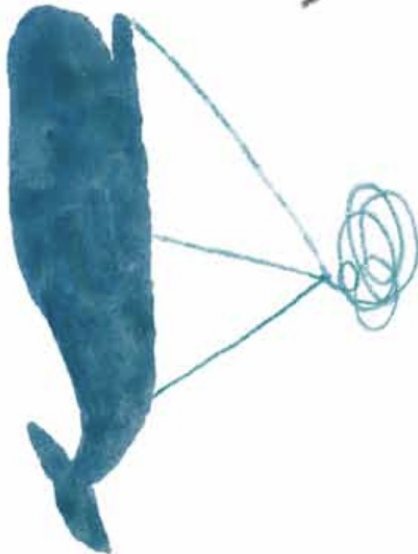


No Trumpets Needed



Saeed was flying the kite of peace.



I am a cameraman. I work on my own. It's how I like it. I was on the West Bank a few weeks ago, my first job in the bitter cauldron of contention that is the Middle East. Of course I had seen on television, like most of us, the burnt-out buses, the ritual humiliation at checkpoints, the tanks in the streets, the stone-throwing crowds, the olive groves and the hilltop settlements – and now, the wall. I knew the place in images, I was there to make more of them, I suppose. I began my travels on the Palestinian side.

I had been there only a couple of days when I first came across a shepherd boy. He was sitting alone on a hillside under an olive tree with his sheep grazing all around him. I had seen nothing remotely picturesque in this land until that moment, nothing until now that reminded me in any way of its biblical past. The shepherd boy was making a kite, so intent upon it that he had not noticed my approach. When he did look up he showed no surprise or alarm. His smile was openhearted and engaging. I could

not bring myself to pass by with a mere greeting or a paltry nod of the head.

So I sat down and offered him a drink out of my rucksack. He drank gratefully, eagerly, but said nothing. I patted my camera, told him who I was, shook his hand. I tried to communicate in English, then in the very few words of Arabic I had picked up. His smile was the only reply I got.

When I began to film him he seemed unconcerned, disinterested even. We shared what food we had. He took a great fancy to some Scottish shortbread I'd brought with me from back home, and he gave me some of his pine nuts. And we shared our silence too, both of us knowing instinctively that this was fine, as good a way as any to get to know one another.

When evening came and he stood up and began to whistle his sheep home, I knew he expected me to go with him, like one of his sheep. Later, I found myself sitting in his house, surrounded by his huge extended family, all talking amongst

