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# 1

## *Amah Tells a Story*

“Come, my little lily flower. You must try to eat your dinner. See! I put molasses on your rice ball to make it nice.”

“I don’t want dinner,” Bidy Forrester said with a sigh. “I don’t want to eat. I’m too hot.”

“I too feel the heat and I do not like the noise of this great city,” said Amah. Then she smiled. “I know what will help you feel better. Eat up your dinner and I will tell you the story of how I got the little green frog.” The old Chinese lady’s eyes became only little slits in her face as she laughed. Bidy was eating so fast that she almost knocked over her glass of milk!

Bidy always liked to hear a story, and her favorite story was the one about the little green frog. Oh, this was not a real frog. It was made of heavy, green stone and had two shiny little eyes set in its head. Amah sometimes gave it to Bidy to play with. On days like this, when it was too hot to run and play outside, Bidy could

pretend that the frog was really her pet and she would play with it all day long.

Finally the last bit of rice ball was gone and Bidy jumped up from the table. "I'm ready for the story, Amah." Together they sat on the woven mat on the floor and Amah began her story.

"When I was very small I lived in the rice fields with my own mother and father. One day a man came to our house. He was out of breath from running and he was very much afraid. He begged my father to hide him from the men who chased him. This poor man's bare feet were all cut from the stones in the road. He had not eaten in a long time, and he was weak and tired. He could not tell my father what trouble had come to him, but only kept saying 'Hide me, hide me!' My father was a kind man and could not send the man away. He heard the men who were coming after the weak and tired one. Quickly Father took the man to an old well behind our house. There was no water in the well, so Father took off the boards that covered the hole and helped the man get into the well. Then Father put the boards back over him and sprinkled chicken feed on the boards.

“Just then the men arrived. They came into the house and looked all around, but the man was not there. They went into the shed behind the house, but the man was not there. They went right by the chickens who were eating the grain on the old well, and went away without finding the man.”

Amah and Bidy laughed. “Your father was smart, Amah,” Bidy said, laughing.

“Yes, he was very wise. And he was also kind. When the angry men had gone, he helped the man out of the well, took him to the house and gave him food. He washed the man’s feet and put medicine and bandages on them.

“The man stayed with us until he could walk again without pain. While he was there he told us that he had been a priest in the temple in a village many miles away. He had argued with the other priests, and they tried to kill him. He was trying to get to his own village where his family could protect him. Before he left us, he gave my father the little green frog. He told my father that it would bring luck to the family. It was the only thing he had to give. He gave it because he was very grateful to my father for his kindness.”

"Did the frog bring you good luck?" Biddy asked.

"No," answered Amah sadly. "Soon after that, my father died. Just before he died, he gave me the little frog and told me to take care of it. I made a little bag and put the frog inside. It seemed that the frog only brought us bad luck, for we became very poor. Then a woman from the city told my mother that I would do as a wife for her son when he was older, and my mother thought that would be good, so I went to live with the woman in the city. She was unkind and made me work very hard. Because of this, I became sick and could not work. Then she did not want me and made me leave. I started to walk home, but I got worse on the way, for I had nothing to eat. And then, when I reached my home, my mother was not there. Another family now lived in our house."

"Poor Amah," Biddy said softly. "Where did your mother go?"

"I could not find her. The people would not let me stay, for they did not want to catch my sickness. They gave me a little food and then sent me away. Nobody wanted me. I did not

know what to do or where to go. Finally I fell down by the side of the road and could not get up."

"Did you think you were going to die?"

"Yes, I did. But then I heard voices. They were not the voices of Chinese people; they were different. I opened my eyes, and I saw a man and woman with white faces looking at me. I had never seen such people, and I was so afraid that I screamed. Then they spoke to me, very kindly. 'Don't be afraid. We will take care of you,' they said. And who do you think was speaking so kindly to me?"

"I know! I know!" Biddy said quickly. "My mother and father."

"That's right. They took me to their home and took care of me till I was well. I had heard of the white missionaries, but I never knew they were so wonderful. Now I knew they were kind and good. They told me about the God in heaven and about His Son, Jesus. I have been here since then, and the frog came with me, in the bag that I had made."

"God sent you here, didn't He? He sent you here to take care of me when Mommy and Daddy are busy."

“Yes, my little lily flower. That is why He sent me.”

“Amah, did the frog ever bring you luck? Was it luck that got my parents to find you on the road?”

“Oh no! It was God’s goodness to me that brought them along the road where I was. I have learned not to trust in luck, but to trust in God. What some people call luck your mother calls ‘God’s glad surprises.’ ”

“And what about your mother? Did she ever come home?”

“Your father helped me to find her. She had married again and did not want me, so I was glad to stay here.”

“Thank you for the story,” said Bidy as she got up from the mat. “Is it all right if I get the frog from the shelf in your room?”

Amah said it was all right, so Bidy got the frog and spent the rest of the day acting out the story that Amah had told her.

## 2

### *Good-bye to China*

Dr. Forrester sat in the living room talking to his wife.

“Molly, I’m afraid that we will have to send Bidy back to England before long. She’s been sick so much, and she can’t seem to get well in this heat and in the city.”

“I know you’re right. But I don’t want to send her so far away. Why, we won’t be able to see her for a year—maybe two years at a time. And it takes weeks to send a letter to England! Dick, isn’t there some way we can keep her here?”

“I don’t really see how. Just think. When she goes back to England she can have a good teacher, lots of room to play, healthy food and clean air. We aren’t sending her away forever.”

“I know. But I’ll miss her so much. And I don’t even know your sister Hannah. She didn’t seem to like children much when I saw her in England just before we left.”



“It will be good for Hannah to have someone like Biddy around. Hannah will learn to be much kinder, I’m sure. I know she’ll take good care of Biddy. And really, the only way that we can stay with Biddy is if we would go back to England too.”

“Oh, we can’t do that,” said Mrs. Forrester quickly. She thought of all the sick Chinese people who came to their clinic for help. If the Forresters left, who would give them medicine, and who would tell them about the God who loved them? “No, I suppose the only thing to do is to send Biddy back to England. I hope she understands.”

The next morning at breakfast, Biddy listened to her mother, her eyes wide with surprise. Mother was telling her about England, about Aunt Hannah, and about the long boat trip she would be taking to get to England.

“Aunt Hannah is eager to see you,” Mrs. Forrester was saying, “and you will like England so much! You’ll like the big yard to play in, and there are all kinds of flowers. You’ll live out in the country and you won’t have to listen to all the city noise, and it won’t be so hot there in the summer. And you’ll have lots of friends.”

"I think I'd like to go," said Bidy, "but I want you and Daddy to come too."

"Well, Bidy, we would like to go with you, but you know that there won't be anyone to come and take over the clinic for two more years. Daddy and I have to stay here to help the people who come to the clinic."

"Then *you* come. Daddy is the doctor. He can stay."

"But if I go, Daddy will have to stay all alone. There is too much work for him to do by himself. He would have to spend all of his time just being a doctor and wouldn't have time to tell people about Jesus. You don't want to be selfish, do you? Would you rather keep your mommy all to yourself, or share me with the other people who need me?"

"I want you, Mommy!" Bidy cried. "Those old Chinese don't need you. They can get someone else to help them!"

Just then a woman came running to the door. "Oh, come fast! My daughter spilled some boiling water on her foot. Come help!"

Dr. and Mrs. Forrester jumped up to help the girl, and Bidy went outside into the courtyard. At first she was angry, but then she began to

feel ashamed. She walked along, kicking at the gravel on the ground. *What does Daddy think of me now?* she wondered. *He was glad when I was unselfish with my dolls and gave one to Hansan.* It made her sad to know that Daddy would be unhappy with her actions, but still she did not want to leave them here while she went to England. And then she thought, *I guess it makes Jesus unhappy, too. I know He wouldn't want me to be so selfish.* She knew that Jesus loved her and that He knew about her problems, so she began to talk to Him.

“Lord Jesus, I know You don't want me to be selfish, but I do want my mommy and daddy. I guess I know what's right, but I don't want to do it. Please help me not to be so selfish. I am sorry that I am selfish. I don't want to be.”

Just then her mother came back to the house. Bidy grabbed her hand and walked toward the house with her. “Mommy, I—I think I would like to go to England after all. And I think I'm big enough to go by myself.”

Mrs. Forrester smiled and hugged Bidy. “I'm glad you decided to be unselfish. What made you decide?”

“Well, I know it doesn't make you and Daddy

happy when I'm selfish, and I know it doesn't make Jesus happy. So I asked Jesus to help me do the right thing."

"You must remember that when Daddy and I are far away, Jesus will still be with you."

"I know," Bidly said.

"Come on, Bidly," said her mother. "Let's go find Amah and tell her the news."

When Amah heard, she began to cry. "My little lily flower, for you I am glad but for me, I cry. You will forget about me way off there."

"No I won't, Amah. I couldn't forget you. Please don't cry."

Amah tried to stop crying. "England is a good place, I think. And there is much money there, and gold."

"Really? For everybody?"

"Oh, I think all are rich in England."

"I'll make a lot of money when I get there, and send it to Mommy and Daddy to build a hospital. There's no place for the sick people to stay. And Daddy can do operations." Then she stopped. She would miss Amah. "I wish you could come with me and tell me stories, Amah."

Amah went to the shelf where the little green frog was kept. "Little lily flower," she said.

“I would like to give you the frog to take with you—to keep always. It will make you think of Amah sometimes.”

“Really, Amah? Can I really have it? But you promised your father you would keep it.”

“My father thought it would bring me luck. I know it does not. But it can give a small lily flower happiness on dark days. You may have the frog.”

Then it was time to start packing for the long trip to England. Biddy took along her Chinese clothes so that the boys and girls in England could see how the people dressed, and she took her Chinese books so that they could see the strange writing.

“I know you’ll tell people about China, Biddy, but what else will you tell the people in England?” asked Mrs. Forrester.

“I’ll tell them about the clinic,” Biddy answered.

“And what else?”

“Oh! I’ll tell them about Jesus, and how we teach the Chinese people about Him.”

“I’m glad you will, Biddy. You know, people all over the world need to hear about Jesus—even the people in England.”

Then Biddy laughed. "I'm going to be a missionary, too, Mommy, a missionary to England."

When Mr. and Mrs. Broadbent came for Biddy two weeks later to take her to the boat with them, she was carrying the little green frog.

"Do you think that frog is worth anything, Dick?" Mrs. Forrester asked her husband.

"No, I think it's just soapstone. Besides, Amah gave it to Biddy as a keepsake."

Finally they all said goodbye, and Biddy Forrester began her long trip to England.