

Spirit Storybooks

Three Traditional Tales from Around the World



By Aaron Zerah

Paintings by Della Burford

Bamapama Chases the Kangaroo

Long, long ago, in the time called Dreamtime, there was a man named Bamapama who everyone thought was crazy. Bamapama and all the people lived under the earth where the sun stayed in one place all day long. It never went down and it was always very hot.



Bamapama decided to come up to the surface of the earth. "I'll go hunting," he said. When he got up to the top, he saw a big kangaroo.

Bamapama started chasing it, but he couldn't get close enough to throw his spear. The kangaroo hopped away to the west and Bamapama followed. The day was long and the sun was going down farther and farther in the sky. The kangaroo stopped hopping and Bamapama caught up to it. He was about to throw the spear when the sun disappeared. It was now dark.



Bamapama had never seen the night before. Where he lived it was always light. He became very frightened and started to cry. He climbed a tree to see if he could find light high above, but it was dark there too. So he climbed down the tree and fell asleep.

When he woke up the next day, it was morning and the sky was light again. Bamapama was full of joy. Looking at the sun, he said, "Here they sleep at night and rise with the sun. This is a good way."



Bamapama went back home and everyone wanted to know where he had been. He told them all about chasing the kangaroo, the setting of the sun, and how, when he woke up from the dark night, it was light in the sky once more. "It's very different up there, but it's a better place for us. Come and see," he said. The sun rose the next morning and the people stretched out in its warm rays.



They said, "Crazy Bamapama was right after all.
This is much better than living under the earth
where it is always so hot. Here if we get cold
we can get wood from the trees and make a fire.
Let's stay."

So Bamapama and all the people chose to
forever live with the kangaroos in a new place
on the earth.



Buddha Saves the Swan

Long ago in the high Himalaya Mountains there was a great kingdom where King Suddhodana and Queen Maha Maya ruled. One night the Queen had an extraordinary dream. An enormous white elephant came into her bedchamber holding in its trunk a beautiful lotus flower. The elephant walked majestically around Queen Maha Maya three times, all the while trumpeting a glorious sound. Then it stepped up very close to the Queen, and being most careful not to hurt her, gently poked one of its tusks into her right side.

Eight wise men were called to the palace the very next morning to tell the dream's meaning.



They all said “A great and noble son will be born into the family.”

The King and Queen were very happy and even more so when the baby was born. The boy had exceptionally long earlobes and his skin was bright gold, wonderful signs of the magnificent life the child was to lead. They named him Siddhartha because that meant he would accomplish all the dreams he dreamed.

Siddhartha grew to be a fine young boy. He studied all the subjects a noble son was to know. His teachers noted he was especially good at languages, art, and math. Siddhartha was strong and tall and a wonderful athlete.



Delle Burford 2011

Siddhartha loved to wrestle and he was an excellent archer. When Siddhartha released an arrow, it flew right to the target!

But Siddhartha never took his bow and arrows with him to the woods. The boy loved all the animals who lived there and wished them no harm. One day, Siddhartha and his cousin Devadatta were walking in the forest when they saw a beautiful swan flying above them. Right away Devadatta pulled out his bow and shot it. The poor swan fell straight down from the sky.

Both boys ran to the swan, but the swift Siddhartha got there first. The swan was still alive! Siddhartha gently pulled the arrow out of the swan's wing. He reached for some leaves and squeezed a healing juice from them to put on the swan's wound. He spoke soft words like a mother does to calm a child.



Then Devadatta rushed up. "That's my swan," he shouted to Siddhartha. "I shot it, so it's mine!" He tried to grab the swan but Siddhartha wouldn't let him. Siddhartha knew very well what he would do to the swan once he got it for himself. "If you had already killed the swan, it would be yours," Siddhartha said, "but since it is alive and I have saved it, the swan now belongs to me."

The two boys argued fiercely over the swan. At last Siddhartha said, "Let us return to the palace" and Devadatta agreed. After hearing each boy tell the story of the swan, the wise men said together, "A life belongs to the one who tries to save it. It is right for Siddhartha to take the swan and care for it." And so Siddhartha helped the hurt swan until it was well, and when it was ready to fly, he let it be free again.



Dell Barfoot
2011

Jesus and the Birds of Clay

Jesus loved to wander out in the open air when he was a boy. He happily walked through the fields of wheat and barley, smelling the lovely flowers growing along the way. But most of all, he loved to watch the birds.

There were the little doves who flitted from the sky to eat the tiny seeds of grain left on the earth after the harvest. There were the brightly-colored hoopoe birds who flocked to the Sea of Galilee in summer. And there were the great eagles, given strength enough to make nests for their young ones in the trees.



Jesus often looked to the heavens for signs of these creatures he so loved. One day, as he was doing so, Jesus suddenly heard a strange and wonderful wind swirling around his head. When he looked up, he saw it was none other than the Angel Gabriel coming just to be with him. Jesus felt as if the very breath of heaven was blowing through him! "You have the power of God within you," Gabriel said. "This is God's blessing for all children."

Then Jesus said to his friends, "I tell you now God is showing us a sign. He is saying that I will create for you a clay bird, and when I breathe into it, it will become as alive as a real one."



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Jesus' friends watched as he went to the stream near his house. He dug up a batch of good clay. It was just right for making the toy birds they all liked so much.

Jesus' father Joseph was at his prayers. It was the holy day of the week when no one was allowed to work. The farmers stopped their plowing, the fishers cast no nets in the sea, and the carpenters and stoneworkers like Joseph built nothing at all.

But a man from the village had seen Jesus and ran to tell Joseph. Almost out of breath, he shouted, "Do you know what your child is doing down at the stream? He has taken clay and made twelve birds. He is breaking God's law!"



Joseph strode right away to the stream. He saw that it was true. Jesus had made the birds. He cried out to Jesus, "My son, why do you do what is not allowed?"

Jesus looked up but did not answer his father. He bent close to the twelve clay birds around him. With gentle breath he said to them, "Be gone." And with that everyone could see the twelve clay birds all fly away to the sky.



Dale Burford 2011

About the Author

Aaron Zerah



From early childhood, Aaron's parents, both Holocaust survivors, showed (and continue to show) him the power of acceptance and love. As an ordained Interfaith Minister, teacher, and parent, Aaron honors the wisdom found in all peoples and cultures. Aaron believes in the spirit of children and their power to create a world of peace and joy.

Aaron is the published author of four books: 365 Spirit, A Time to Mourn, Every Day Is a Blessing and How the Children Became Stars which continue to be happily received and shared throughout the world.

Aaron currently lives in the lovely town of Sechelt, British Columbia (near Vancouver) with his fifteen-year-old daughter, Sari, who is the delight of his life.

About the Artist Della Burford



Della Burford, creator of the paintings for Spirit Storybooks leads workshops internationally. A former college teacher she is an author, painter, storyteller, lifelong dream adventurer and author-painter of Dodoland, Magical Earth Secrets, Miracle Galaxy, Journey to a Lotus , and Dream Wheels.

She often paints from her dreams and after reading Spirit Storybooks had many dreams that helped to guide her in the paintings for this book. Her work is for inner growth, our planet Earth, humanity and spirit.

Aaron has said of Della, "She is the jewel in the lotus , the angel with a message of peace, and the one who illustrates (literally and actually) that the dream of love among all people of the world is possible!"

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