

The BLACK ROSE

A Story about
'Abdu'l-Bahá
in America



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CHILDREN'S PRAYER

*O God, guide me, protect me, illumine the lamp
of my heart and make me a brilliant star.
Thou art the Mighty and Powerful.*

—'Abdu'l-Bahá

The BLACK ROSE

A Story about
'Abdu'l-Bahá
in America

Adapted for children by Anthony A. Lee
Illustrated by Rex John Irvine



For Channa

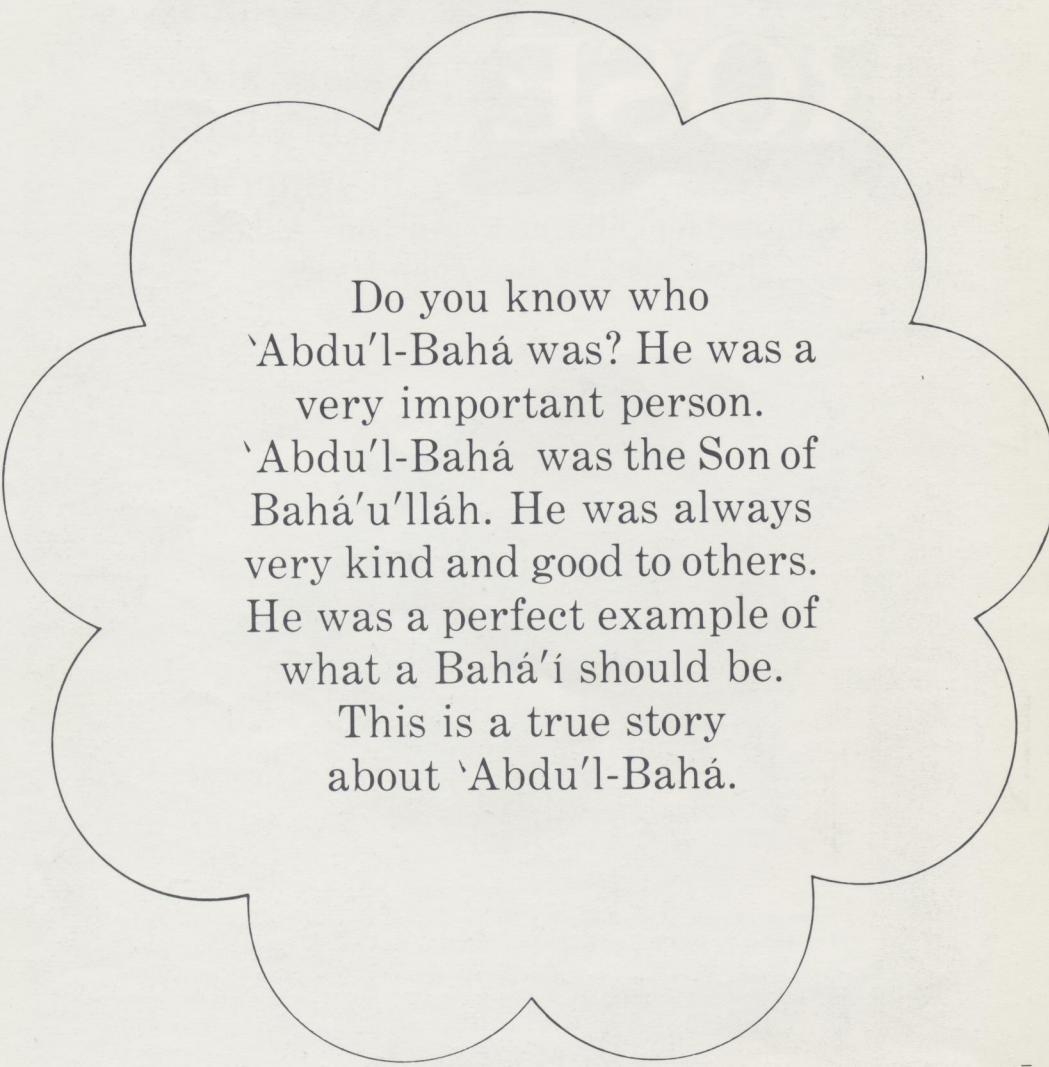
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Do you know who
'Abdu'l-Bahá was? He was a
very important person.
'Abdu'l-Bahá was the Son of
Bahá'u'lláh. He was always
very kind and good to others.
He was a perfect example of
what a Bahá'í should be.

This is a true story
about 'Abdu'l-Bahá.



A long time ago, long before you were born,
'Abdu'l-Bahá came to America.

While He was on His trip to America, He spoke
to many different people . . .
men and women and children.



He went to many cities — to churches and temples and parks and meetings and houses to tell people about the Bahá'í Faith.

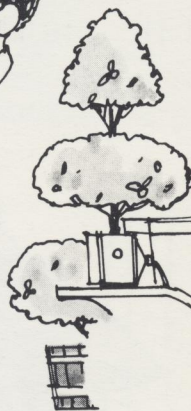


He spoke to

young people



and old people



and black people and white
people and tall people and
short people and rich people
and poor people . . .

He told them all about Bahá'u'lláh.



Wherever 'Abdu'l-Bahá went, many Bahá'ís went with Him. They were Bahá'ís of all kinds — Persians in Persian clothes, and Americans in American clothes, tall Bahá'ís and short Bahá'ís and rich Bahá'ís and poor Bahá'ís and old Bahá'ís and young Bahá'ís. And all colors — white and yellow and tan and brown and black.

Once, while
'Abdu'l-Bahá was in
New York, He went
to a place where
many poor people
lived, to tell them
about Bahá'u'lláh.
This place was called
the Bowery.



Many Bahá'ís went to the Bowery
with 'Abdu'l-Bahá. As they
walked down the streets,
some people stared at them
because they were
so different.





Soon some of the children started shouting and laughing. They thought that it was funny to see so many different kinds of people together. And, of course, they the didn't know who 'Abdu'l-Bahá was.



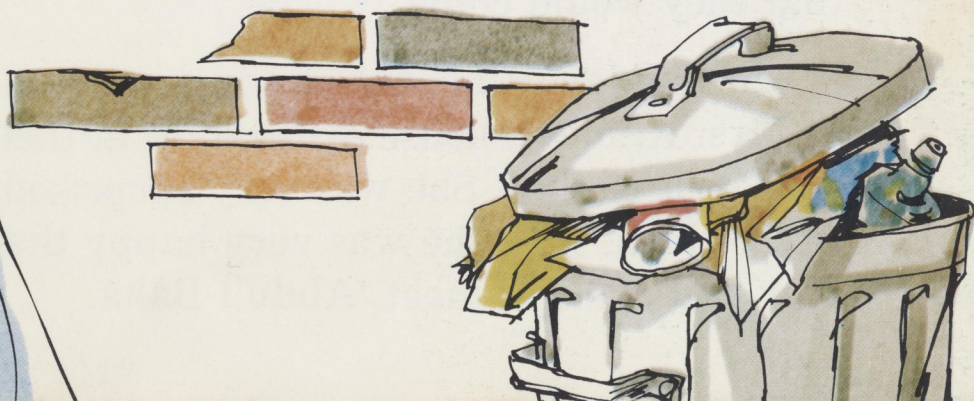
Some of the boys called names and some even
threw sticks at 'Abdu'l-Bahá and the
Bahá'ís as they walked down the streets.

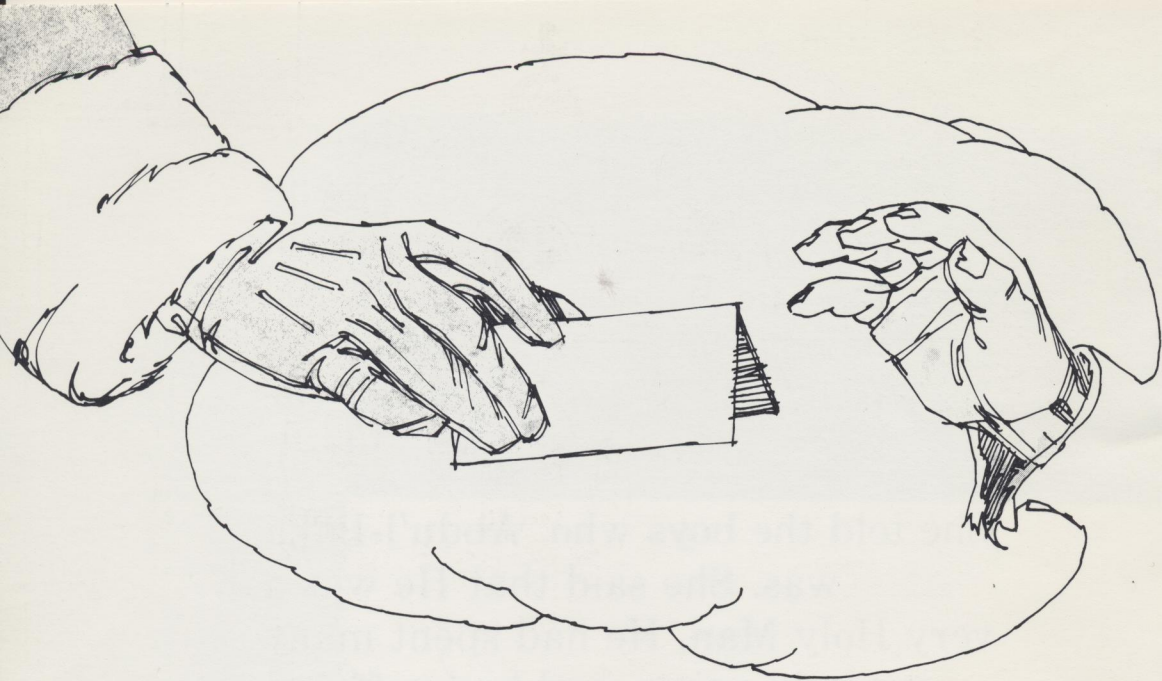




Mrs. Kinney was one of the Bahá'ís
with 'Abdu'l-Bahá. 'Abdu'l-Bahá
was staying at her house in
New York. It made her sad to see
the boys laughing and shouting
at 'Abdu'l-Bahá. So, she went over
to speak to the children.

She told the boys who 'Abdu'l-Bahá
was. She said that He was a
very Holy Man. He had spent many
years in prison and had suffered
very much, just because He told the
Truth and loved all men. Now
He was going to a meeting to tell
poor people about Bahá'u'lláh.





The boys were sorry for what they had done. "Can't we go to the meeting, too?" they asked.

"No," Mrs. Kinney said that was impossible. But, since 'Abdu'l-Bahá was staying at her house, they could come there on Sunday to meet Him. She gave the boys her address, but she didn't really think that they would come.

When Sunday came, the children arrived at Mrs. Kinney's house dressed up in their very best clothes. She was very surprised to see them. But, she was very happy that they had come to meet 'Abdu'l-Bahá.



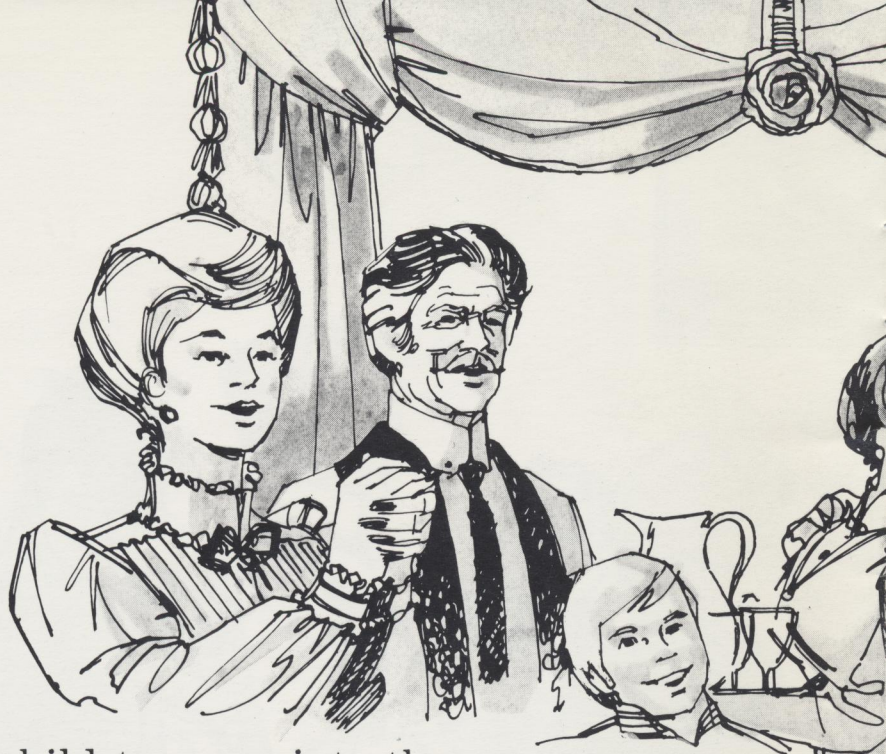




All the boys
came into the
house. They went up
the stairs and walked
into a large room.



'Abdu'l-Bahá was standing at the door. He was smiling and laughing because He liked children very much. He met each one of the boys as they came into His room. He shook their hands and put his arm around their shoulders. His smiles and laughter made them all very happy.



The last child to come into the room was a little black boy. When 'Abdu'l-Bahá saw him, He was even happier than before. In a loud voice He said that here was *a black rose*.

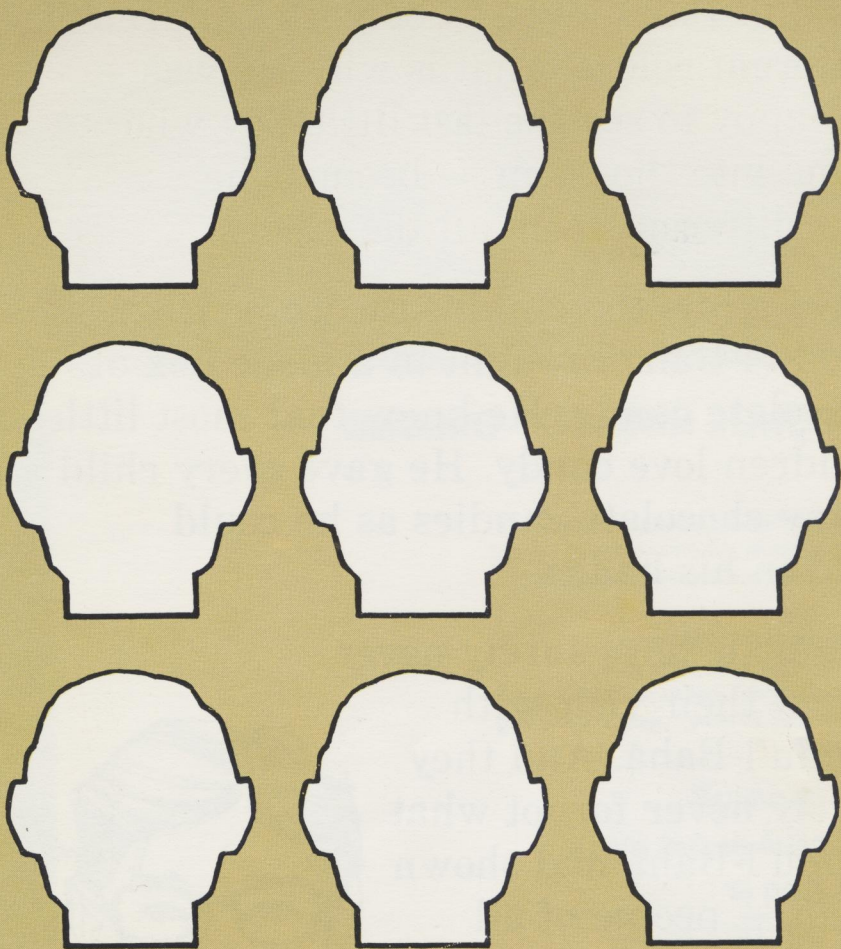
'Abdu'l-Bahá said these words because he was so happy to see the last little boy. And, this made the little boy very happy, too.

Now, there is really no such thing as a black rose. Most roses are red or yellow or pink or white. But, people say that if there ever *were* a black rose that it would be the most beautiful flower of all.





You know that some children
are red or yellow or pink or
white, too. And, some
children are brown or tan or
black. All of them are like
beautiful flowers.

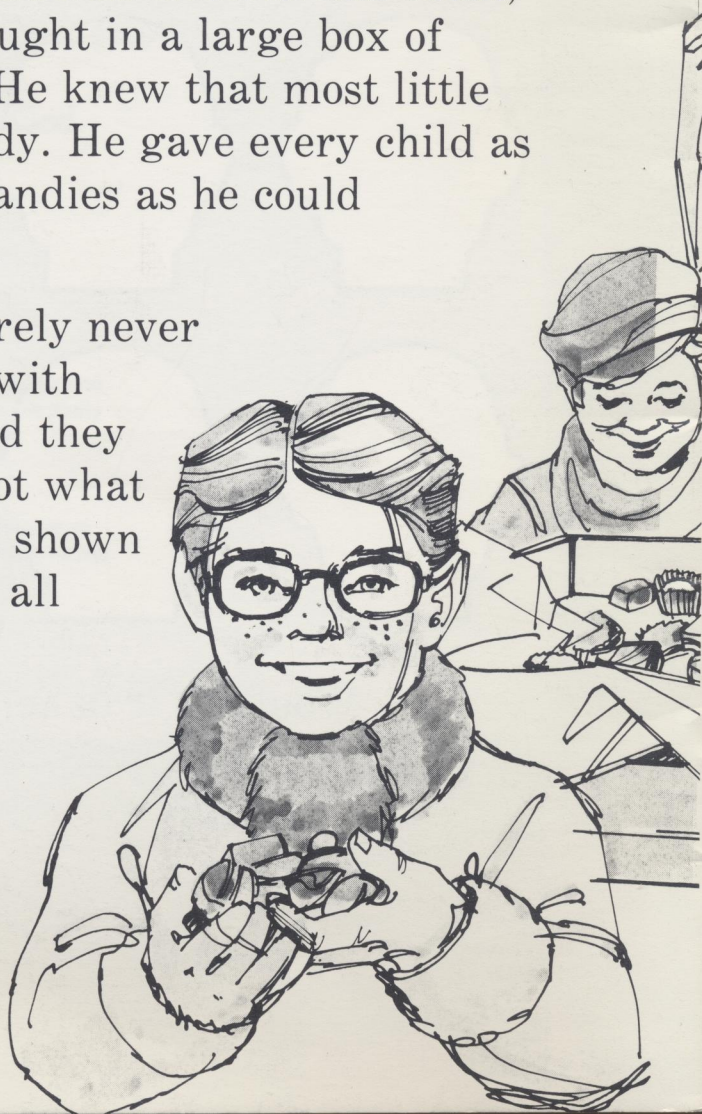


Wouldn't it be terrible if
everyone looked exactly
the same? Wouldn't that
be just awful?

'Abdu'l-Bahá loved to be with children of different colors. That is why He was so happy to see the last little boy who came into the room — because he was different from all the others.

Now, while the children were in His room, 'Abdu'l-Bahá brought in a large box of chocolate candy. He knew that most little children love candy. He gave every child as many chocolate candies as he could hold in his hands.

The little boys surely never forgot their visit with 'Abdu'l-Bahá. And they surely never forgot what 'Abdu'l-Bahá had shown them — people of all kinds and colors are beautiful.





THE BLACK ROSE

A Story about 'Abdu'l-Bahá in America

TO THE PARENT:

This story about 'Abdu'l-Bahá was adapted from passages in *Portals to Freedom*, pp. 63-67. It is related in this book by Howard Colby Ives, who was an eyewitness to the events which are described. Of course, it is a charming story about 'Abdu'l-Bahá and can be enjoyed as only that. But, the story also illustrates an important principle of Bahá'í life — the appreciation of human diversity.

The Bahá'í teachings do not ask us to ignore racial and ethnic differences, but rather to seek them out and enjoy the fruits of interracial fellowship and sharing. A Bahá'í should learn to value, and even to cherish, intercultural experiences and make them a part of his daily life.

It should be pointed out that 'Abdu'l-Bahá in this story did not simply ignore the fact that the last child to come into the room was of a different race than all the others. Nor did He behave as though this difference was of no importance. Rather, He *announced* the discovery of this bit of diversity and emphasized it with such love and joy that no one could possibly mistake His purpose.

"Bahá'u'lláh hath said," 'Abdu'l-Bahá writes, "that the various races of human kind lend a composite harmony and beauty of color to the whole. Let all associate, therefore, in this great human garden even as flowers grow and blend together side by side without discord or disagreement between them." (quoted in *The Advent of Divine Justice*, p. 31)

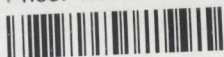
And again, He stresses, *"The diversity in the human family should be the cause of love and harmony, as it is in music where many different notes blend together in the making of a perfect chord."*

(quoted in *The Advent of Divine Justice*, p. 32)

This story can help teach your child to recognize and appreciate differences of race and color. It can also illustrate 'Abdu'l-Bahá's station, His love for children, His unfailing hospitality, His concern for the poor and His joy of life.

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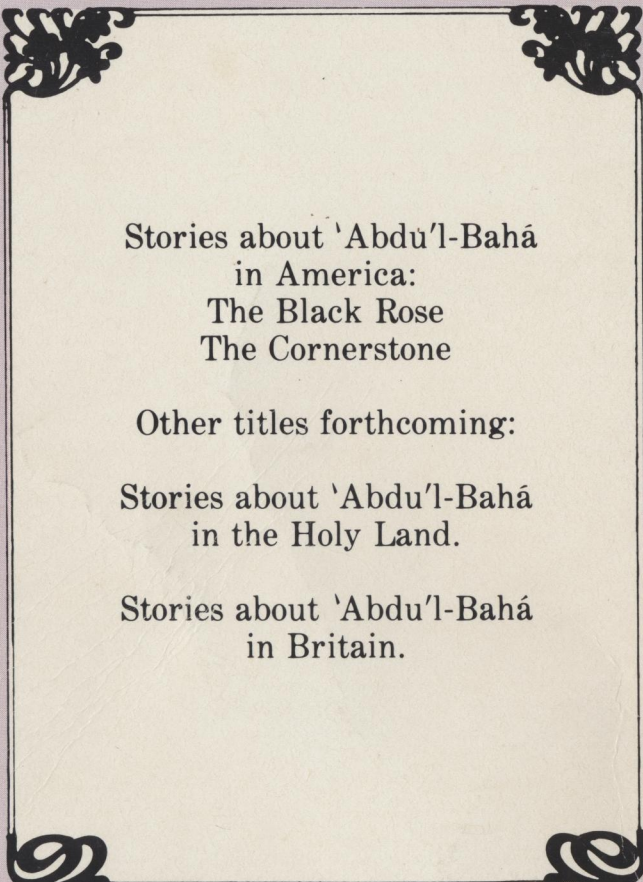


IN THE CLASSROOM:

This booklet can be read in Bahá'í children's classes but should be associated with some creative activity. One idea would be to have the children use crayons to draw two pictures. For the first picture, they may be asked to draw a flower garden or a group of children, but would be limited to only one color. Each child would have only one crayon and could use no other. On the second picture, the children may be asked to draw the same subject. But, this time they should be allowed to use as many colors as they wish.

As the children draw their pictures, they should be encouraged to express their feelings about colors. At the end, the teacher should ask which pictures were more fun to draw and which look the best — the ones with just one color or the ones with many.





Stories about 'Abdu'l-Bahá
in America:
The Black Rose
The Cornerstone

Other titles forthcoming:

Stories about 'Abdu'l-Bahá
in the Holy Land.

Stories about 'Abdu'l-Bahá
in Britain.