

BE RESPONSIBLE
A tale from Burma
Adapted by Carole L. Cooney

Setting: The Palace balcony; the street below the Palace balcony

Characters:

Narrator

King Arun

Htet, the King's Adviser

Fly

Gecko

Cat

Dog

Narrator: On a bright, sunny day, King Arun and his Adviser Htet were sitting at a table on the balcony eating a most delicious afternoon treat.

King: Ahh, the bees are plentiful this year. Look at the golden honey they bring to me.

Htet: Yes, your majesty. The honey is most delicious on this puffed rice.

King: Ahh, watch as I drip this sweetness all over my dish.

Htet: Be careful, your Majesty. You don't want to waste a precious drop!

Narrator: But King Arun wasn't paying attention to what he was doing. He was too busy talking about his gold and jewels. Soon a drop of honey fell on the balcony floor and slowly dripped onto the street below.

King: Don't worry. Never mind. It's not our problem. The servants will clean it later.

Fly: **BZZZZZ, bzzzzz!** What have we here? Honey! Yummy for my tummy! Slurp, slurp!

Gecko: Ha! I spy a fly! (flipping out his tongue) WOW! That tasted delicious.

Cat: (pouncing and swatting) Take that, you Gecko! YOU are the best breakfast I know!

Dog: (barking and biting) Woof! Woof! It's time I teach you a lesson, Cat. Grrrrrrr! Woof! Woof!

Adviser: Your Majesty, there seems to be a cat and dog fight in the street. It looks very fierce. Shall I call our servants to stop it?

King: What? And stop our feasting? Come Htet, try some honey on this toast. Never mind. It's not *our* problem.

Adviser: Look, your Majesty. The cat's owner is beating the dog and the dog's owner is beating the cat. (laughing) What a crazy sight! Now they are beating each other. Shouldn't we send someone to break up this fight?

King: (lazily looking over the balcony) From what I can see, ... never mind. It's not *our* problem.

Adviser: But now, your Majesty, there is a great crowd gathering. Some people are friends with the cat's owner and others are friends with the dog's owner. Oh, no! Now, they are all fighting each other. Your Majesty, this is getting out of hand. Perhaps we should call someone to break this up. Come quickly and look!

King: (yawning) Htet, you worry too much. Never mind. It's not *our* problem.

Narrator: Trumpets began to blast as soldiers marched down the street. At first they tried to break up the fight, but then when they heard what caused the fight, they took sides. Half fought for the dog's owner and half for the cat's owner. The fight became so huge it turned into a civil war.

Htet: Your Majesty, someone has set fire to the houses. People are hurt. We must escape the Palace for I see flames on the roof.

Narrator: Quickly, King Arun and Htet, his Adviser ran through the Palace to the street below. They stood there looking as the Palace and the whole town burned.

King: Perhaps I was wrong. Perhaps the drop of honey WAS our problem.