

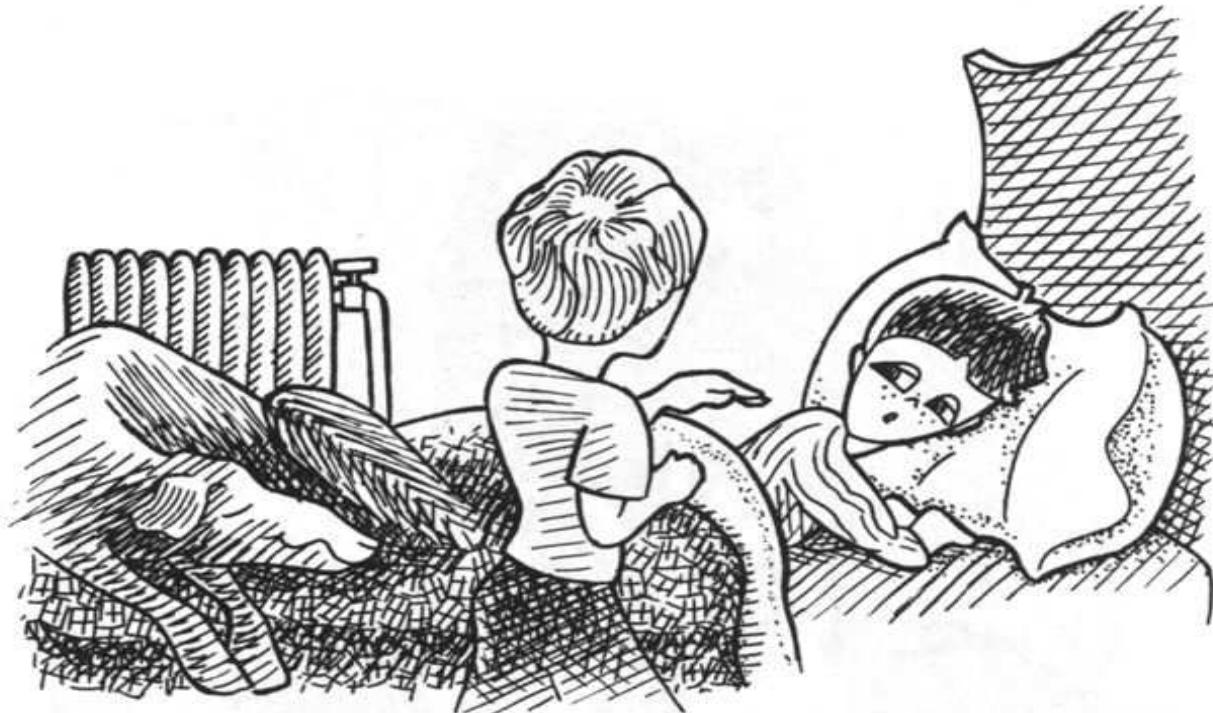
My Friend Forever

Chapter 2

Sometime during the night Tom felt a gentle tap on his arm.

"Maria must be having another bad dream," thought Tom.

If Maria has a bad dream, she usually wakes Tom up and asks if they can sleep together. Tom opened his eyes and much to his surprise, there was a little stranger standing by his bed. He was wearing a white T-shirt, he was about three or four feet tall and he had beautiful blond hair.



The little stranger's voice was soft and friendly. He said. "Did I scare you?"

Though he didn't look like anyone Tom had ever seen, Tom felt safe. After all, his dog named Watson had not even barked. As a matter of fact, Watson was still sleeping.

"No, I'm not scared at all," said Tom. "Who are you?"

"I'm Bamboo, from Namboo," said the stranger.

"Bamboo? From Namboo?" asked Tom.

"That's right. My name's Bamboo and I'm from Namboo."

"Namboo?" said Tom. "I've never heard of Namboo."

Bamboo stepped over to the window. "Come over here," he said. "I'll show you where it is."

Maria was still sleeping. Tom knew his parents were sleeping too because the night light was on in the hallway. He got out of bed and hurried over to the window. Tom stood beside Bamboo and together they looked at the night sky.

"Look up there," said Bamboo as he pointed at the stars. "Do you see the Big Dipper?"

"Yes," said Tom.

"Good," said Bamboo. "Do you see the star at the end of the handle?"

"I see it," said Tom.

"Well," said Bamboo, "my home is called Namboo and it circles around that star just like your earth circles around your sun."

"Wow! What do you want from me?" asked Tom.

"I need your help," said Bamboo.

"You need my help?" asked Tom.

"Yes" said Bamboo. "Have you ever been to the zoo?"



"Lots of times," said Tom. "I've seen the elephant, the hippopotamus, the giraffe and the monkeys. And the kangaroo too!"

Tom stopped to think for a moment.

Then he asked, "Are the animals in trouble?"

"Not yet," said Bamboo. "But they soon might be."

"What's wrong?" asked Tom.

"The man who runs the zoo is very selfish. He's taking some of the money set aside to buy food for the animals and he's using it to buy things for himself. What this means is that the animals are not getting enough to eat."

"That's terrible," said Tom. "Somebody should help the animals."

"That's why I'm here to get you," said Bamboo.