

The Magic lake at the End of the World ~ adapted from Barbara Kloeck

Once upon a time there was a king of a great land who had one child. The child brought the king great joy and also sorrow. The prince was born in ill health and as the years passed no one could find a cure. One night the king prayed, "Oh Great One, I am getting old and will soon leave my people to join you in the starry heavens. But there is no one to look after my people aside from my child, the prince. Please tell me how to cure the prince." The king waited patiently for an answer and finally heard a voice from the fire that burned always by the altar. "A drink from the magic lake at the end of the world will make the prince well."

But the king was too old to make the journey to the magic lake at the end of the world and the prince was too ill. So, the king proclaimed throughout the land that whosoever would bring back the water from the lake at the end of the world would be richly rewarded. Many brave people set out to try, but none could find it.

Now, in a valley far from that kingdom there lived a family who had very little land and were farmers. One day, the two oldest children said to their parents "Let us go and search for the healing water. We shall return before the moon is full to help with the harvest." Their parents feared for them but gave their blessing to help the king and prince.

They traveled far and found many lakes, but none where the sky touched the waters. Finally they knew they must return home to help with the harvest but they said, "Let's gather water from every lake. In this way we may just receive a reward." They went to the palace and told the king that they had brought water from the magic lake. They gave the water to the prince who remained just as ill as before. The king called the magician to ask why the prince was not made well. The magician said wisely that this was not the water from the magic lake and the children were not telling the truth. They trembled with fright. They knew that their falsehood had been discovered. The king threw them into prison for their trickery and every day they had to drink their false water.

Once again the king sent a messenger to plea for help from the people. Suma, the youngest sister, was out grazing the llamas when she heard the messenger ask the people to help find the magic lake. Suma quickly led the llamas home and begged her parents for permission to go and find the magic lake at the end of the world. "You are too young," said Suma's parents. "Just look at what has befallen your siblings. We cannot bear to be without you, dear Suma."

"But think how sad our king will be if the prince dies," replied Suma, "And if I find the lake, perhaps the king will forgive my siblings."

Suma's parents gave their blessing. She put a bag of golden corn and her water flask into her llamas pack and set off at once. The first night Suma slept snug and warm against her llama but heard a mountain lion crying so the next day she sent her llama home for safety. The next night Suma slept in the top branches of a tall tree where in the morning she was aroused by the

voices of gentle birds resting on a nearby branch. They were talking about Suma. Suma had shared some corn with them the day before. They said Suma would never be able to find the magic lake alone and so they must help.

“Oh yes, please do!” said Suma.

“We shall help you, you are a good person” they said and they each gave Suma a wing feather. “Hold them all together as if in a fan. These feathers have magic powers that will carry you wherever you wish to go, and they will protect you from harm.” Suma made a little fan with the feathers. Then, the birds told her about three terrible creatures that guard the magic lake. Suma was to hold up the feathers before the creatures, have no fear, and sing,

“No fear here, guarded am I.”

whenever the three creatures appeared.

Suma gratefully thanked the birds and held up the fan and said, “Take me to the magic lake at the end of the world.” At once, a gentle breeze lifted Suma out of the tree and off through the valley and up over the snowy mountain peaks. At last the wind carried her to the shore of a sunny lake that touched the sky. Suma ran to the water to fill her flask, and a huge crab said “Get away from my lake or I shall eat you.”

Suma trembled only a little and lifted the magic fan and sang, “no fear here, guarded am I!” and the crab’s eyes closed and it fell fast asleep.

Once more Suma began to fill her flask when a voice came up from the water and said, “Get away from my lake or I shall eat you.” She looked and saw a great green alligator in the lake. Suma quickly held up the fan and sang “no fear here, guarded am I” and the alligator fell fast asleep and sank to the bottom of the lake.

Just as soon as Suma recovered from her fright there was yet another voice whistling “get away from my lake or I will eat you,” and there above her was a flying serpent. Again, she held up her fan and sang “no fear here, guarded am I and the serpent drifted to the ground, folded its wings around its body and began to snore.

Suma sat for a moment to quiet herself. She realized the danger had passed and finally filled the flask.

Holding her fan, she whispered “please take me to the palace.”

Suma flew swiftly and found herself before the palace gates. A guard led her to the prince who was pale and motionless. Suma gave the prince a few sips from her flask. At once, the prince sat up joyfully and said “How strong I feel!”

The king rejoiced and praised Suma for her courage and offered Suma all of the riches of the kingdom but she asked for just three things. The first was that the fan should return to the birds and with that it flew out of the window and off toward the mountains. The second was that her siblings would be freed and the king had them immediately released. The third was for a large farm with many llamas for Suma's family. "It will be so," said the King, "but please stay with us in the palace. We will do everything to make you happy."

But Suma refused, "Oh no, thank you, I miss my family and I have to return to them." So, Suma and her siblings returned home to their parents and their large farm with many llamas and they all lived happily ever after.