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If you were to ask someone when this story took place, even a white-bearded old man will shake his head. One can count how many stars there are in the sky and how many pebbles there are on the riverside, but he cannot count how many years have passed since the story took place.

At that time, there was a green mountain near the sea. At the foot of the mountain was a village of farmers.

要问这个故事发生在哪年哪月，就连白眉毛、白胡子的老爷爷也只能摇头。数得清天上的星星、河滩上的沙砾，也数不清这故事经历了多少个年头儿啦！

那时候，大海边上有座青山。山脚下的村庄里住的都是庄户人家。

村东头一户人家，有父亲、母亲和一个孩子。这孩子生下来就会唱歌，连哭声都那么好听。庄户人最喜欢青青的庄稼，就给孩子取名叫青蛙。

早晨，天刚蒙蒙亮，青蛙的父亲就下地去干活儿了。青蛙等饭熟了就给父亲送去。



The family living in the east end of the village had only one child, a boy. The boy was a good singer when he was born. Even his cries sounded musical. His parents, like all farmers who loved the freedom of their country life and the greenness of their crops, named their son Free Green.

Every morning, Free Green's father got up at daybreak and went to the fields for farm work. The boy would later bring food to him when it was ready.

在离田地不远的草丛里，长着红宝石一样的野草莓，又红又鲜，让人看着就流口水。青蛙高兴地去摘，越走越草越深，越走越草越密。



One day on the boy's way to the fields, he saw in the grass some wild strawberries, red and fresh like rubies, making his mouth water. Free Green was so excited that he went in the grass to pick them, only to find the grass thicker and higher than he expected.

忽听“嗖”的一声，草丛里蹿出了一条黑蛇，一口咬住了一只正在唱歌的小鸟。青蛙一见，顺手抄起一根树枝，朝黑蛇劈头盖脸抡了过去。黑蛇冷不防挨了一下子，丢下小鸟，钻进茂密的草丛溜走了。

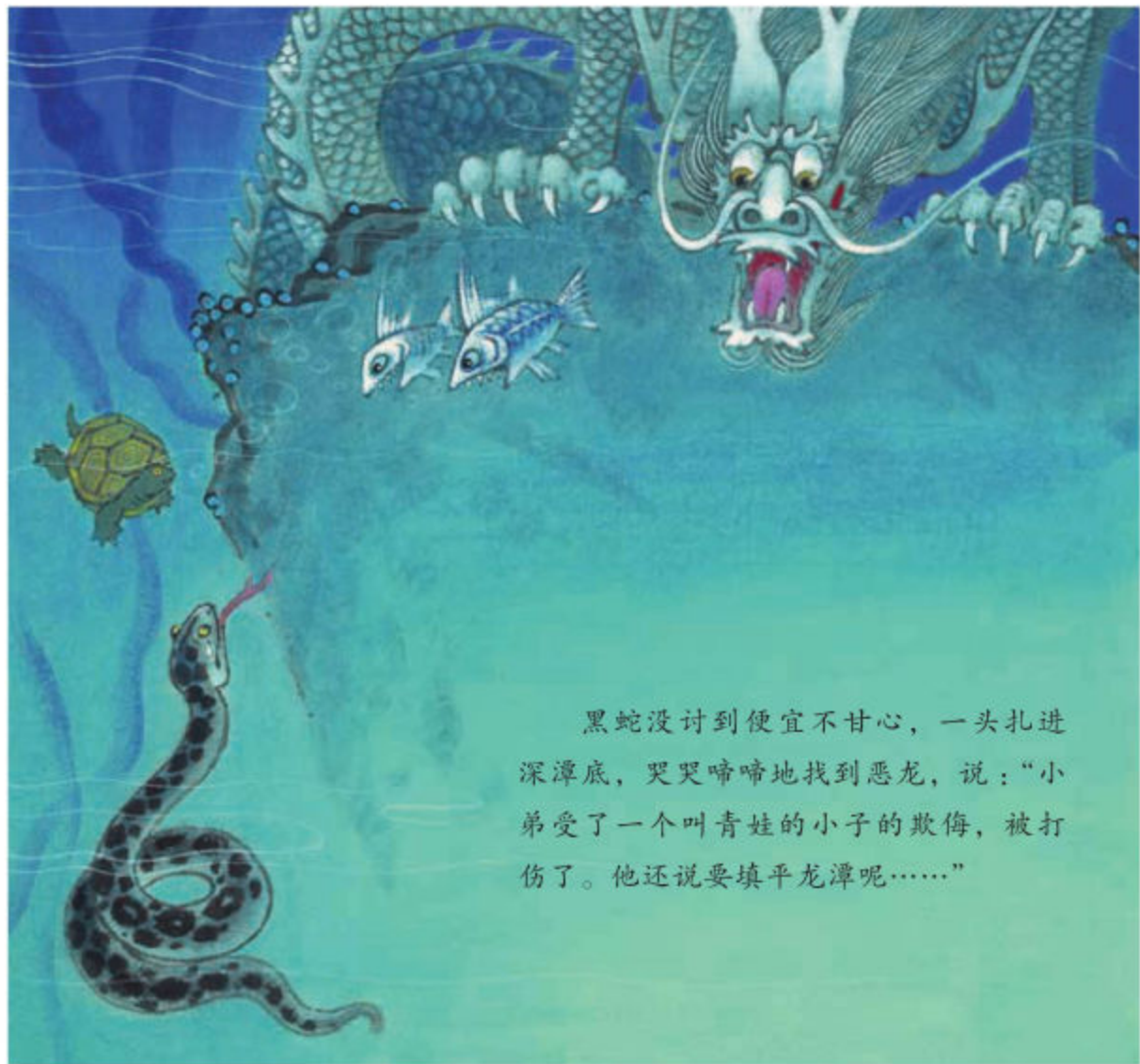


"Whooshi!" A black snake came out of the grass and caught a singing little bird. Free Green picked up a twig and threw it towards the black snake. The snake was struck and had to let go of the bird and fled into the grass.



蛇口逃生的小鸟长着一身漂亮的羽毛，尖尖的小嘴，雪白的脸，可讨人喜欢了。青蛙找到一株草药，给小鸟包扎好伤口。小鸟渐渐苏醒过来，梳理一下羽毛，抖抖翅膀，朝青蛙叫了几声就飞走了。

The bird survived but was wounded. It was a very good-looking bird, with beautiful plumage, its bill little but sharp. Free Green found a special herb to treat its wound. The bird soon recovered, groomed itself, flapped its wings and chirped goodbye to Free Green before it flew away.



黑蛇没讨到便宜不甘心，一头扎进深潭底，哭哭啼啼地找到恶龙，说：“小弟受了一个叫青蛙的小子的欺侮，被打伤了。他还说要填平龙潭呢……”

The black snake regretted its failure and went deep into the water to complain to the dragon, its big brother, "I was beaten by a boy named Free Green. He even threatened to fill up your pond with rocks..." said the snake with its lying tongue.

恶龙一听，暴跳如雷。它飞出深潭，
兴风作浪；狂风掀倒了房屋，拔起了树木；
大水冲毁了堤坝，淹没了良田。青蛙一家
和乡亲们来不及收拾东西，扶老携幼，艰
难地向高山上爬去。



The dragon became very angry upon hearing this. It flew out of the water, raised winds and waves, destroyed the houses and trees, and flooded the dams and fields. Free Green and his fellow villagers had to leave everything behind and make their way to the mountain for shelter.



黑蛇领着恶龙追来了。正在这危急的时刻，只见一个长翅膀的小姑娘闪电般抓住青蛙，飞上天空，转眼间就无影无踪了。

The black snake and the dragon went after them. At this critical moment, a little girl with wings took Free Green and flew him into the sky. They flew so fast they disappeared in a flash.

小姑娘带着青蛙飞呀、飞呀，飞到一座仙山上。这座山上的树木冬夏常青，花草四时鲜艳，瓜果漫山遍野。流水淙淙，像弹琴一样好听。小姑娘把青蛙带到了一位仙姑面前，青蛙躬身道谢。可仙姑说：“是你救了我的小女儿，我应当先向你道谢才是！”小姑娘咯咯笑着，藏到仙姑身后。青蛙这才明白，原来小姑娘就是他从蛇口里救下的小鸟。



The little girl and Free Green kept flying all the way until they reached a fairy mountain. On the mountain, trees were green all year round, flowers were in bloom in all seasons, and fruits and berries were all over the place. The creeks flowed in the mountain as if their clear water was playing some pleasant music.



The little girl took Free Green to meet a fairy, and Free Green thanked the little girl. But the fairy said, "You saved my little daughter. It's me who should be thanking you." The little girl giggled and hid herself behind the fairy. Free Green now came to realize that the little girl was actually the bird he'd saved from the mouth of the black snake.



仙姑捧出无数金银珠宝送给青蛙，他摇摇头，一样也不要。青蛙只想要一样宝贝来制服恶龙，让乡亲们不再受伤害。仙姑喜欢青蛙有志气，就满口答应了。

The fairy presented Free Green with lots and lots of gold, silver and jewelry, but he shook his head and took none. What he wanted was a weapon to defeat the dragon so that his fellow villagers could be protected against any harm it could cause. The fairy praised his determination and promised to give him what he wanted.



小姑娘递过来一个仙桃，青蛙吃了，精神百倍，力气大增。



仙姑捧出一条长长的彩带，送给青蛙，说：“这是捆龙仙绳，不但能捆住恶龙，而且捆上后叫它变成什么就能变成什么。但是，捆龙仙绳只能变一次，多了就不灵了。它能长能短，能含在嘴里，可含到嘴里时不能说‘变’，一说‘变’，自己就变了。”

The fairy then gave him a long ribbon and said, "This is a magic ribbon. Not only can it tie the dragon, but it can also change into anything at your command. But it can change only once and will lose its magic power if it's changed too many times. It can become long or short, short enough to fit into your mouth. When you hold it in your mouth and say 'Change', it will change."



青蛙想着父亲、母亲和乡亲们，匆忙答应下来。仙姑摘下一片荷叶，轻轻一吹，荷叶便托着青蛙飞了起来。

Thinking of his parents and fellow villagers, Free Green took the ribbon right away. The fairy plucked a lotus leaf and sent Free Green flying home on it.



家乡依然大雨倾盆，地上白浪滔天，眼看大水就要漫上山头。这时，青蛙坐着荷叶飞来了，落在岩石上。山崩地裂一声巨响，震落一块大石头，正砸在幸灾乐祸的黑蛇头上。黑蛇翻卷了一下，死啦！

The village was still at the mercy of the rain and the flood waters, which had risen almost to the mountain top. At this moment, Free Green arrived with his lotus leaf and landed on a rock. With a deafening roar, the huge rock tumbled down the mountain and fell right onto the head of the black snake. The snake made a painful twist and died — one minute earlier it had been taking pleasure in its revenge and the villagers' misfortune.

恶龙凶狠地扑
向青蛙。青蛙张开
嘴，吐出捆龙仙绳。
只见霞光万道，仙
绳把恶龙结结实实
捆绑起来。



The dragon angrily came to Free Green. Free Green opened his mouth and released the ribbon. All of a sudden in myriads of glowing rays, the ribbon tied the dragon fast.