

A Real Tale of Woe

By Donna Bishop

I want you to understand right from the beginning that I have a very sad tale to share with you. I may look to you like an ugly creature and I do understand that because when I see my reflection in the water I'm scared too. If you will just come a little closer and sit on the rock here by the edge of the lake I promise I will stay in the water and tell you why I'm so sad and why I can't stop crying. I suspect you have heard that you can't trust crocodile tears. Well you can trust mine because you see I'm not really a crocodile.

Let me explain. A very, very long time ago this lake was part of a beautiful valley owned by my father. My father and mother loved each other and were delighted when I was born. Father build our comfortable home. For food father hunted and fished while mother and I planted vegetables and gathered berries. We were a happy family but sometimes we wished for contact with the world outside this valley.

One day a lone traveler came our way. You can imagine our joy. Naturally he was welcomed into our home and encouraged to rest from his travels with us. He delighted us with tales of the people and places he had been. We had no reason to believe he wished us any harm. Several weeks after his arrival father did not return home before dark. By morning he was still not home. The traveler and mother searched all day. I stayed home and was disturbed by a strange sound from the traveler's room. I reluctantly opened the door to find a very large bullfrog in a cage on the dresser. The bullfrog was throwing itself against the side of the cage over and over and making a fearful bellowing sound! I couldn't imagine why the traveler had caged the creature. Later I was to learn that was my missing father!

The traveler stayed with mother and myself not only to comfort us for the loss of father but to help us survive. After several years my mother too disappeared. To console me the traveler gave me a glass globe with the most beautiful butterfly inside. I sat for hours admiring her. Later I was to learn the butterfly was my mother under a spell cast by the traveler who was an evil wizard.

Now you see I too am really the daughter the traveler turned into a crocodile. He used to sit right there on the rock you occupy and brag about his magic powers. He failed to notice as I slowly slipped closer to him. In a flash he was the most satisfying meal I have every enjoyed.

I shed tears of joy that day but now my tears are my sorrow of living my days as a crocodile.