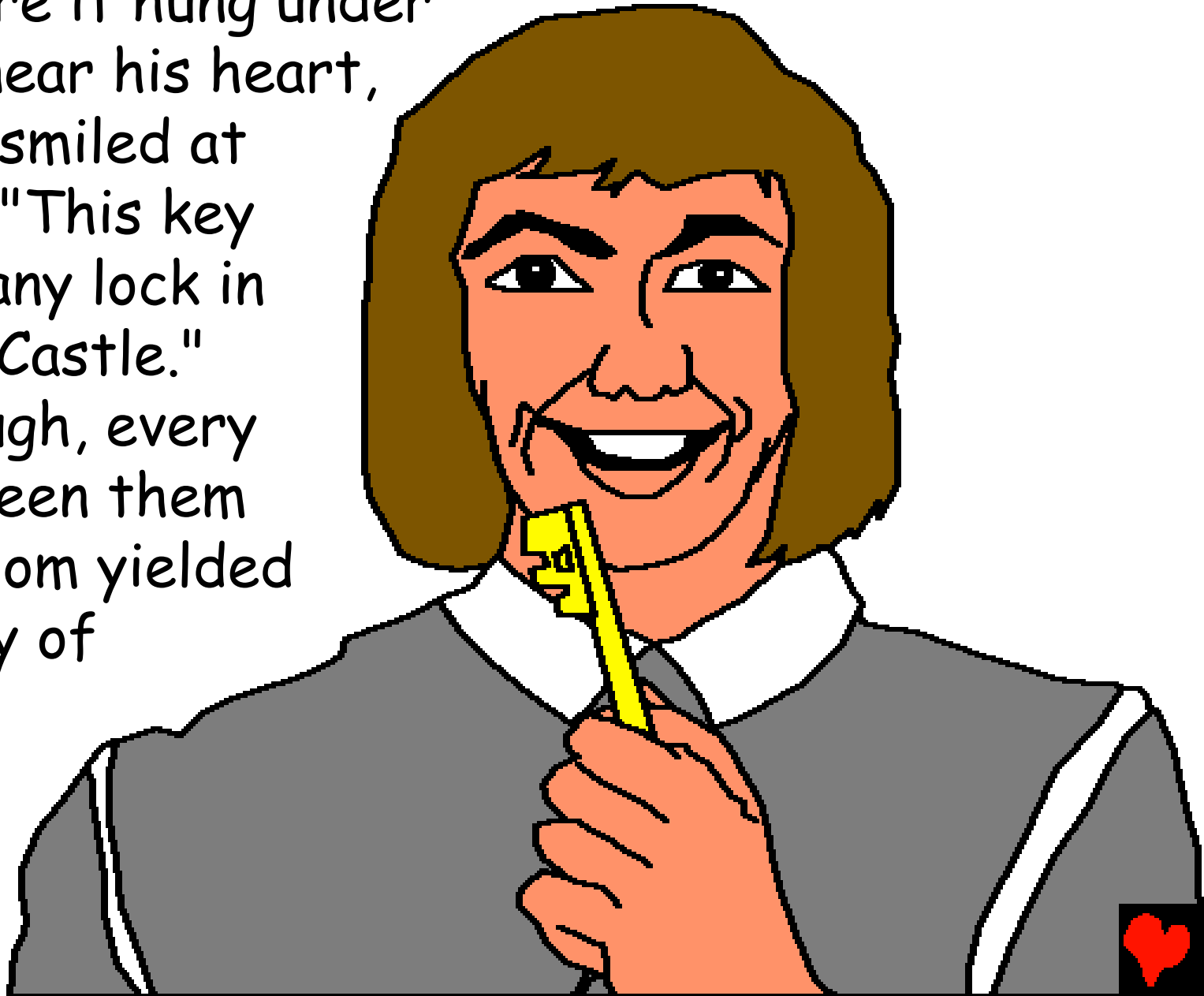




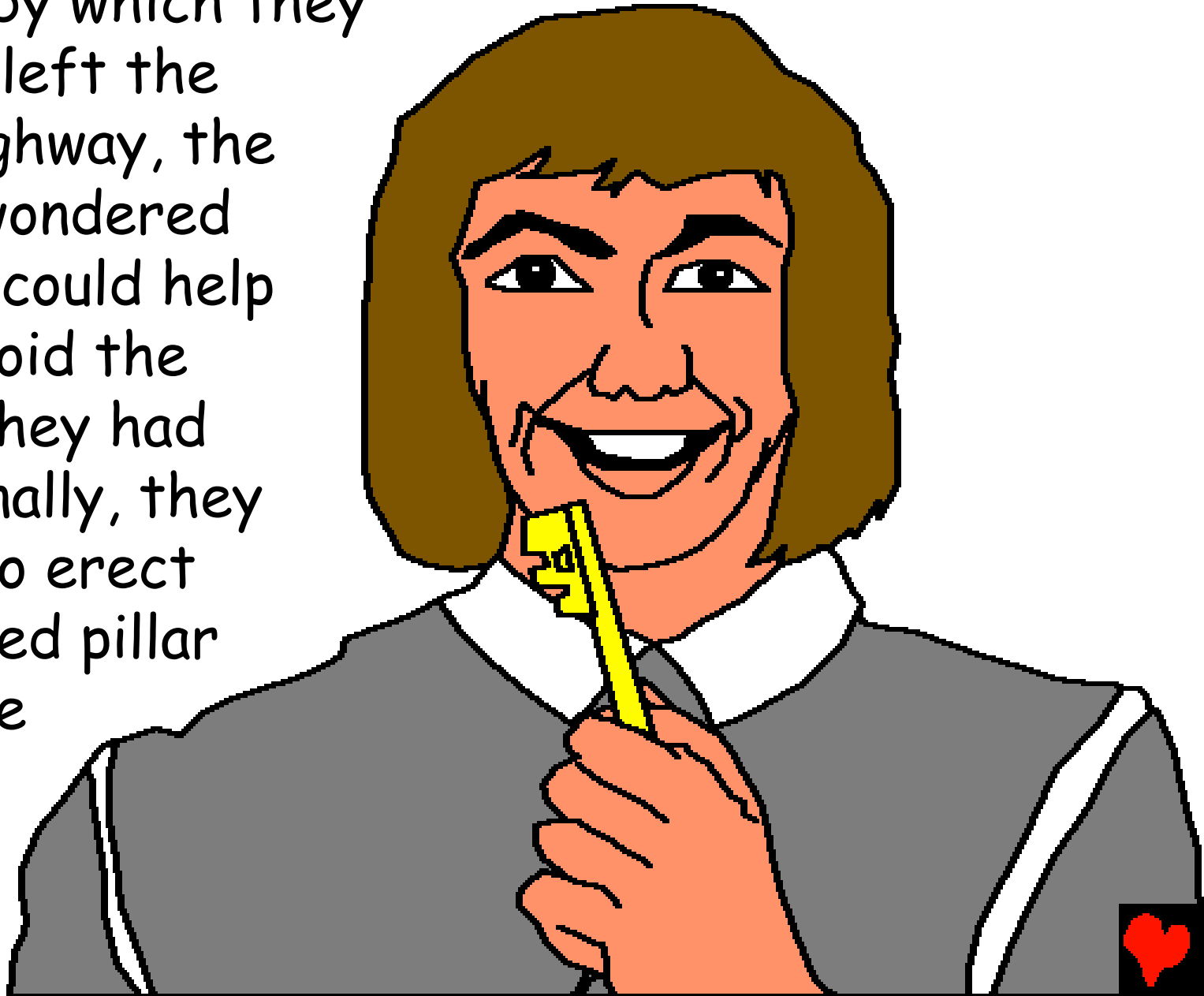
Though weak almost to death,  
the pilgrims resisted  
suicide. "It is  
against God's law,"  
they reasoned. "And He will  
yet deliver us." During  
the night, Christian awoke.  
"What a fool I am,"  
he cried. "I had  
forgotten. I  
have the Key  
of Promise."



Drawing the Key of Promise from where it hung under his robe near his heart, Christian smiled at Hopeful. "This key will open any lock in Doubting Castle." Sure enough, every lock between them and freedom yielded to the Key of Promise.



When they got back over the stile by which they had first left the King's Highway, the pilgrims wondered how they could help others avoid the mistake they had made. Finally, they decided to erect an engraved pillar with these words.



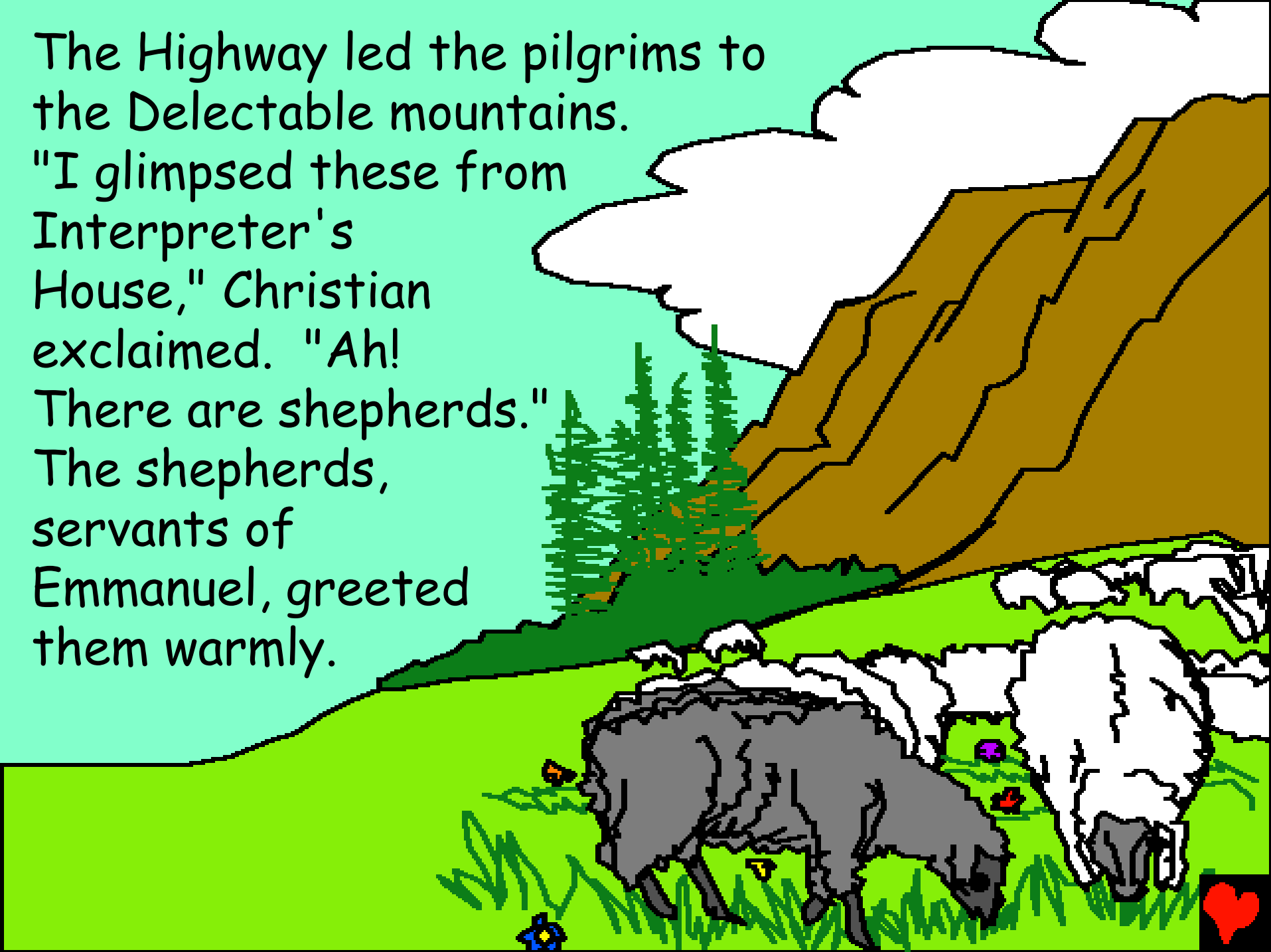
"Over this stile is the way to Doubting Castle which is kept by Giant Despair who despises the King of the Celestial Country and who seeks to destroy His holy pilgrims." Finishing this task, they set off along the Highway.



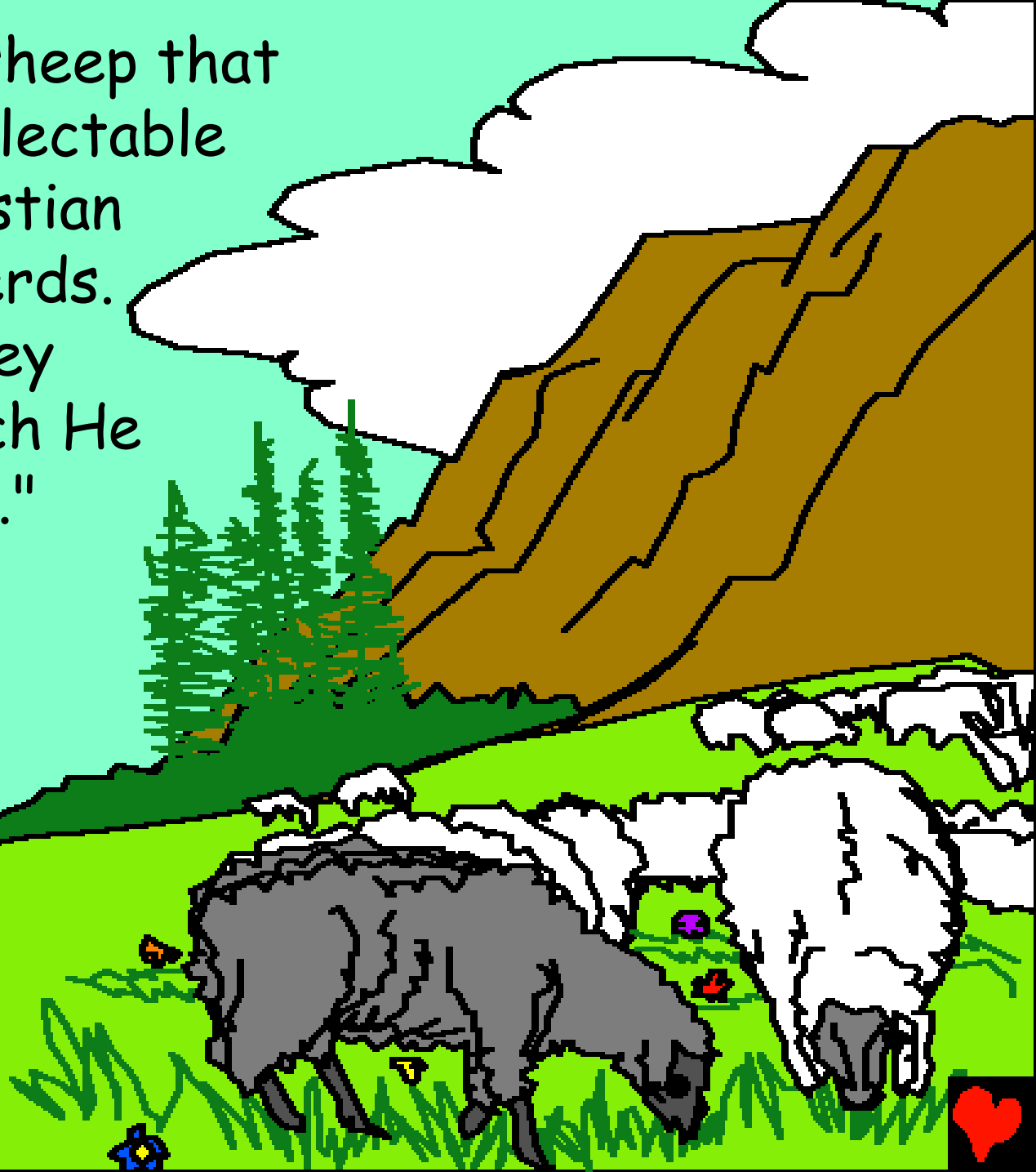
The Highway led the pilgrims to the Delectable mountains.

"I glimpsed these from Interpreter's House," Christian exclaimed. "Ah! There are shepherds."

The shepherds, servants of Emmanuel, greeted them warmly.



"Whose are the sheep that feed on these Delectable mountains?" Christian asked the shepherds. "Emmanuel's," they replied. "For which He laid down His life." The shepherd's names were Knowledge, Experience, Watchful and Sincere.



These shepherds showed the pilgrims wonderful things like the hill called Error at the foot of which men lay broken who had fallen over the cliff there; the hill called Caution, full of tombs where blind men milled around.

"Giant Despair blinded

them,"

the shepherds explained.



The shepherds then showed the two pilgrims a door in the side of a hill. Inside was dark and smoky. They thought they heard a rumbling noise of a roaring furnace, and the cry of tormented people. Also, they smelled the scent of brimstone.

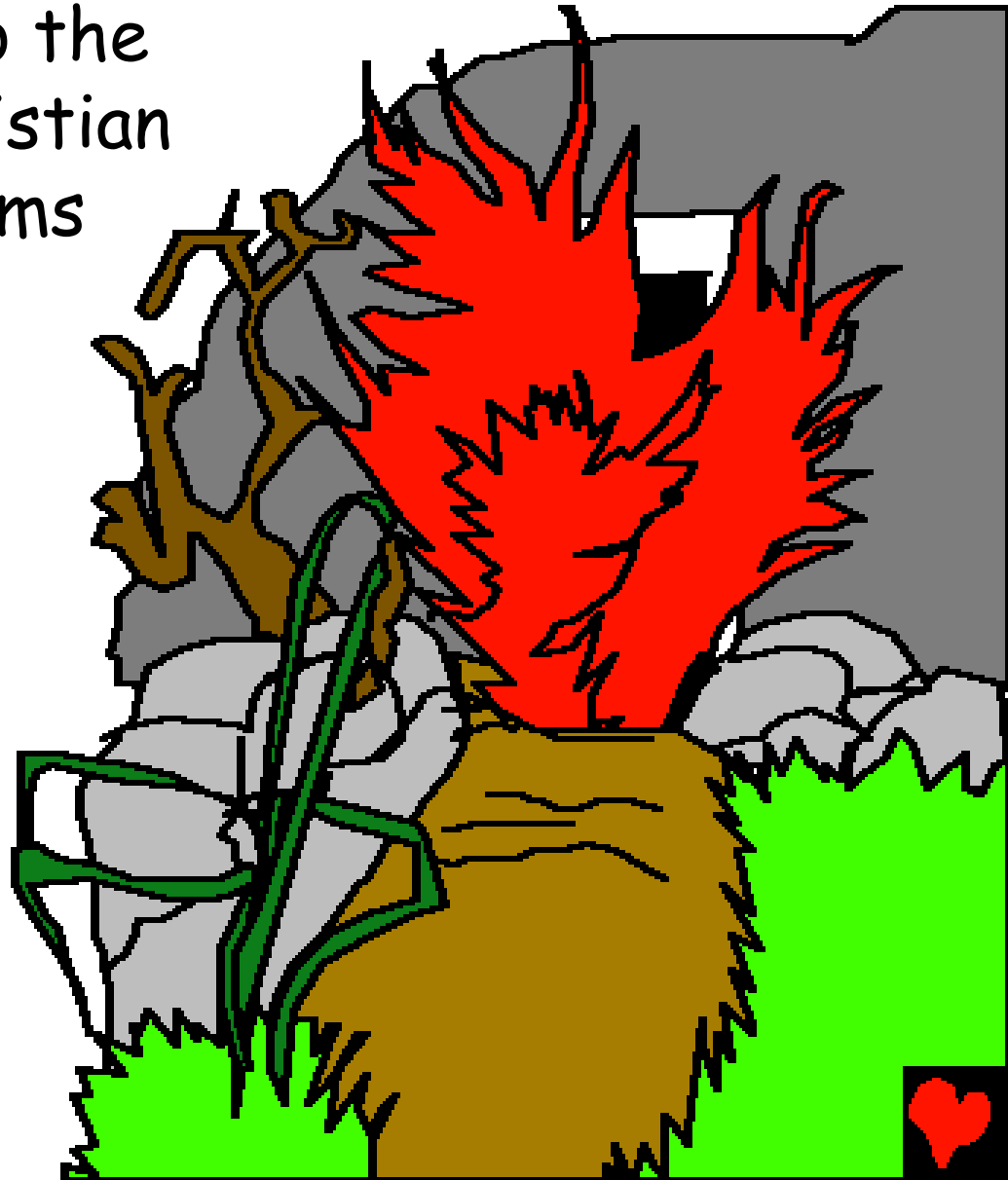
"What does this mean?" Christian asked. "This is a by-way to Hell," a shepherd replied.



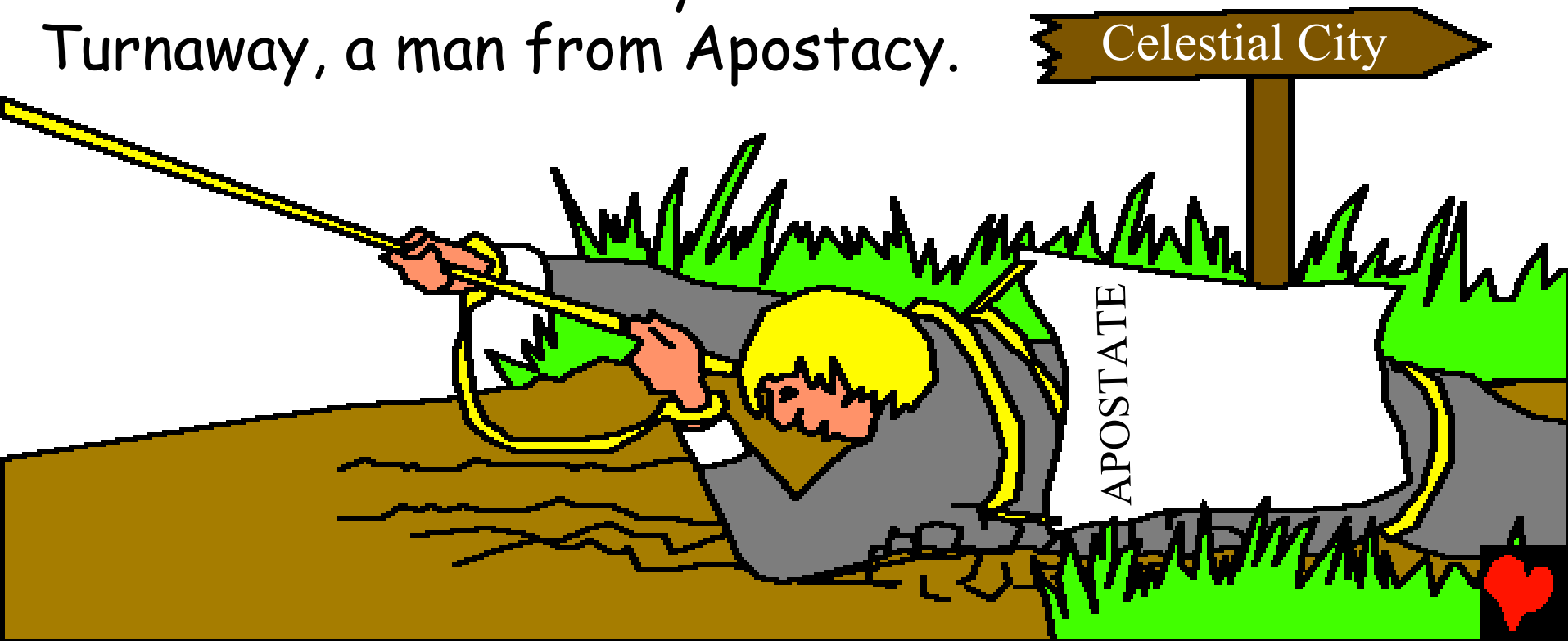


"It is for those who make a fair show of pilgrimage but sell their birthright like Esau."

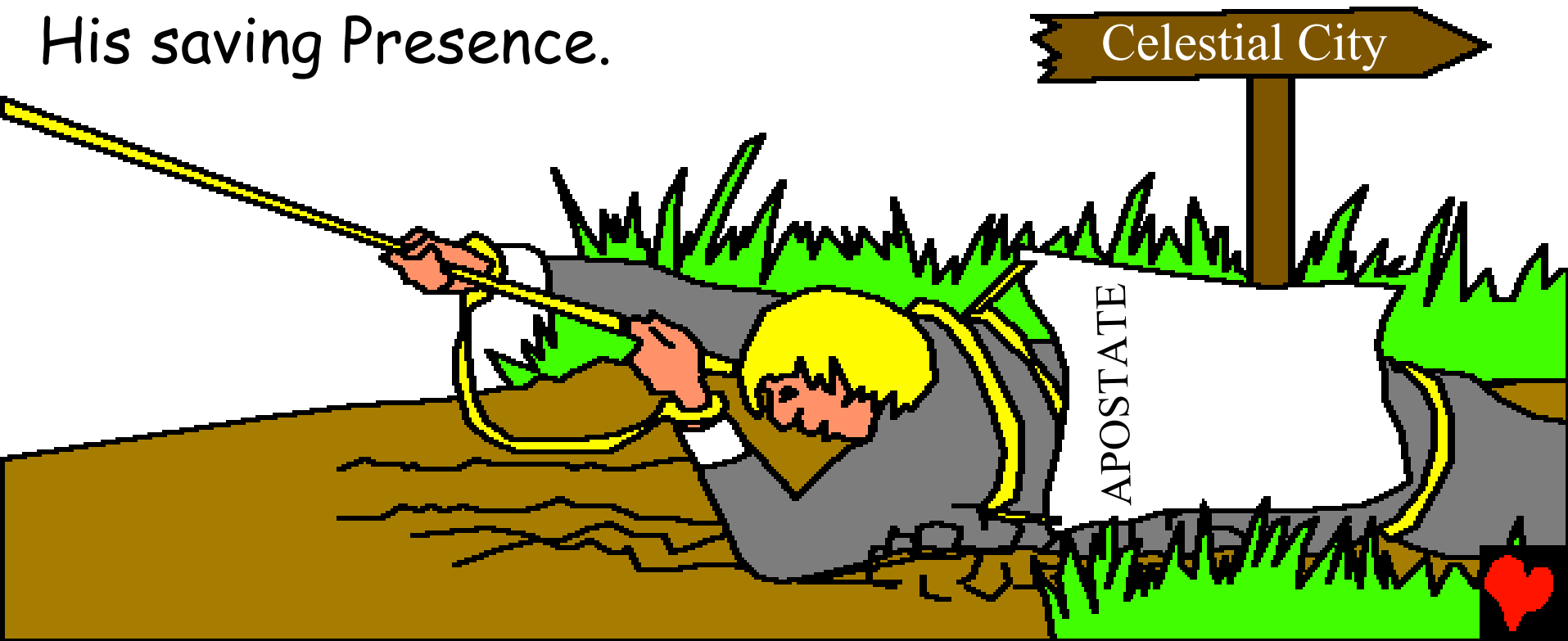
"We have need to cry to the Lord for strength," Christian sighed. When the pilgrims left, one shepherd gave them a note describing the exact way; another warned them to beware of Mr. Flatterer; a third one told them never to sleep on the Enchanted Ground; the fourth bid them Godspeed.

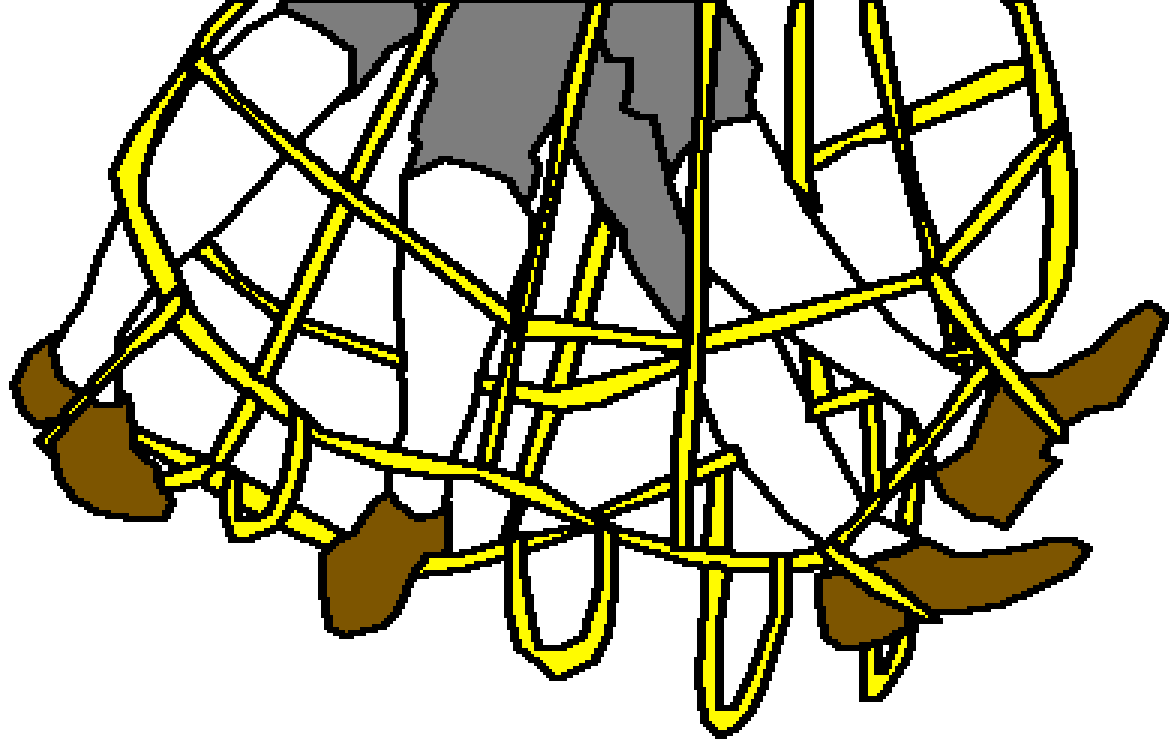


At Conceit country border, the pilgrims met Ignorance. "I know Celestial city gate will open for me," Ignorance said. "I'm a good liver, I pray, I fast, I pay tithes, and I give alms." But Ignorance had not come through the wicket gate. The pilgrims told Ignorance the truth, then left him to think about it. They next met Turnaway, a man from Apostacy.



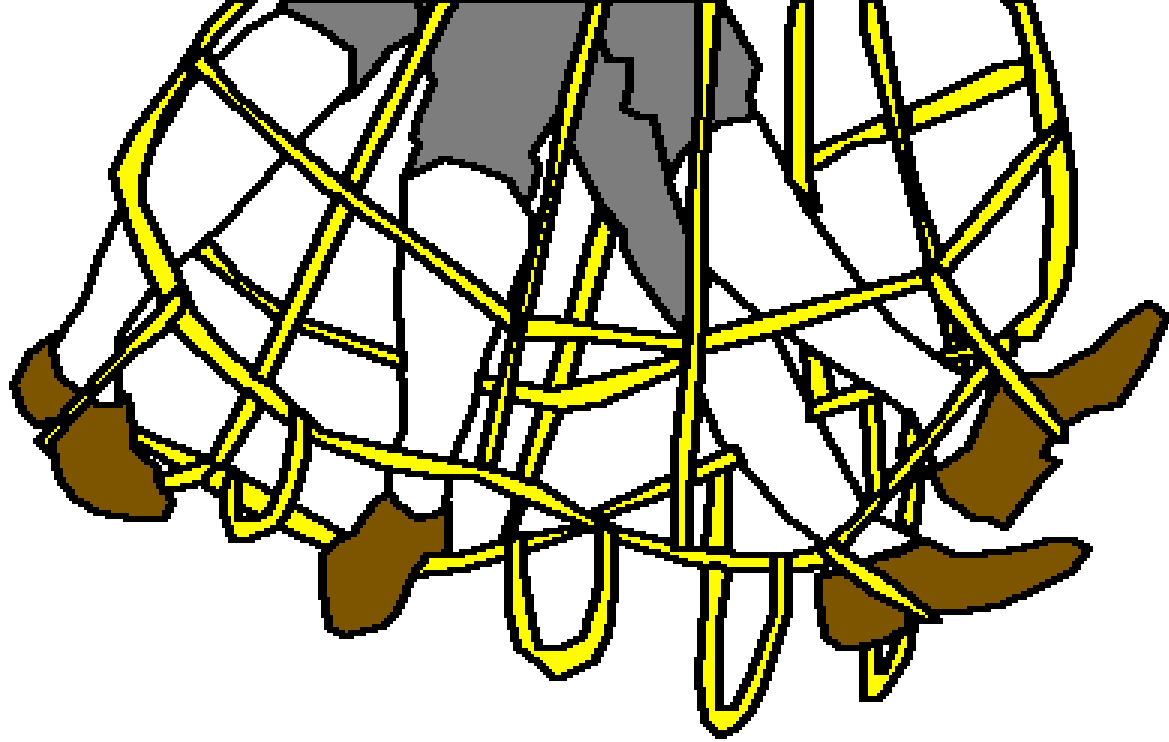
He was being dragged in the opposite direction of Celestial city like a thief. He hung his head as the pilgrims passed. Hearing that Little-faith, a fellow-pilgrim, had been attacked by highway robbers - Faintheart, Mistrust and Guilt - Christian and Hopeful remembered afresh the need to wear God's armor at all times and trust His saving Presence.





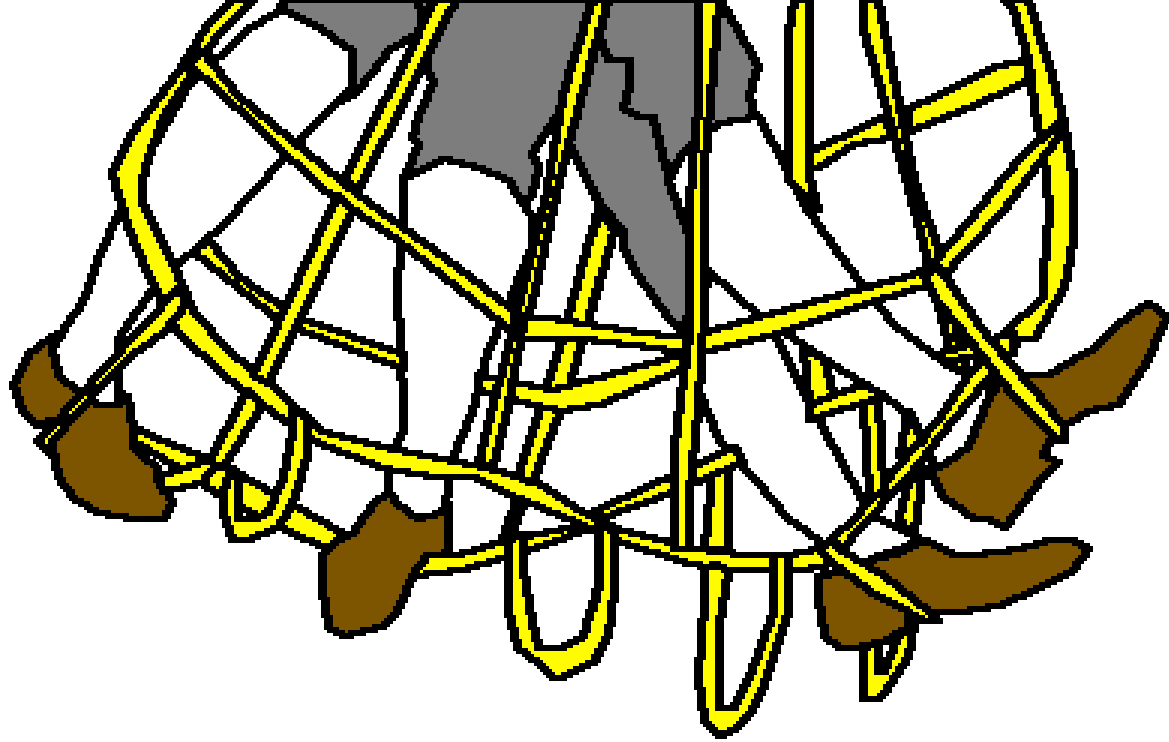
"Hello! Are you lost?" As the pilgrims stood at a crossroads, Flatterer chanced by. When they nodded, he beckoned them to follow him. "I'm going to Celestial city. I know the way," he assured them.





Christian and Hopeful followed Flatterer, hardly noticing that the road curved again and again until they were going in the opposite direction to Celestial city. Suddenly, Flatterer led them into a net which entangled their feet.

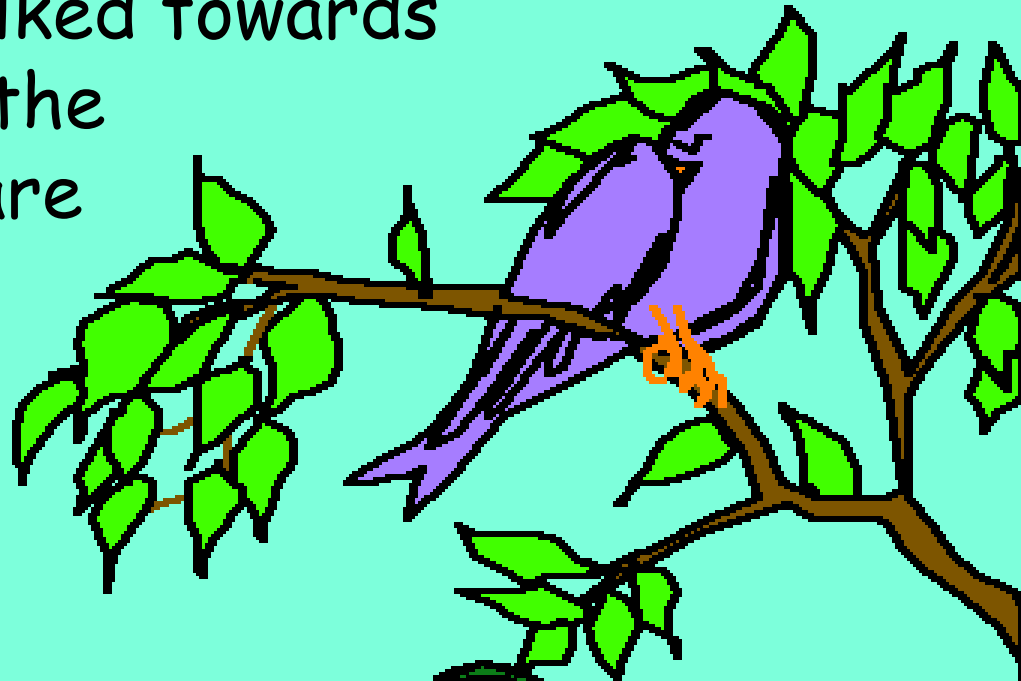




There they were left, to perish. But a Shining One carrying a small whip came to them. Releasing them, he set them on the right way again. First he punished them for not reading the shepherd's note and for heeding Flatterer's tongue.



"As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten," Christian quoted words from his Prince's letter. "It was His kindness to punish us for our carelessness. Aha! Who comes?" A man walked towards them, his back towards the Celestial city. "Where are you going?" the man asked. "Celestial city," the pilgrims answered.



The man, whose name was Atheist, burst into laughter. "I've sought Celestial city for twenty years," he chuckled. "There's no such place."

Ignoring Atheist's lies, the pilgrims travelled on. Soon, they both yawned with drowsiness.

"Let's take a nap," Hopeful said.

"Certainly not! We may never wake up," Christian answered.





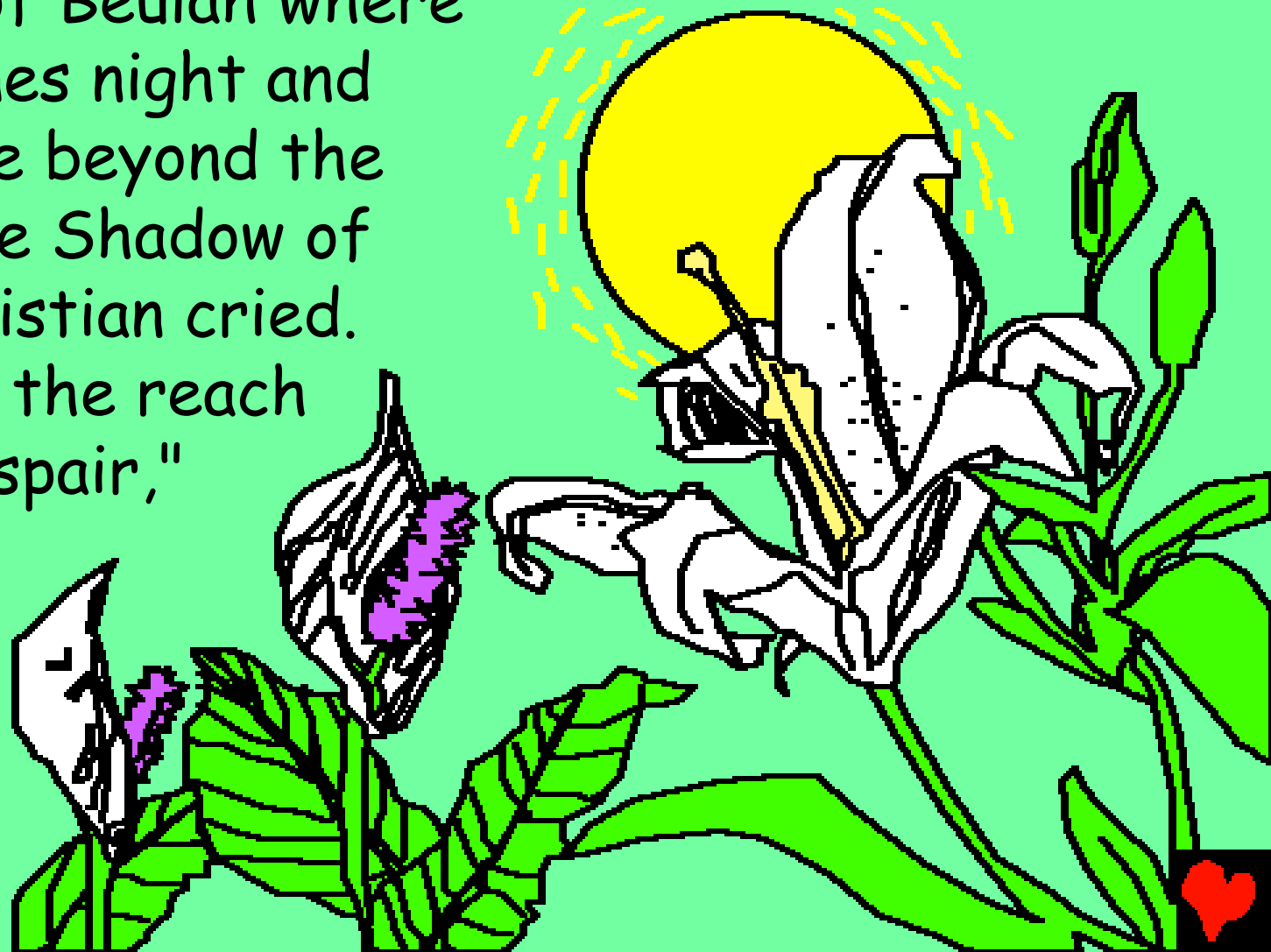
As they journeyed,  
the two pilgrims fought  
weariness by trading  
questions and answers  
about how the Lord had  
drawn their hearts to Him.  
Looking back, Christian  
saw Ignorance walking  
behind them.  
"Let's wait for him,"  
he said.



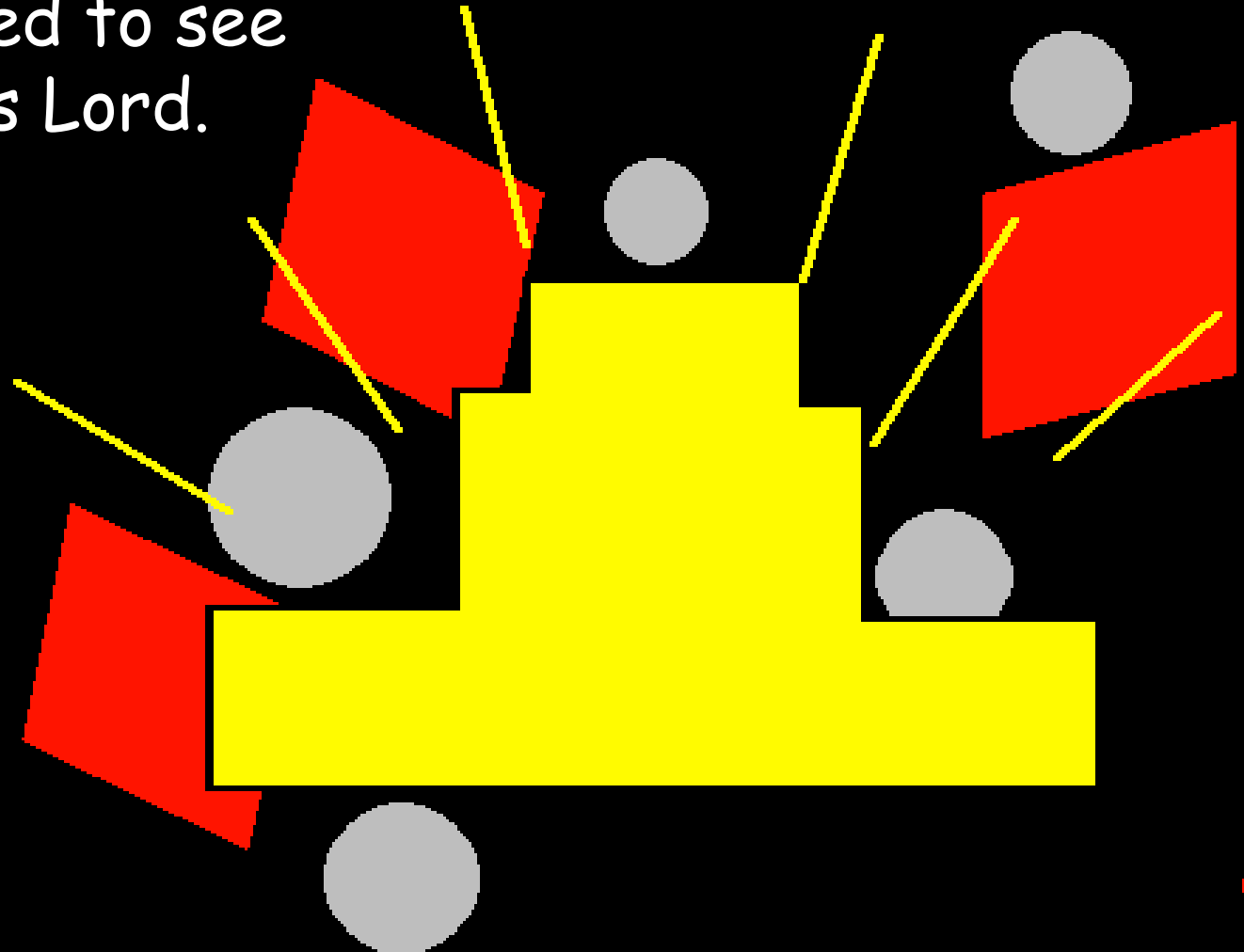
Christian encouraged Ignorance to be ruled by the Word of God. "That is your faith, not mine," Ignorance responded. "Yet I think my faith is as good as yours!" Slowing his step, Ignorance let the two men know he preferred to walk alone.



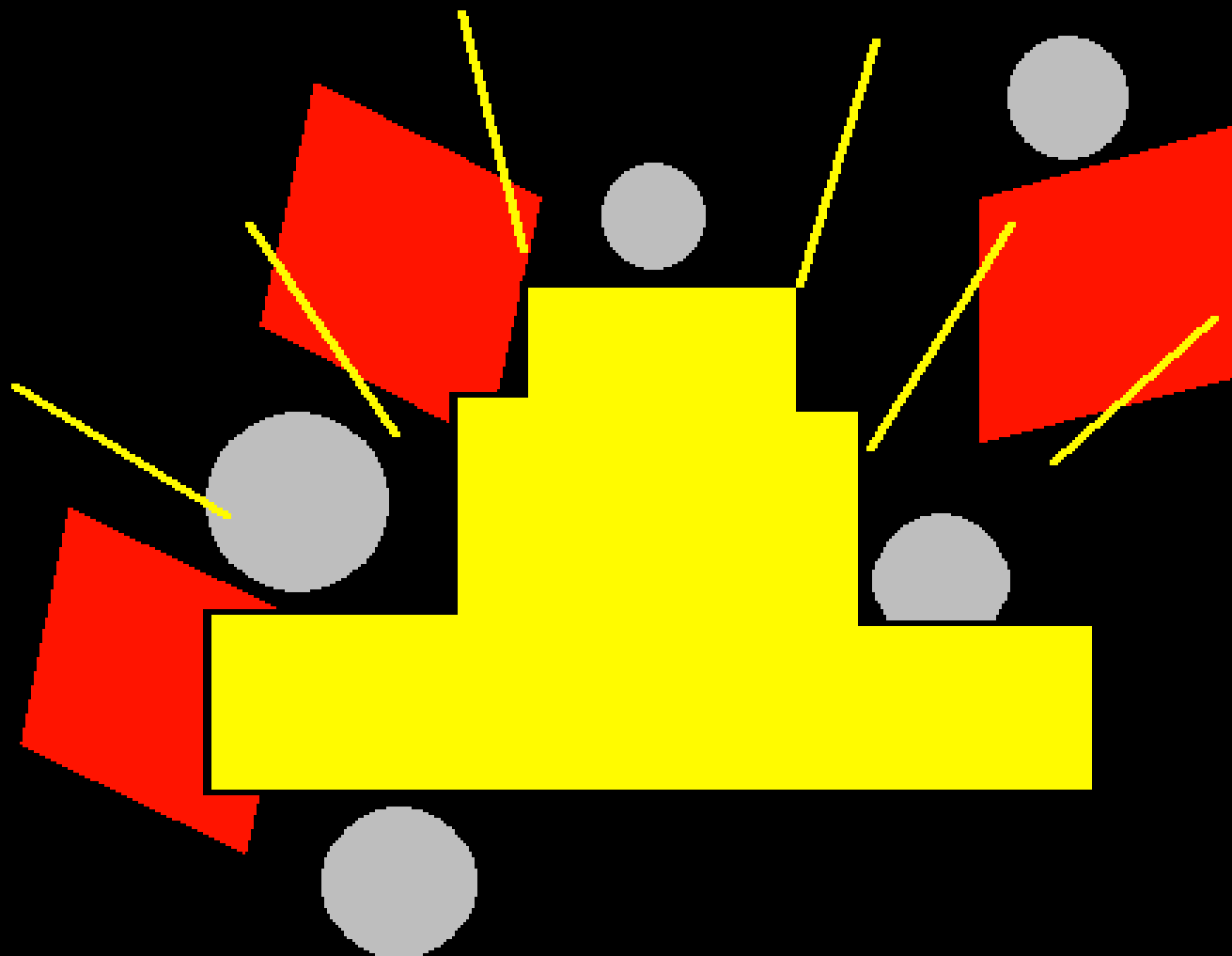
Sad because of Ignorance's fate, the pilgrims went on until they entered the sweet, fresh land of Beulah where the sun shines night and day. "We're beyond the Valley of the Shadow of Death," Christian cried. "And out of the reach of Giant Despair," Hopeful added.



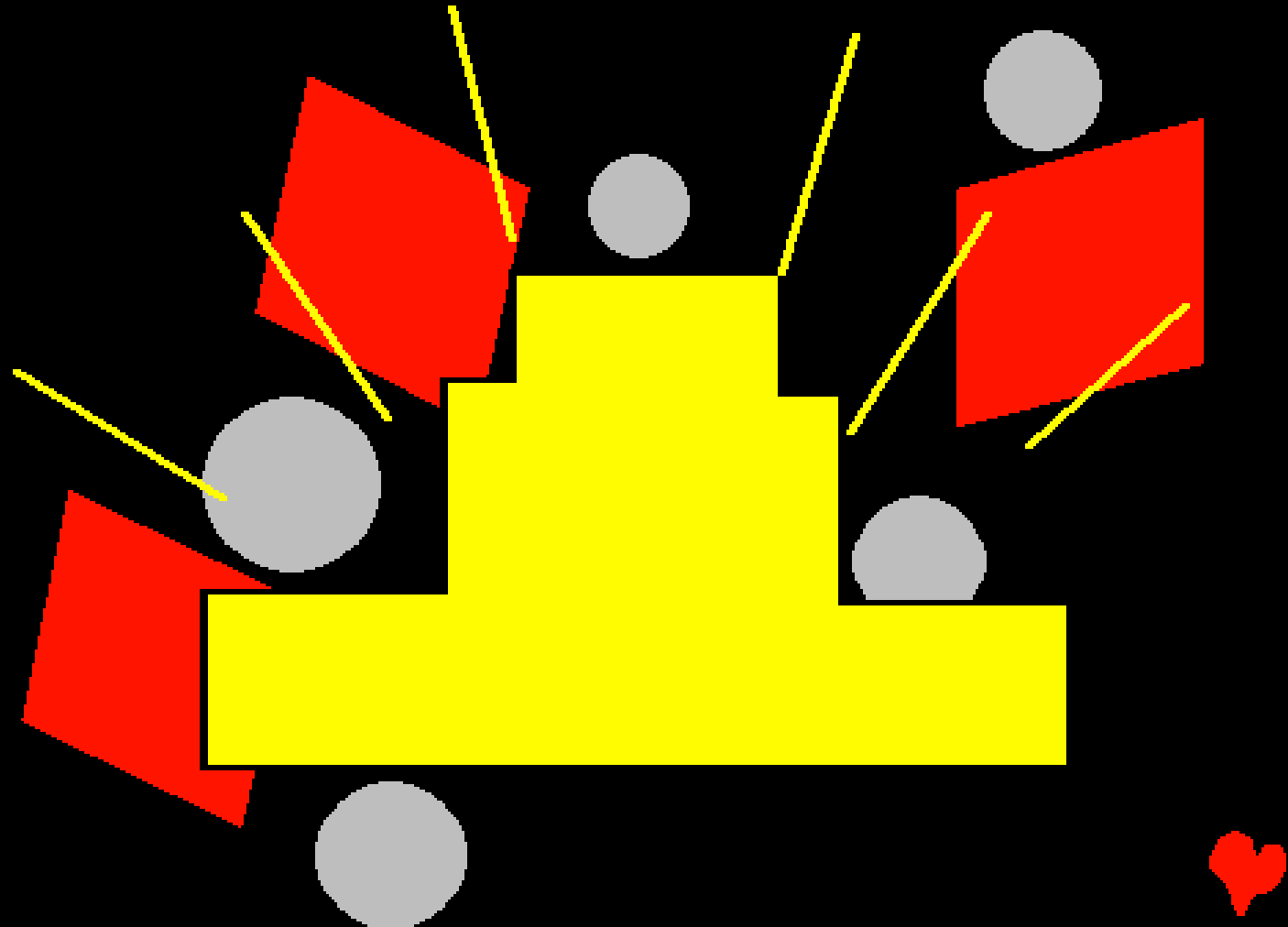
Drawing near to Celestial city, the two could hardly believe their eyes. Buildings of pearls and precious stones; gold-paved streets, where Shining Ones walked. A sickness of desire overcame the pilgrims - they yearned to see their glorious Lord.



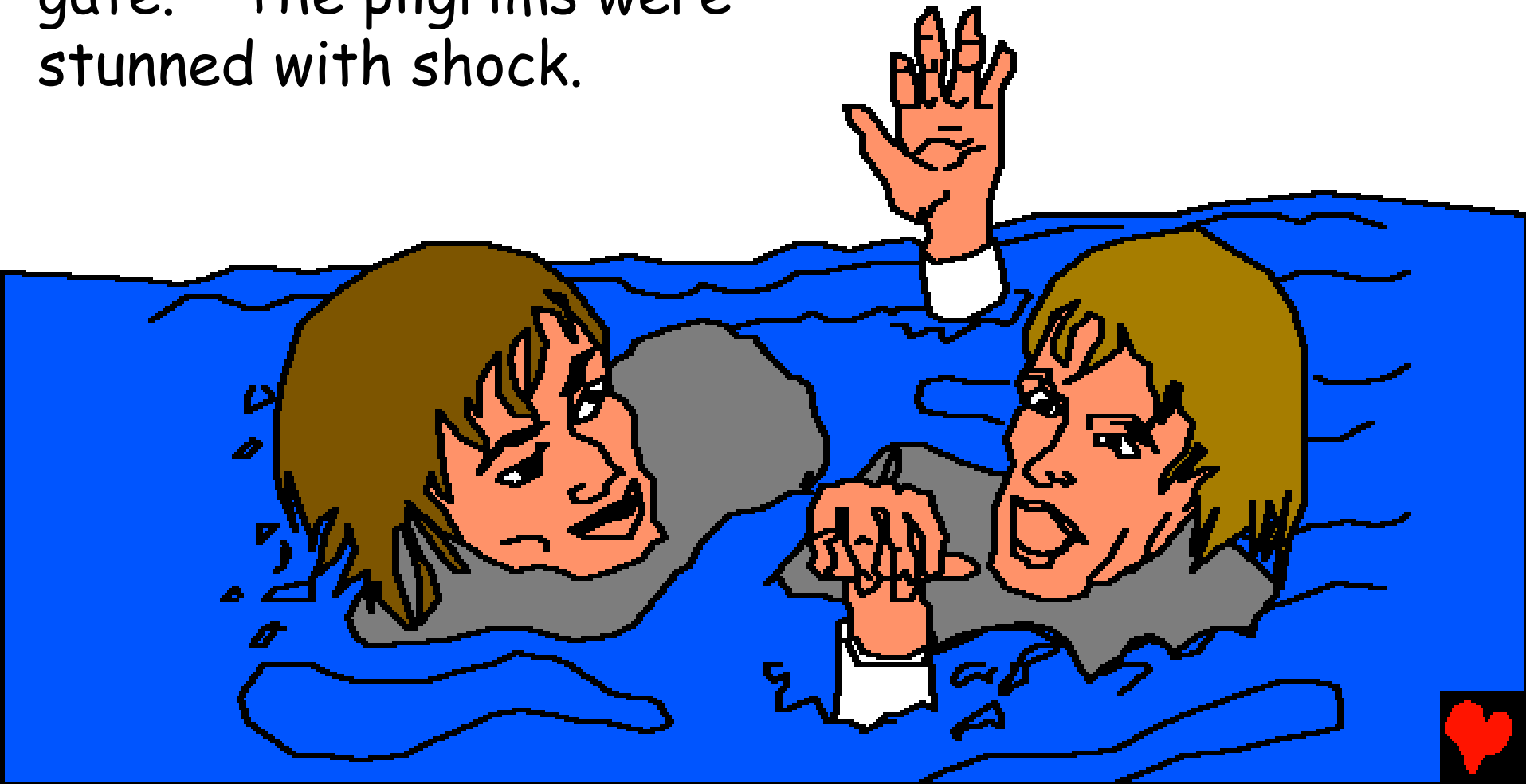
"If you see my Beloved, tell Him I am sick with love," Pilgrim cried out. As new strength filled them, the men moved nearer to the city. They saw orchards, vineyards, gardens. And they saw the city gates.



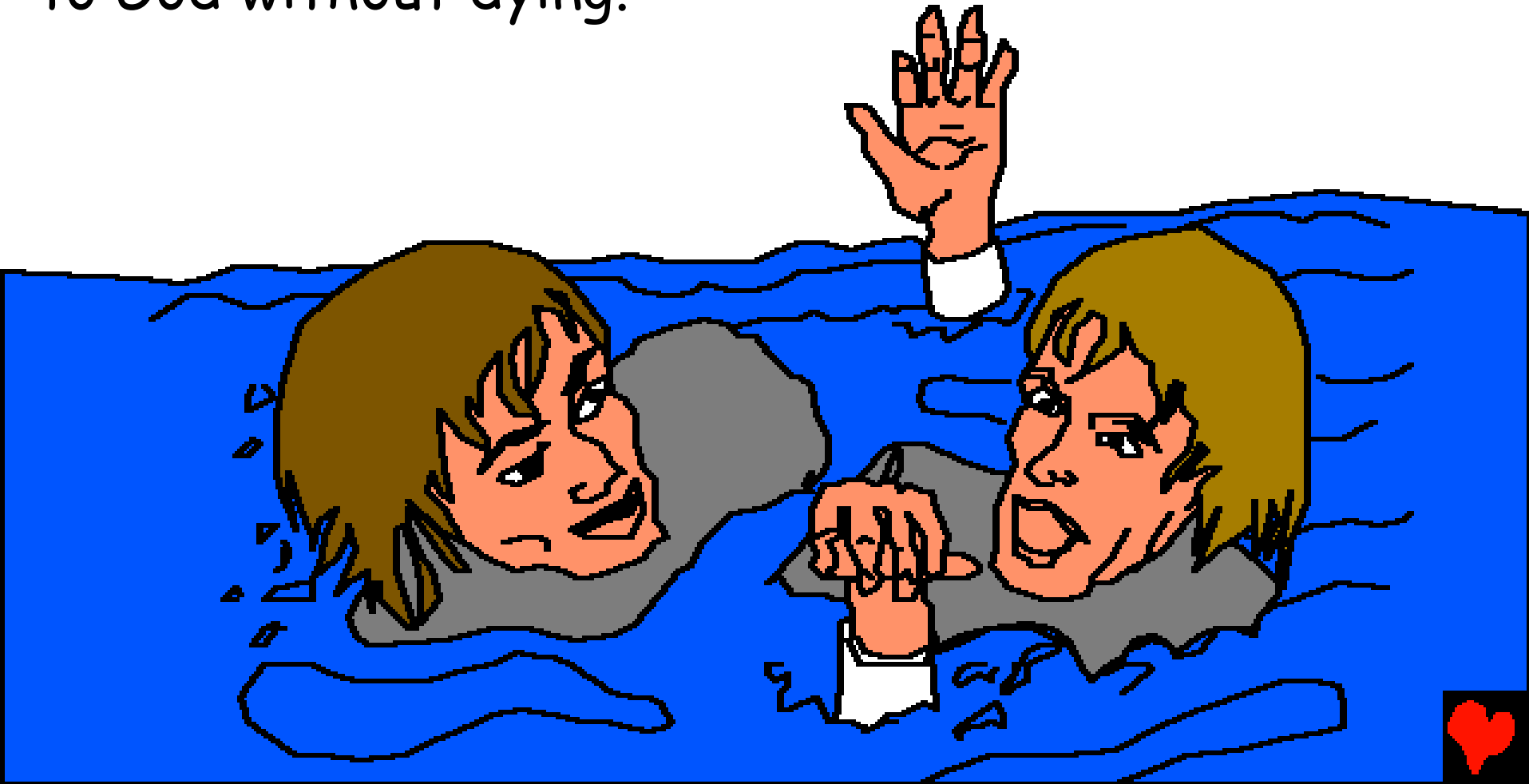
Two men wearing clothes that shone like gold came to the pilgrims. "You have but two more difficulties to meet with, and then you are in the city," they said. "You must obtain the city by your own faith."



As the golden-garbed men walked with them, the pilgrims saw a river between them and the city gate. The river was very deep. "You must come through," the men said, "or you cannot enter the gate." The pilgrims were stunned with shock.

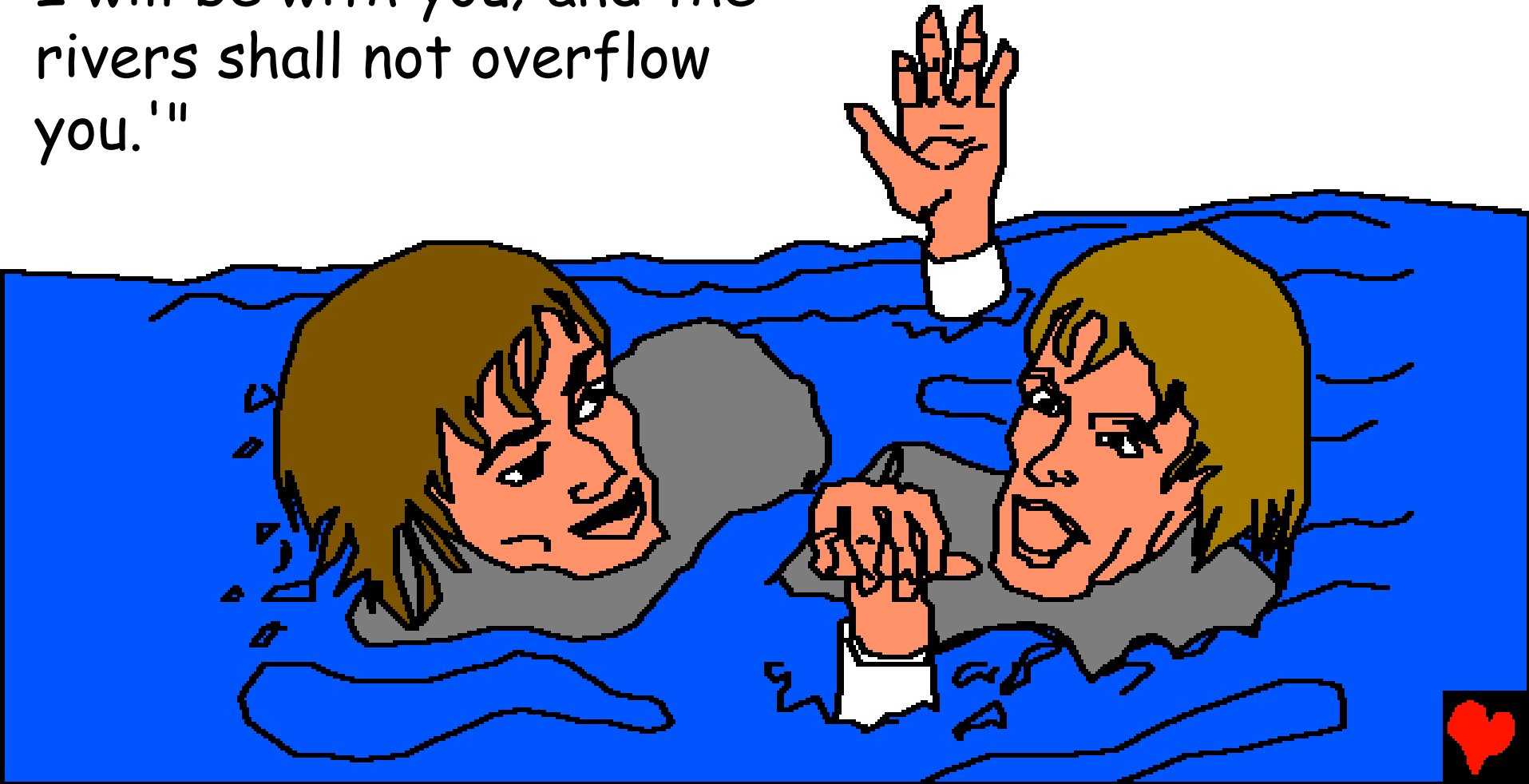


"Is there no other way?" the pilgrims pleaded.  
"Yes! But only two, Enoch and Elijah, have been permitted to tread that path," the men replied.  
Enoch and Elijah were the only two men who went to God without dying.

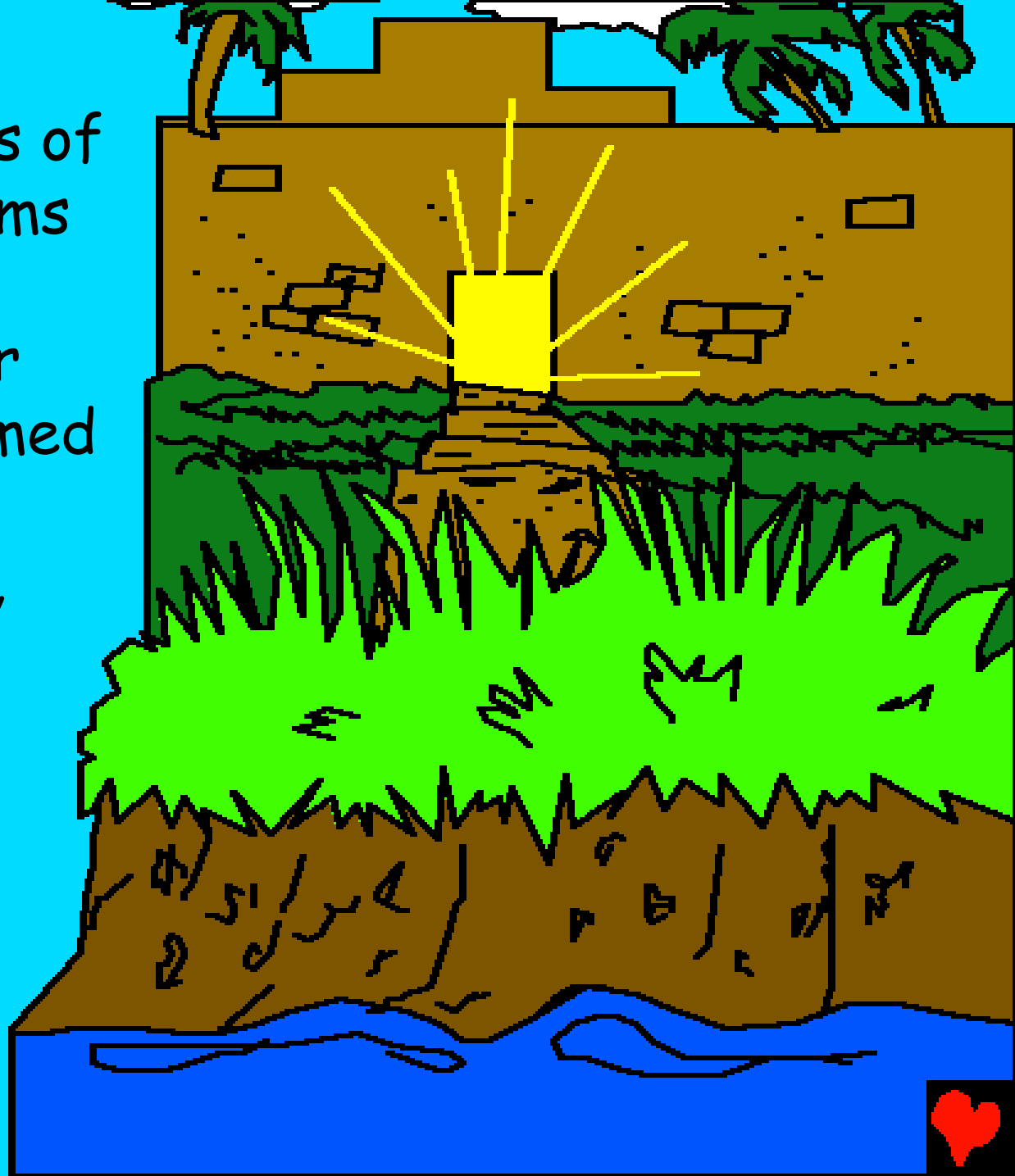




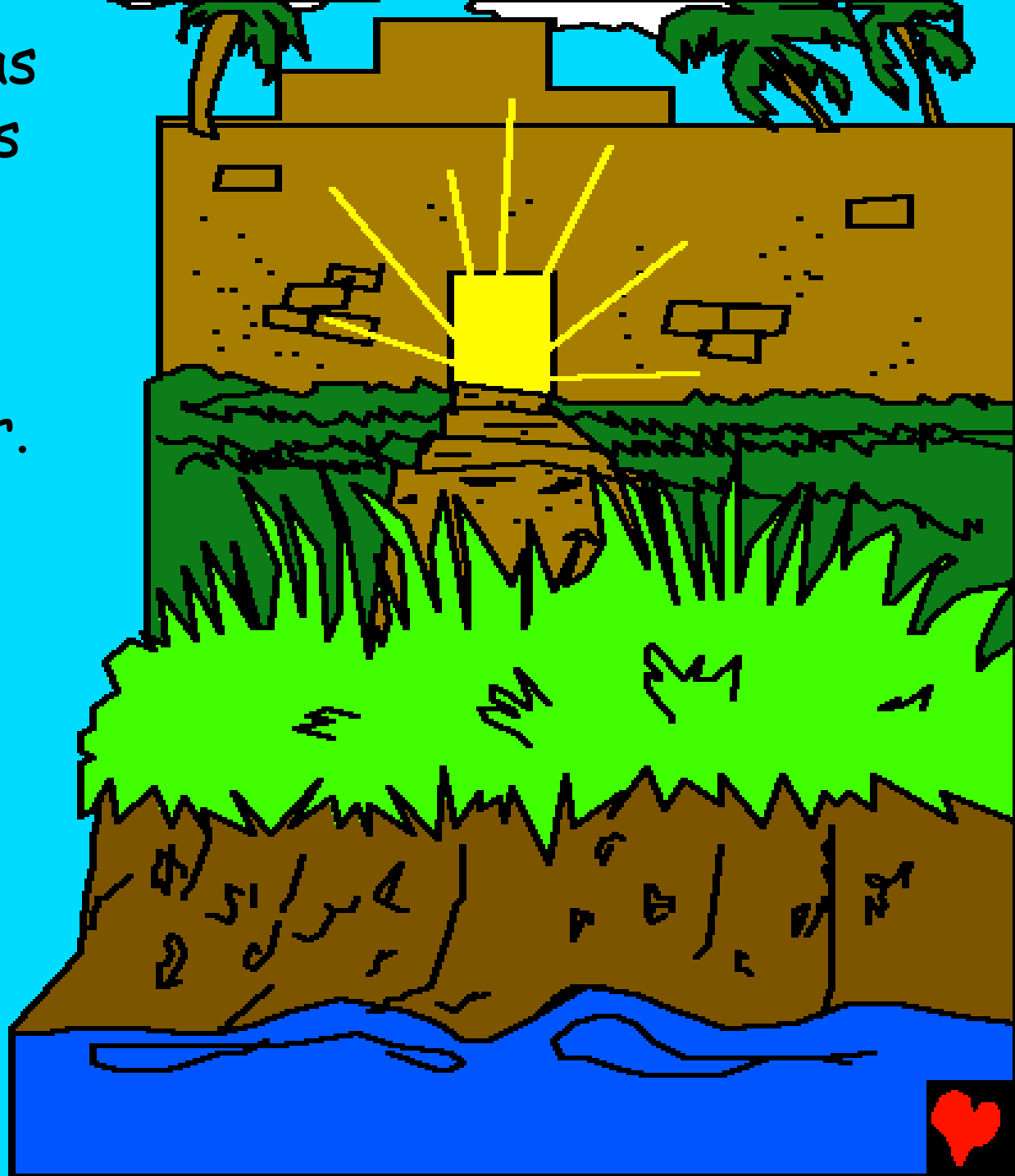
Entering the river, the two pilgrims found themselves sinking in its depths. Then Christian saw Jesus in a vision. "I see my Lord," he cried. "And He says, 'When you pass through the waters I will be with you; and the rivers shall not overflow you.'"



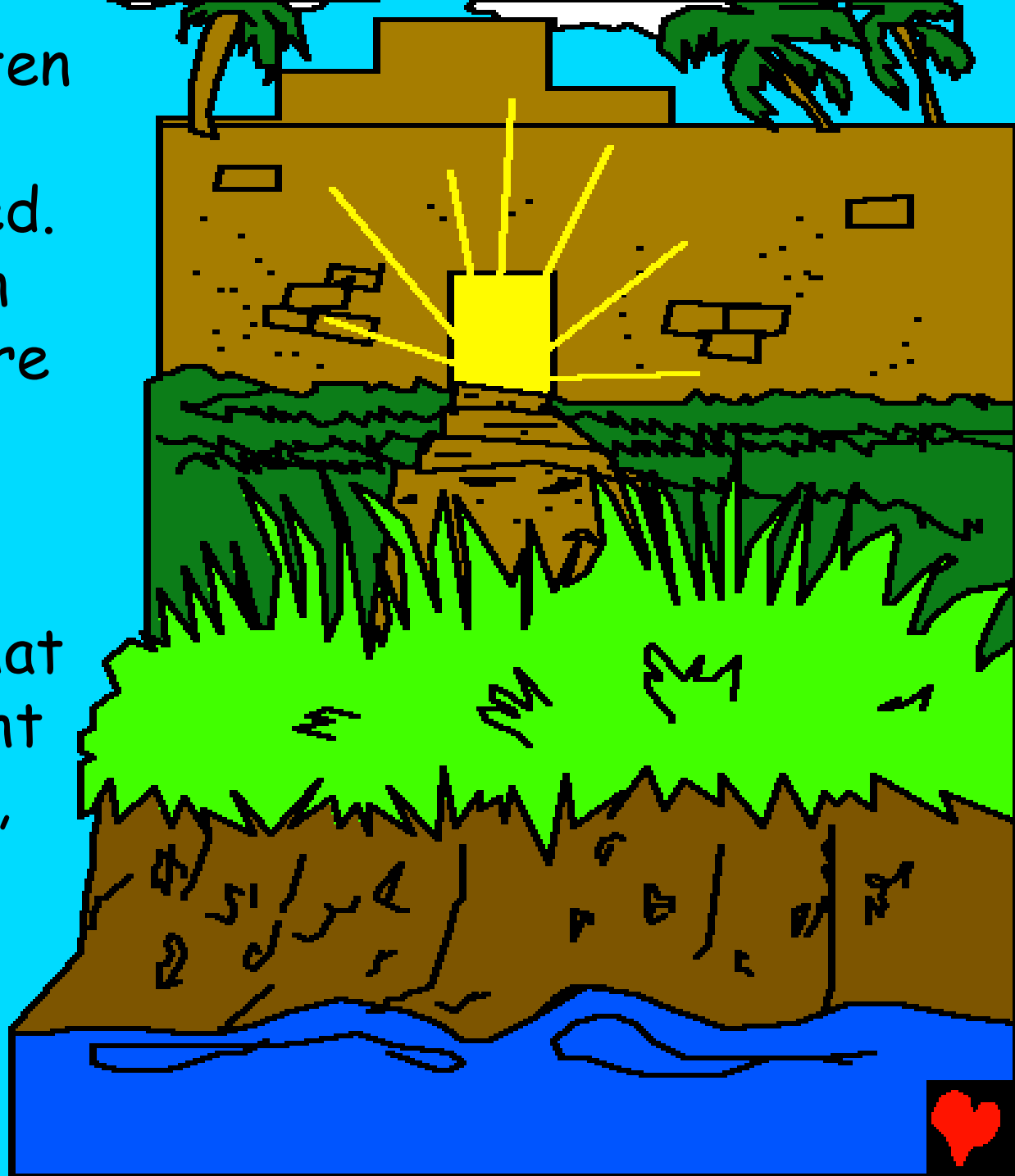
Though the river contained moments of terror, both pilgrims crossed safely. On the bank, other shining men welcomed them. "We are ministering angels, sent to help those who are heirs of salvation," they said. Joyfully, they led the pilgrims up the hill to the gate.



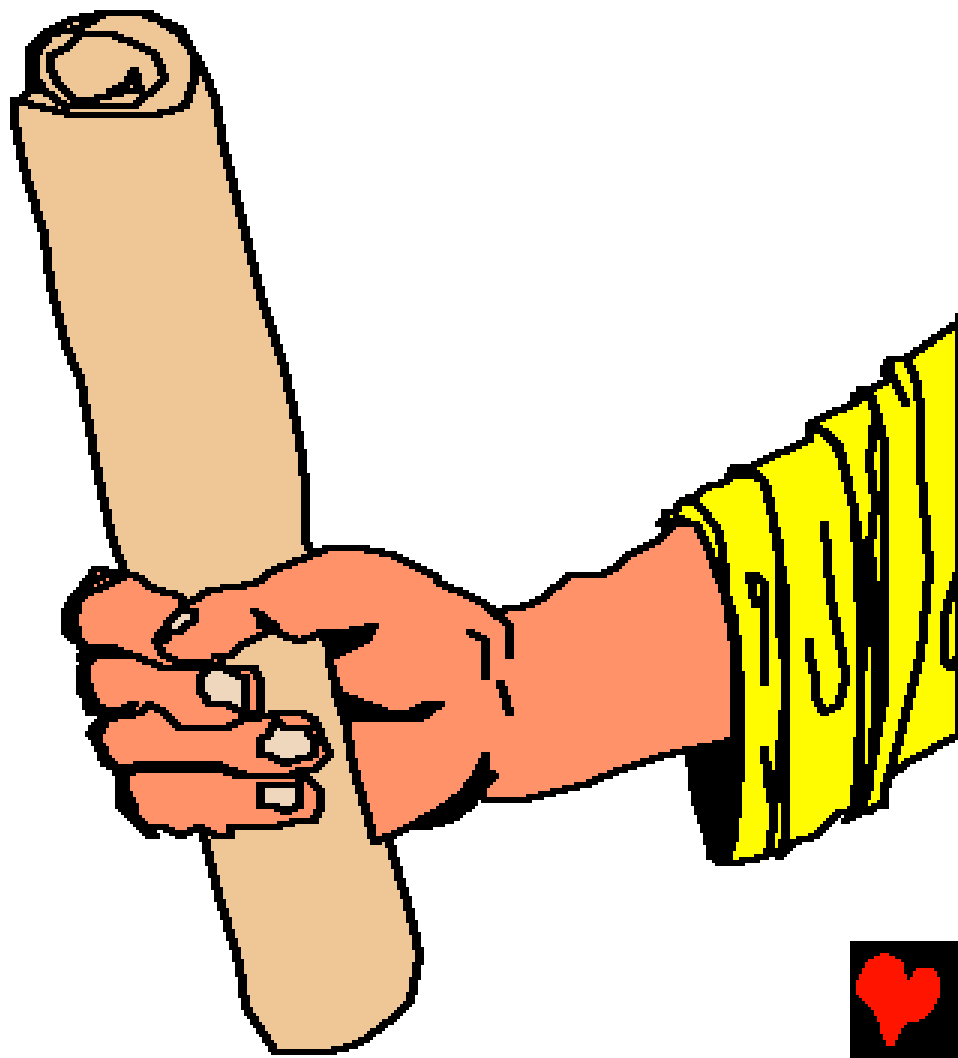
Though the hill was steep, the pilgrims went up with ease because they had left their mortal bodies in the river. As they neared the golden gate, a great crowd of heavenly beings surged forward to meet them.



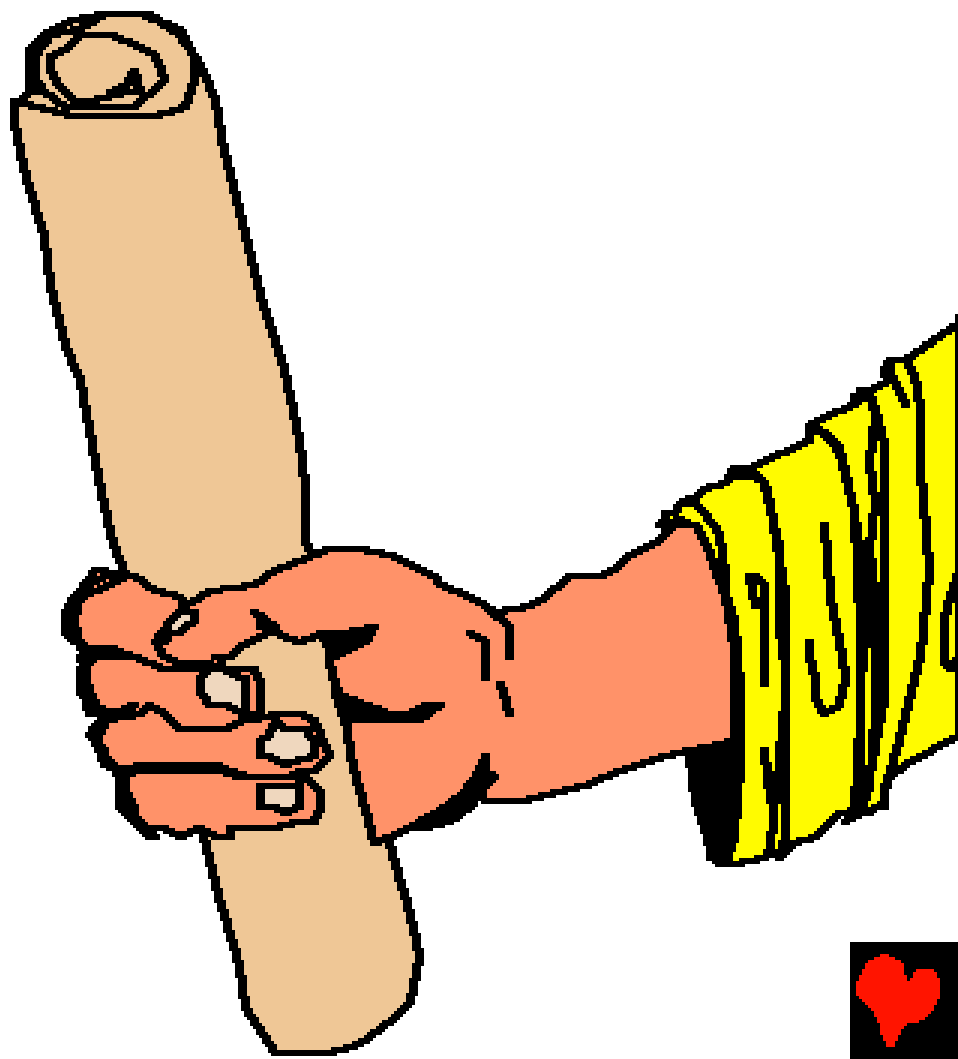
"Look what's written above the gate," Christian whispered. There, engraved in letters of gold were the words, "Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the City."



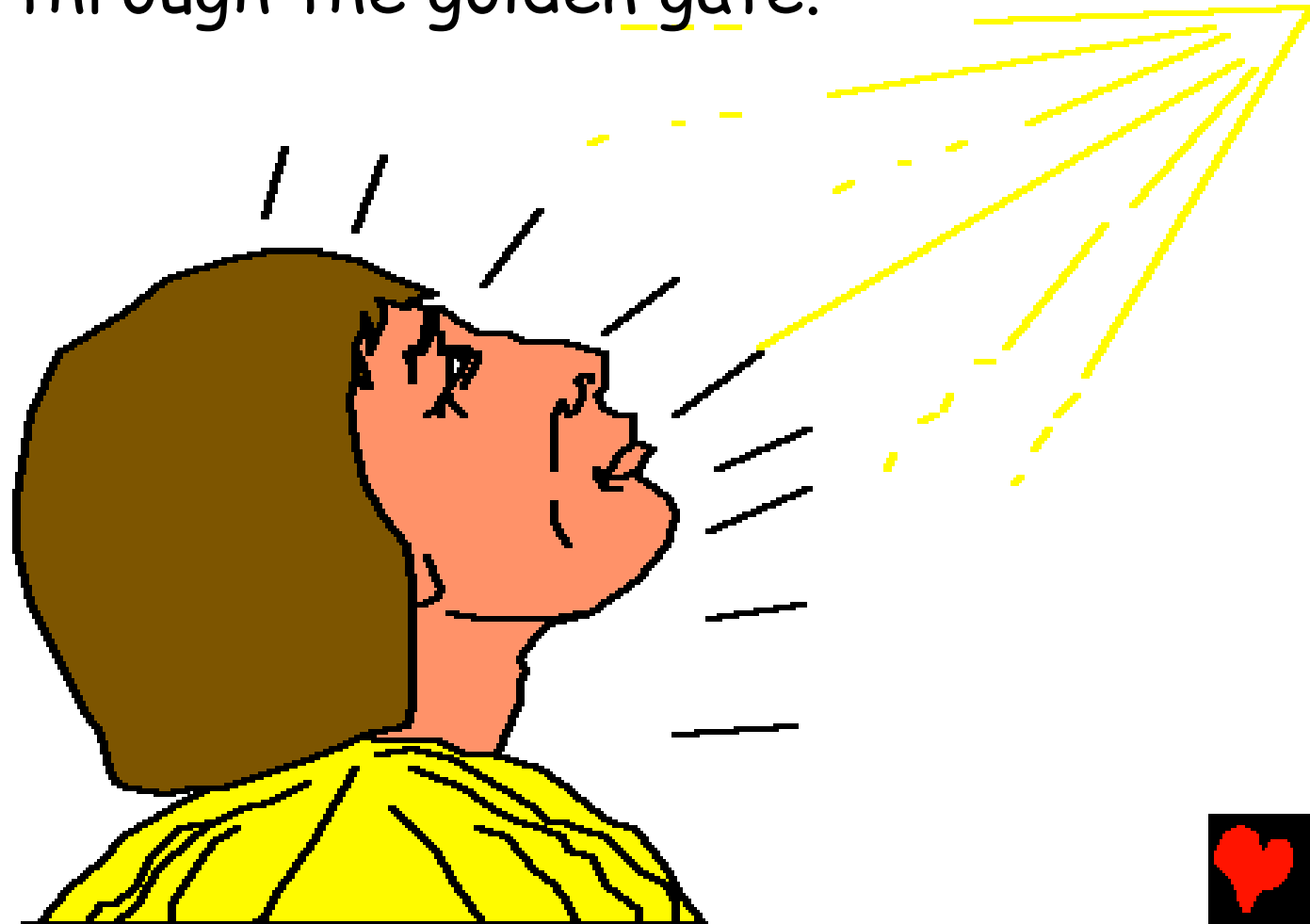
From the other side of the gate, Moses, Elijah, and countless other shining men gathered. "These pilgrims have come from the City of Destruction," they were told. "Their love for the King of this place has led them here." The pilgrims' certificates were taken to the King. "Open the gate," the King commanded. "That the righteous may enter in." As the pilgrims entered, they were gloriously changed.



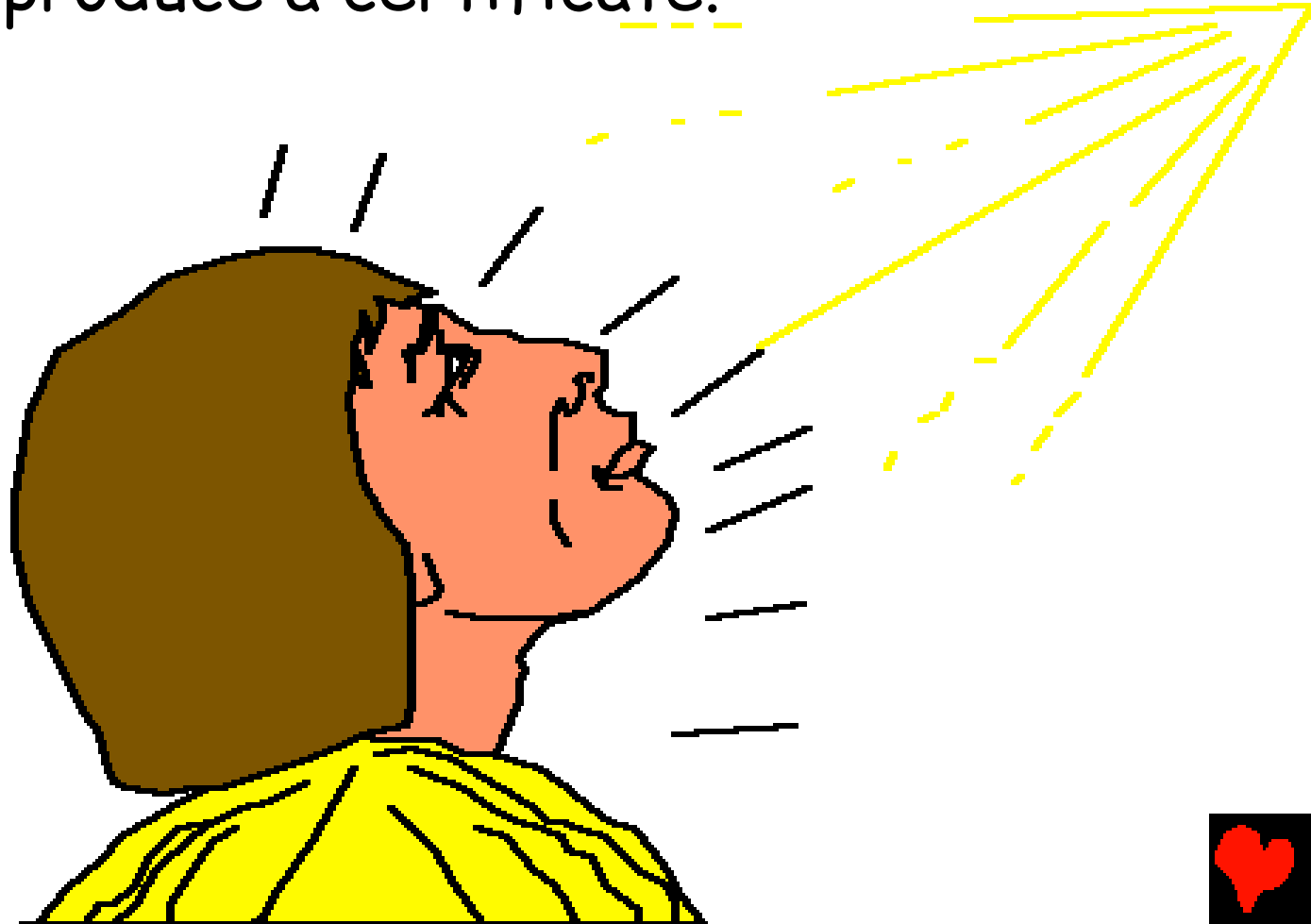
They received clothes of pure gold, harps and crowns. All the bells of the city rang for joy. Inside the gate, the city shone like the sun. People with crowns on their heads, palms in their hands and golden harps walked on streets of gold, singing praises. Some winged beings sang together, "HOLY, HOLY, HOLY IS THE LORD."



Christian's last sight of the world he'd left behind was not a happy one. Ignorance, whom he'd met on the road, had crossed the river by the help of a ferryman named Vain-hope. Now Ignorance applied for admission through the golden gate.

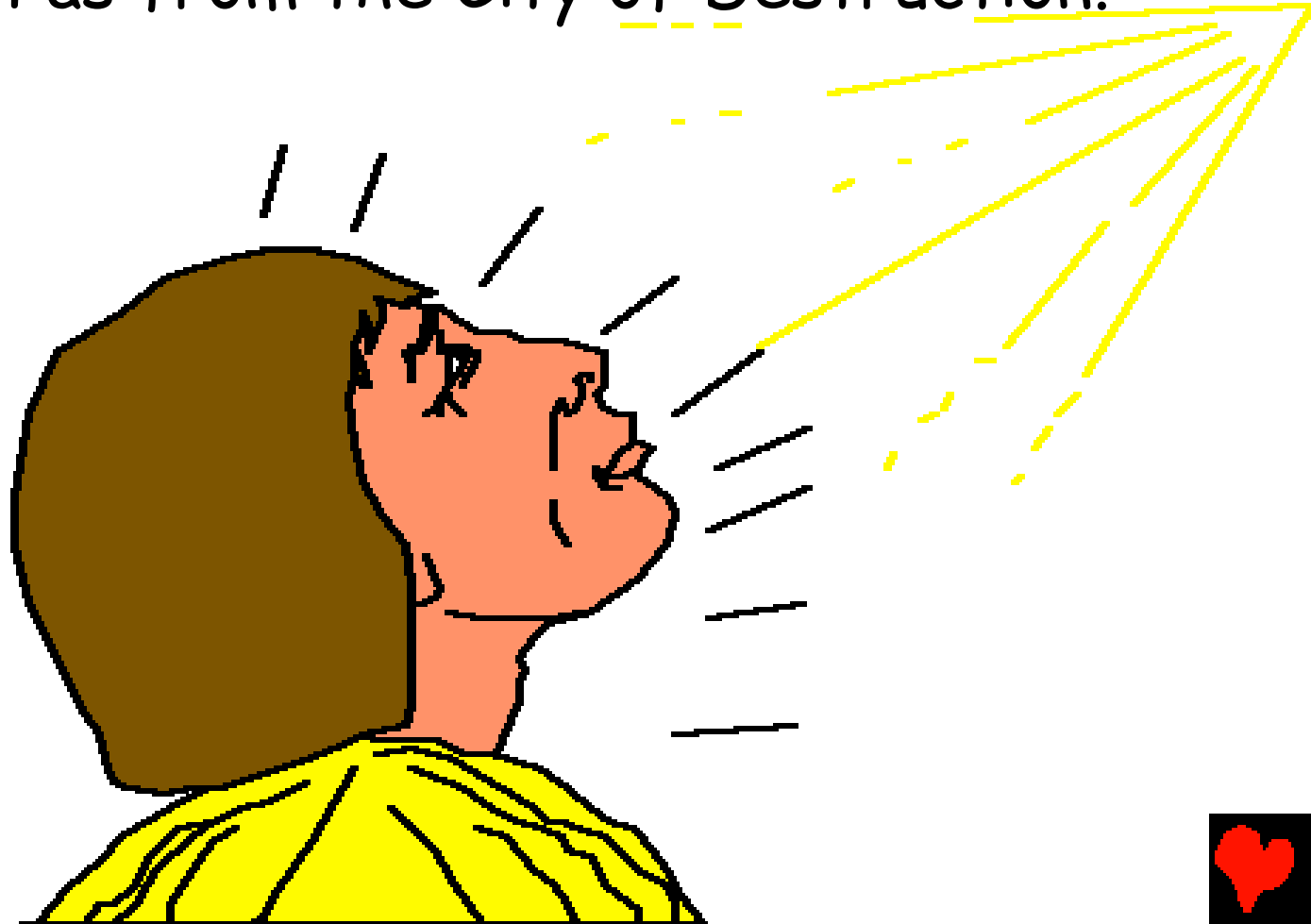


"I have eaten and drunk in the presence of the King and He has taught in our streets," Ignorance told the gatekeepers. "But where is your certificate?" they demanded. Ignorance fumbled in his tunic, but could not produce a certificate.





So they told the King. He commanded two Shining Ones to bind Ignorance hand and foot and remove him far from the city. Then Christian saw that there was a way to Hell even from the gate of Heaven as well as from the City of Destruction.



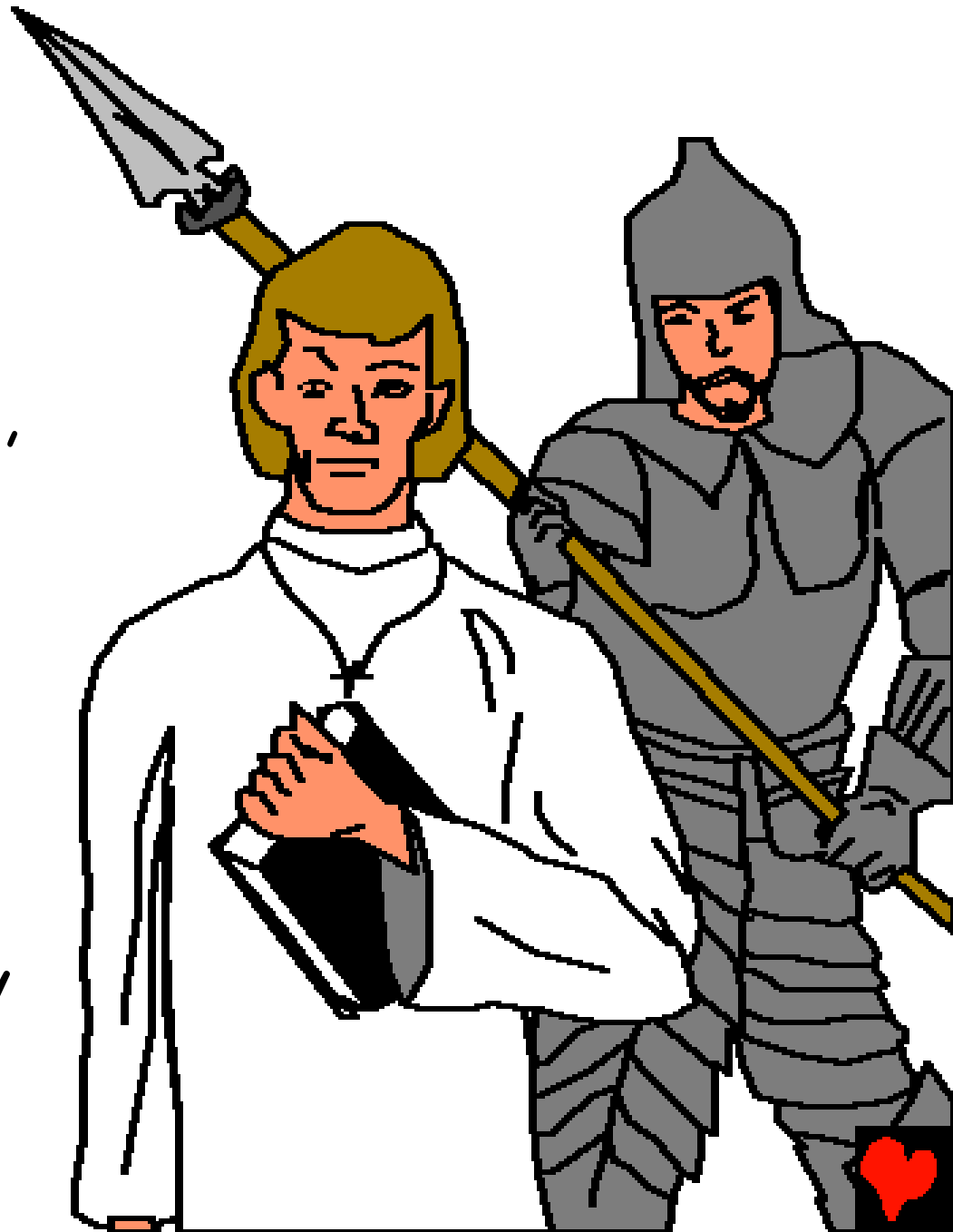
This story you have now read was written long ago - over 300 years ago - in England. At that time, you could be thrown in jail for speaking about God. In those days, jails were horrible dens of cold, damp stone. Sometimes, a jail was simply four walls with bars instead of a covered roof, out in an open field.



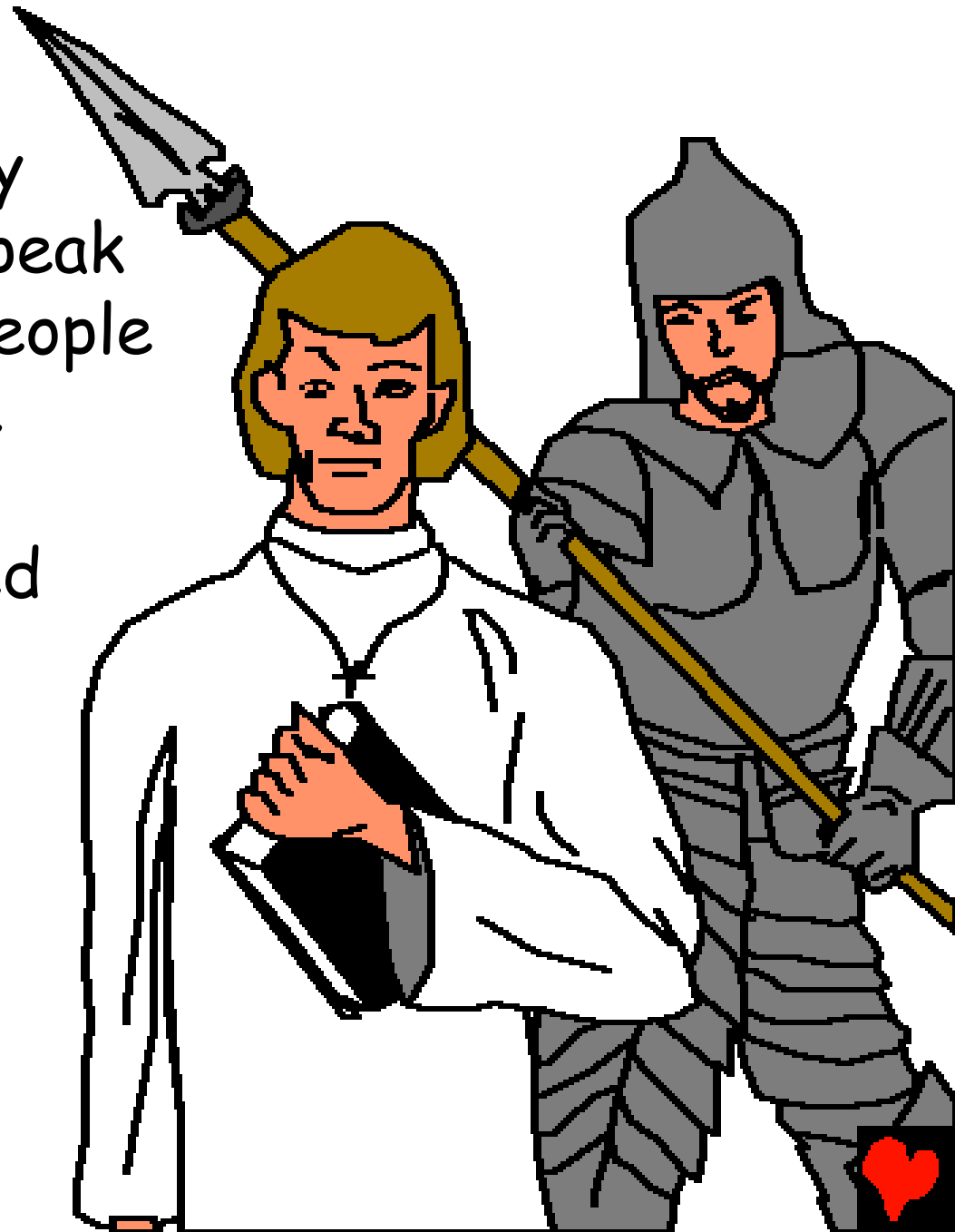
Snow and rain brought sickness and often death to the prisoners. Yet, many brave men taught God's Word wherever people gathered. Jesus had told His followers: "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to everyone." These preachers obeyed God.



Poor people liked to hear God's Word and to learn that He loved them. If the Bible preachers had been too scared to speak out, these people would not have known that God even cared for them or that Jesus died for their sins. When the King's soldiers caught someone preaching they dragged that person before the judge.

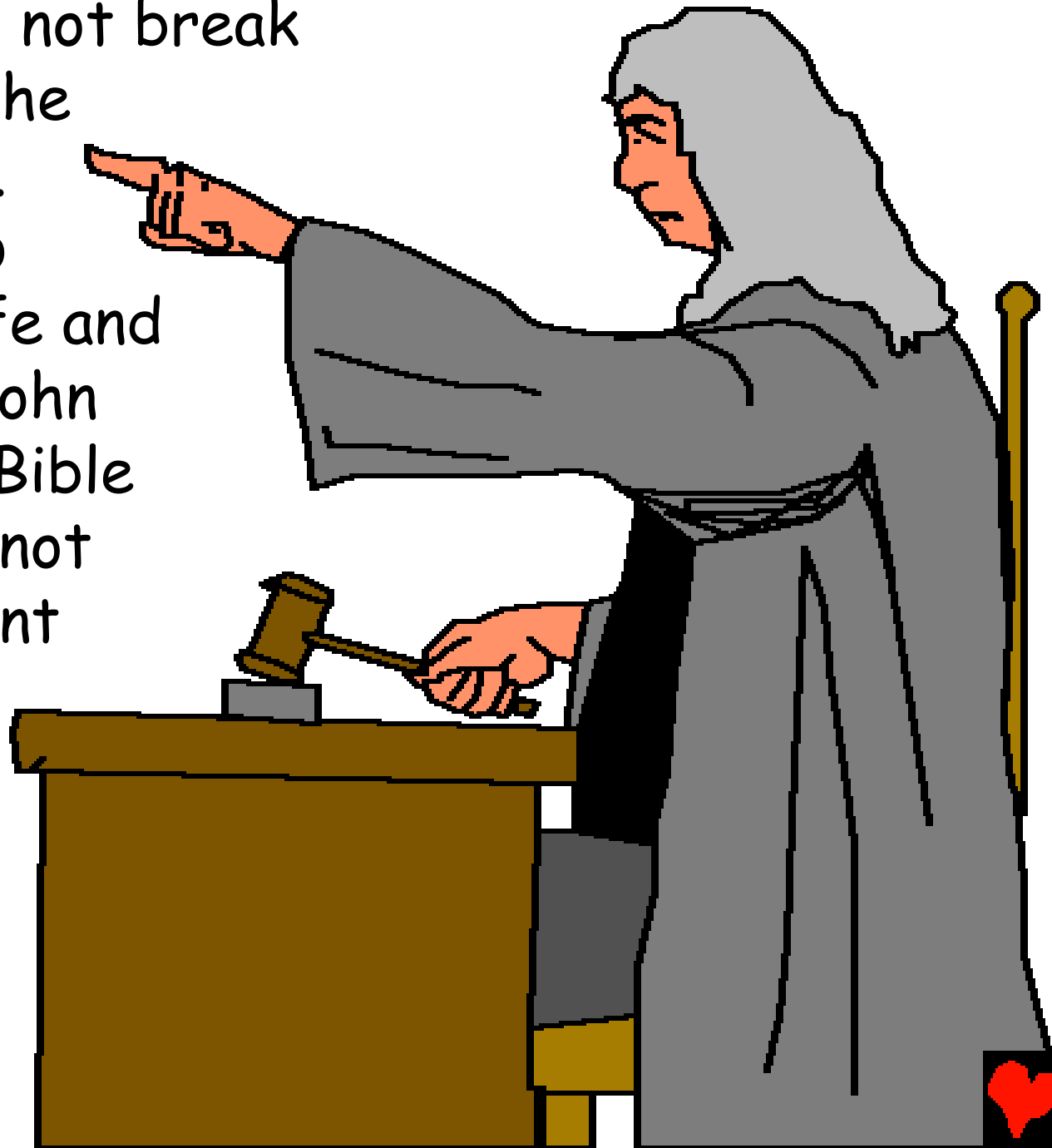


There, the accused preacher could promise not to break the law any more - that is, not to speak about God to others. People who refused to promise were thrown into these awful jails. Some stayed in jail for a long time - some died there. Even in jail, some continued to speak about God and Jesus to their jailors and other prisoners.

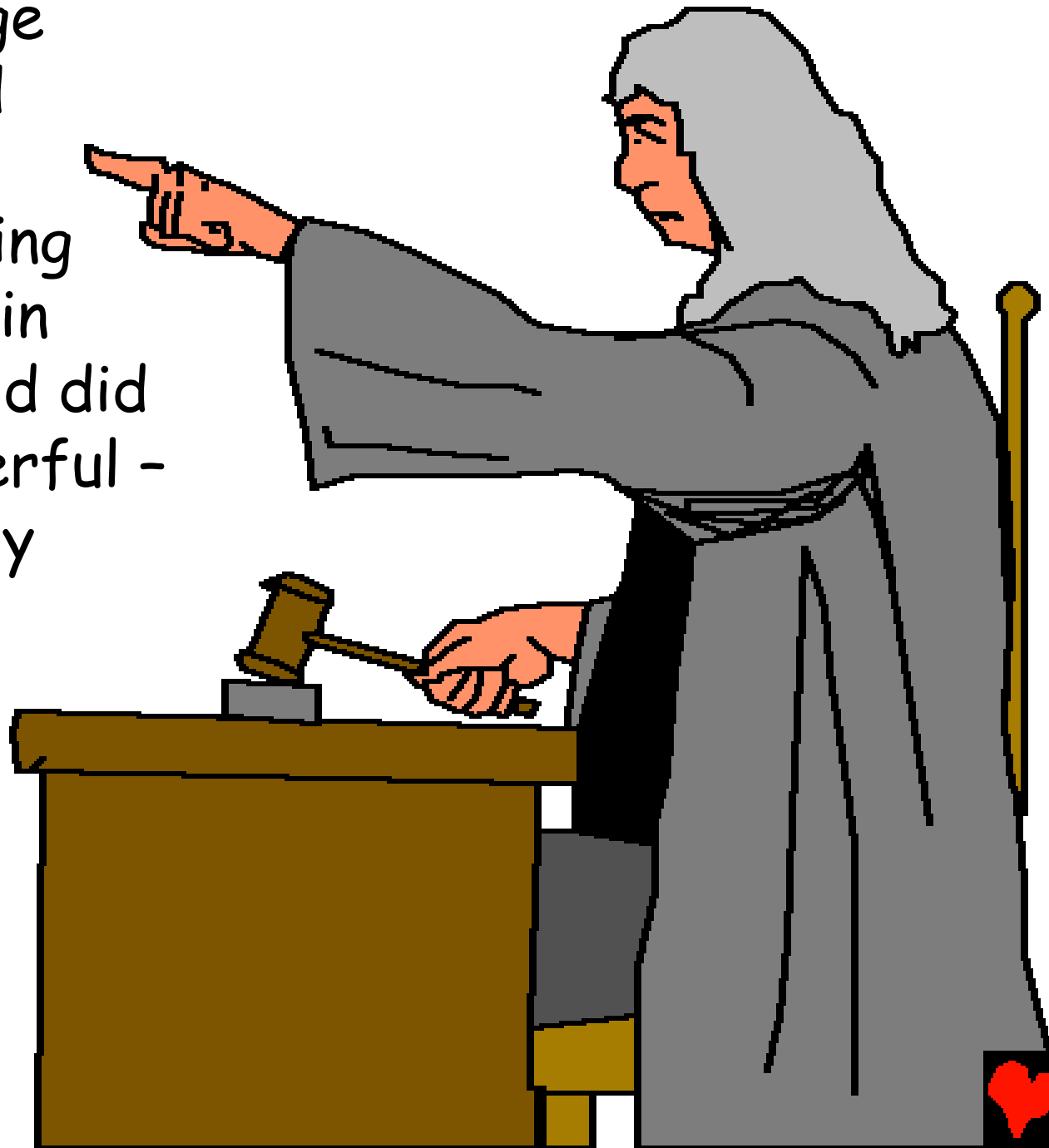


"Promise you will not break this law again," the judge demanded.

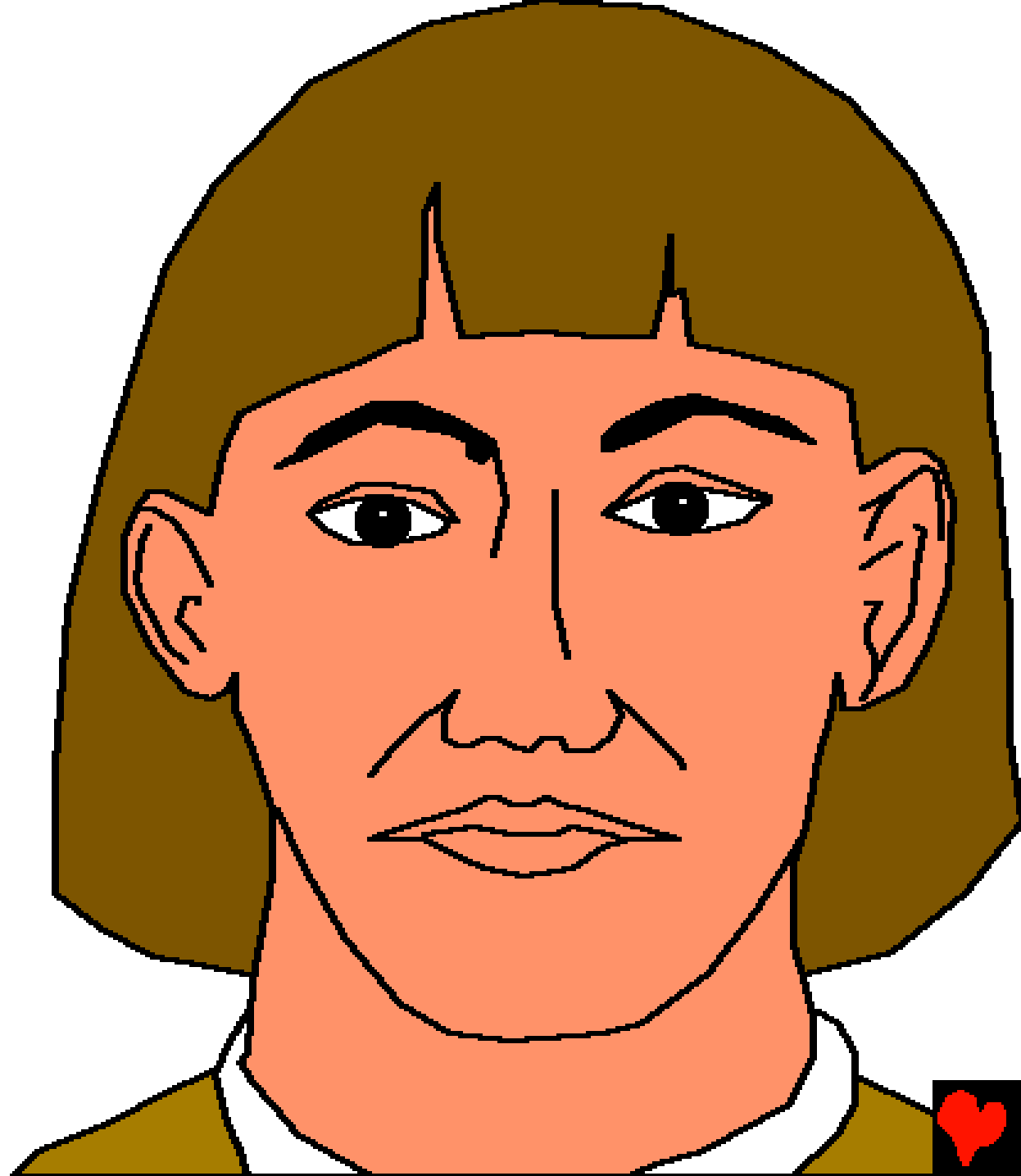
"Then you can go home to your wife and children." But John Bunyan, a young Bible preacher, would not promise. He spent twelve years in jail rather than disobey God. And God honored him.



Perhaps the judge thought he could silence John Bunyan's preaching by throwing him in jail. Instead, God did something wonderful - something nobody could expect.

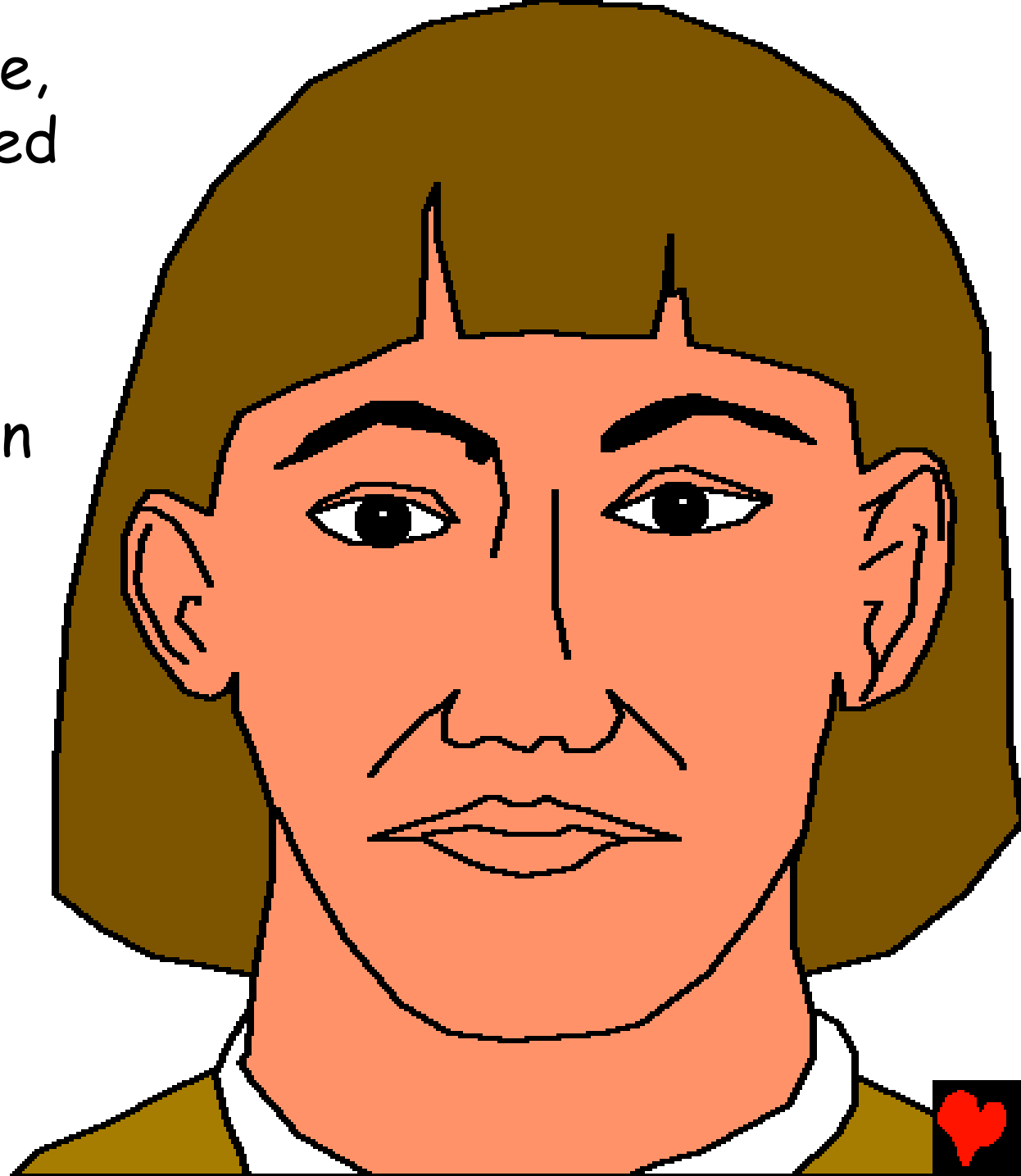


Before you hear about what God did, you should know more about John Bunyan. As a boy and young man, he ignored God and did many bad things. But he married a woman who loved Jesus and knew how to pray.





After his marriage, John Bunyan turned to God by placing his trust in Jesus as his Savior and Lord. John Bunyan knew he had been a terrible sinner. His life was greatly changed when he learned that Jesus died for his sins.



Forgiven by God, John Bunyan became a faithful minister of God's Word, telling others of God's Son, the Savior Who wanted to enter people's hearts and make them good and kind like Jesus Himself. For this he was arrested and jailed.



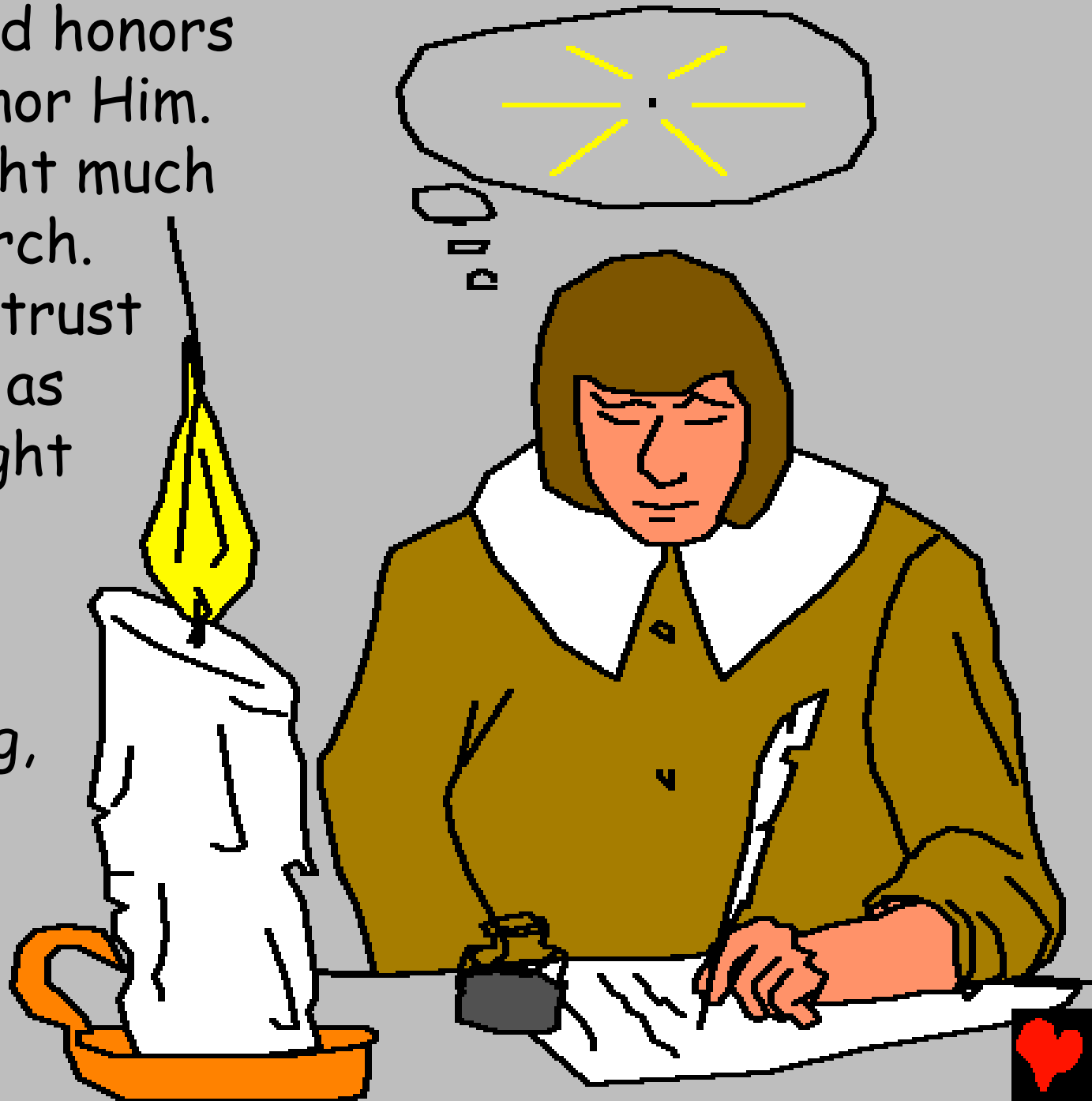
Chained in that primitive den-like jail John Bunyan read his Bible, prayed, and spoke so kindly that even his jailors felt sorry about his imprisonment. His wife, children and friends visited him whenever they could.



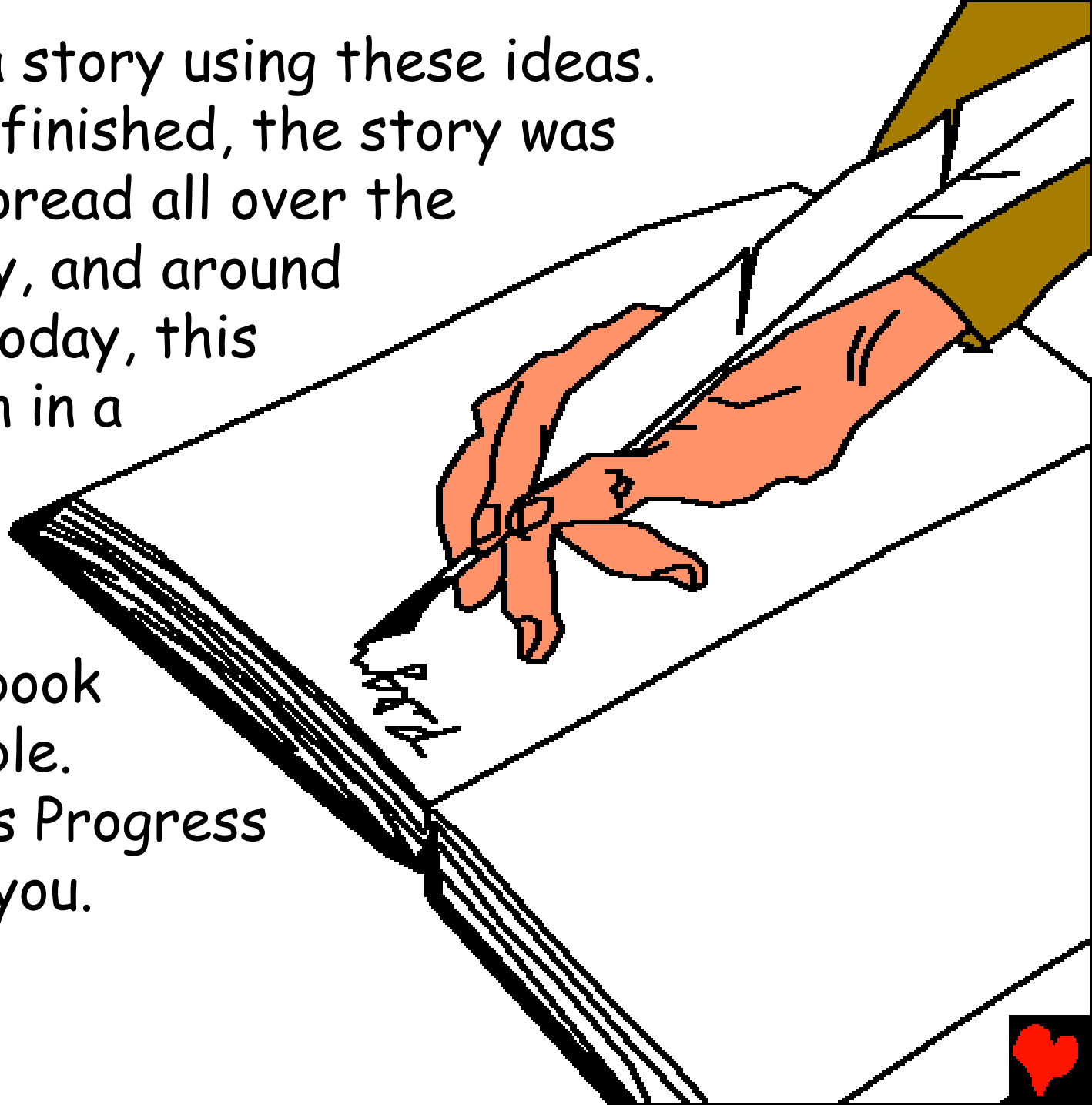
But it was a hard life in prison. Part of John's hardship came from knowing his family suffered too. They had no money to buy food and warm clothes. This nearly broke John's heart. He entrusted their care to God.



John knew God honors those who honor Him. He also thought much about his church. Did they still trust and obey God as John had taught them by his words and example? While thinking, John's mind filled with ideas from the Bible.



John wrote a story using these ideas. When it was finished, the story was copied and spread all over the town, country, and around the world. Today, this story written in a dungeon cell is perhaps the world's best-known book after the Bible. Now Pilgrim's Progress has come to you.





The  
End

