



The Flying Kite Prayer

By Josephine Cunnington Edwards

Abubaker held his mother's hand tightly as they fled from their village in India. It was World War II, and bombs were destroying homes all over the country. As they hurried along with the other villagers, little Abubaker and his mother were separated from his father.

"Where's Daddy?" Abubaker asked.

"I don't know, son," his mother answered. "It's wartime, and many people get lost or hurt. Maybe Daddy's been killed."

But Abubaker refused to believe his father was dead. He remembered his father walking and talking with him, helping him fly kites, and playing little games.

Abubaker remembered their house down in the village and the store where his father used to sell cloth, soap, spices, saris, and teapots. It had been a wonderful shop. Abubaker used to sit on a pile of rugs and watch Daddy sell things for hours at a time and not get tired. He loved to smell the tea from Ceylon, the cloves from Zanzibar, and figs from Smyrna, and the dates from Egypt. Now it was all gone. Abubaker and his mother had been moved to a city in the hills, far away from the fighting.

One day as Abubaker walked by a school in the hills, he stopped to look inside. He saw children reading books and writing on slates. He watched for a long time. Just before noon they all knelt down and shut their eyes. The teacher began to talk to someone. Abubaker looked all around as quietly as he could, but he couldn't see anyone.

When all the boys were going home, Abubaker spoke to one of them. "Who were you talking to when you were kneeling down?"

The boy smiled. "OH, we were talking to the great God."

Abubaker trotted along beside the bigger boy and thought about this strange thing for a minute.

“Did he hear you?” Abubaker persisted.

“Oh, yes, but not always right away, and not just what we ask for. God gives us what’s best for us. But here’s where I have to turn. Come visit our school, and they will tell you more about these things.” With that, the boy turned and headed for home.

Abubaker walked slowly toward the place where he and his mother lived. *I’m sure it’s best for us to have Daddy*, he thought. *And if God hears those boys, I think he might hear me.*

He walked along, wondering how he could pray. As he passed a little shop, Abubaker had a bright idea. The shop had hardly anything for sale, but there were some beautiful kites made of bright colored paper. Abubaker bought the biggest kite he could buy with his coins. Then he went home with his treasure. His mother wasn’t home, so he took the kite inside, got the writing instruments, and started writing a prayer on the big kite. Surely God—if He were up there on the other side of the clouds—would see the kite bobbing. He would likely lean over and read the prayer he had written on it.

Abubaker told God who he was and where he had lived and where he was now and how badly he wanted to see his daddy. Then he went out in the hills to fly his kite. He used up all his string so that the kite could get as close to the clouds as possible. He wanted it to be easy for God to read his message. He didn’t know much about God, but he was doing the best he knew how to do. Suddenly a big gust of wind broke the string. The kite flopped around in the air and then went down. Abubaker walked home slowly, hoping the great God had had time to read his request.

Abubaker didn’t know this, but the kite tumbled down on top of a railroad train that was winding through hills on the way to the coast. There it lay, flapping around with the string caught on some bars on the back of a car. And there it rode and fluttered all the way to Calcutta.

Meanwhile, Abuabker’s father was in Calcutta, longing to find his wife and son. He met every train he could, hoping to see his loved ones.

This day the train from the hills thundered into the station. Abubaker’s father watched everyone get off, but his wife and son weren’t on the train. Then he saw

a kite dangling along the side. Little Abubaker loves these, he thought as he reached up and grabbed the broken kite.

He saw the boyish handwriting and started to read. "Dear God, I am Abubaker. I want to find my daddy. I think you can see me here, God. I'm at the hill village flying a kite here in the field. I knew we—."

But Abubaker's father didn't wait to read the rest. He ran as fast as he could to catch a train into the hill country. He knew exactly where to find little Abubaker and his mother.