

**THE DARING RISK**  
A Vietnamese tale  
Adapted by Carole L. Cooney

**Setting:** Mr. Cam's Palatial House

**Characters:**

**Narrator**

**Mr. Cam.....** (*man with a crooked nose*)

**Mr. Thuc.....** (*a cautious man*)

**Tuan.....** (*an intelligent man*)

(The italicized words are the meaning of the men's Vietnamese names.)

**Narrator:** Mr. Cam was a rich and greedy gambler. He made up a game to play with his wealthy acquaintances. It started with very simple rules so that each player would present an item of equal value.

**Mr. Cam:** Ahhh... that is a beautiful vase, Mr. Thuc!

**Mr. Thuc:** Well said, Mr. Cam. And what will you bet upon?

**Mr. Cam:** You see this diamond pin? It is a perfect match for the value of your vase. Don't you agree?

**Narrator:** The next part of the game was very tricky. Mr. Cam would challenge Mr. Thuc to name something that he thought Mr. Cam might not have in his possession. If Mr. Cam could produce the item, he would win and collect Mr. Thuc's vase. If he didn't have the item, Mr. Thuc would win the diamond pin.

**Mr. Cam:** So now, Mr. Thuc, what is your challenge for me? You know I've been playing this game for so many years, that I have rooms and rooms of valuable treasures. Shall we stop this game or shall we go on?

**Mr. Thuc:** (stuttering) Well... I... was... was thinking of an ancient Vietnamese treasure from the Cham Art collection.

**Mr. Cham:** Ahhh... an excellent choice! Let me think a moment... yes, the 8<sup>th</sup> century bronze Buddha I have just won. I shall go to the next room and get it.

**Narrator:** Tears fell from Mr. Thuc's eyes as he handed over his most precious vase to Mr. Cam.

**Mr. Cam:** No tears, Mr. Thuc! We shall meet again and perhaps you can win your vase back.

**Narrator:** As Mr. Thuc slowly walked out of Mr. Cam's house, he almost stumbled over a beggar sitting on the marble steps.

**Mr. Cam:** Ah! A beggar! Are you sitting there because you want to wager a bet with me?

**Tuan:** Yes, Mr. Cam. I have brought everything I own to place a bet with you.

**Mr. Cam:** (laughing) What! Is that begging bowl your wager?

**Tuan:** Not so! Mr. Cam. It is *myself* I offer as the wager.

**Mr. Cam:** Do you mean, if I win, you will be my slave?

**Tuan:** That is true! Now you must match my bet by wagering everything you own.

**Mr. Cam:** (laughing) All right. If you win, you will have all of my treasures. I agree to the wager. Now, you must name something you think I *do not have*. Remember I have rooms and rooms of treasures.

**Tuan:** Ah... I must think very slowly and with great care. (pause) Yes! I know what I will ask of you, Mr. Cam. Do you have a chipped cup?

**Narrator:** Mr. Cam's face flashed white in confusion. He thought and thought. A chipped cup! All of his servants were always commanded to throw away anything that was chipped or broken.

**Mr. Cam:** (angrily) A chipped cup! I have no chipped cup! I have never owned a chipped cup!

**Tuan:** That means I win the bet and now all that you own is mine!

**Narrator:** The beggar threw open the doors of Mr. Cam's palatial house and invited the poor people of the city to enter and take whatever they wanted. Mr. Cam watched with tears rolling down his face until everything he owned was gone.

**Tuan:** It is time for me to go. Good bye, Mr. Cam.

**Narrator:** Tuan walked away with only his bowl knowing that what he truly owned was *himself*.

**Mr. Cam:** (crying) Oh, oh, oh! Tsk, tsk, tsk! How could this have happened to me? All of my treasures are gone! Tsk, tsk, tsk!

**Narrator:** Suddenly, Mr. Cam began to shrink smaller and smaller and smaller until he became a tiny lizard racing up and down the walls of the palatial house upset about losing his treasures.

There is a legend that when a lizard makes "Tsk, tsk, tsk" sounds, it is Mr. Cam still upset about losing all of his treasures.