




Iko's First Friend

Agatha Barachina

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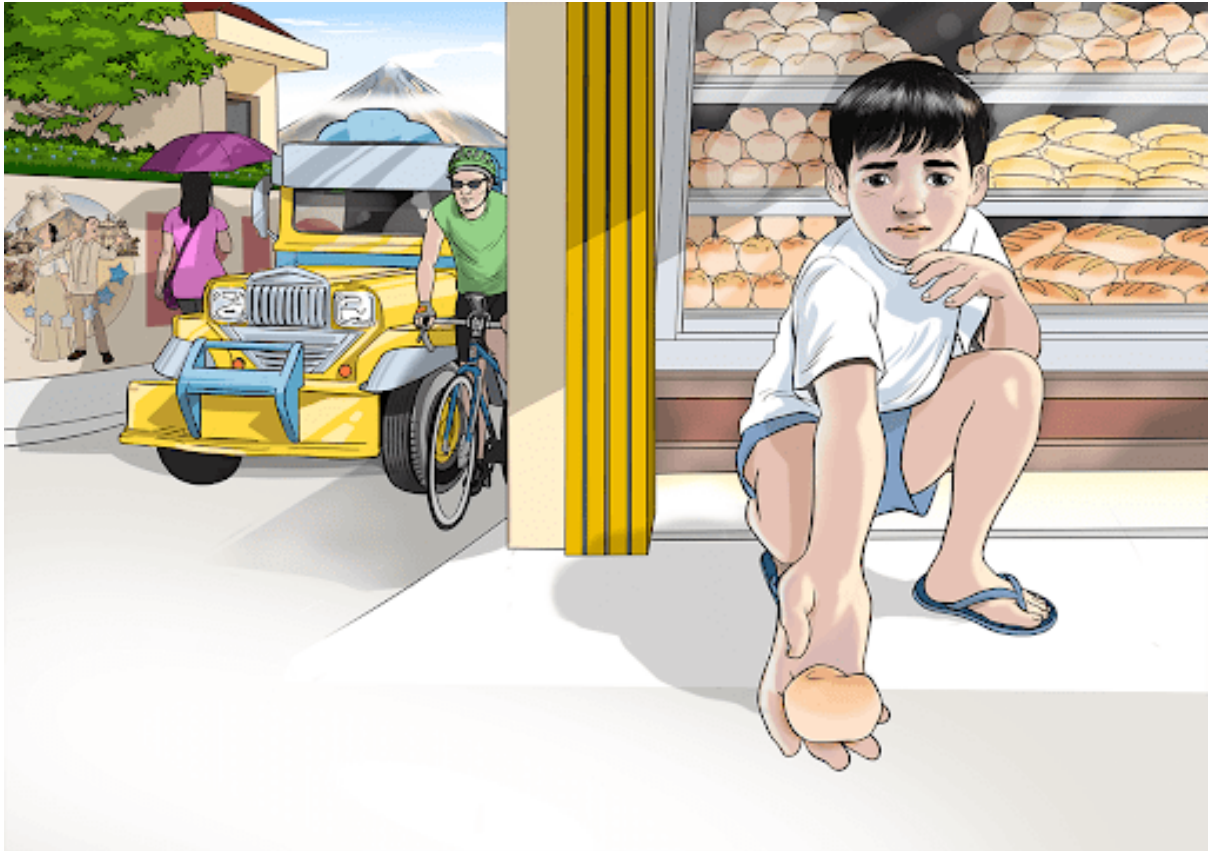


I just wanted to be loved. How could I feel that way if people always avoided me? This worried me a lot.

Because half my body was burned, I was left bald, scarred, and ugly. People thought I had a disease. They seemed to hate me. I was a stray who just wanted to play and be fed and loved by humans.



One time while I was hunting for food, a group of kids threw stones at me, shouting, "You're disgusting! Shoo!" I ignored them and kept looking for food. When they wouldn't stop, I left.



I just wanted to be loved. How could I ever feel that way if hurtful words were thrown at me wherever I went?

There were some kind humans who fed me, like the kid at the bakery who gave me bread.

"Thank you for the food," I said. "What is your name?"

"I'm Kiko," the kid said. "How about you?"



I was about to reply, but I decided to leave when I noticed more and more people gathering by the bakery.

"Goodbye," I heard the kid say.

There were some people like Kiko who fed me, but there were also others who always drove me away.



One day, while I was looking for something to eat, I came upon a house. I climbed the fence and saw Kiko watering the plants. Just when I was about to go to him, I saw a snake hissing behind his back. I quickly attacked it with my claws.

Hissssss . . . "Get off me! Get off me!" the snake said.

"I won't let you hurt Kiko!" I said.



When Kiko saw what was happening, he quickly ran inside the house, shouting, "Papa, come quick! There's a snake on our lawn!"

When the snake was still, I moved away.

Kiko and his father quickly came out.

Kiko pointed at me. When I saw his father holding a shovel, I felt scared. Would he hurt me?

But when he came near, he picked up the snake and put it inside the sack.



Kiko's father walked over to me. "Kiko, what will you say to the cat?" he asked.

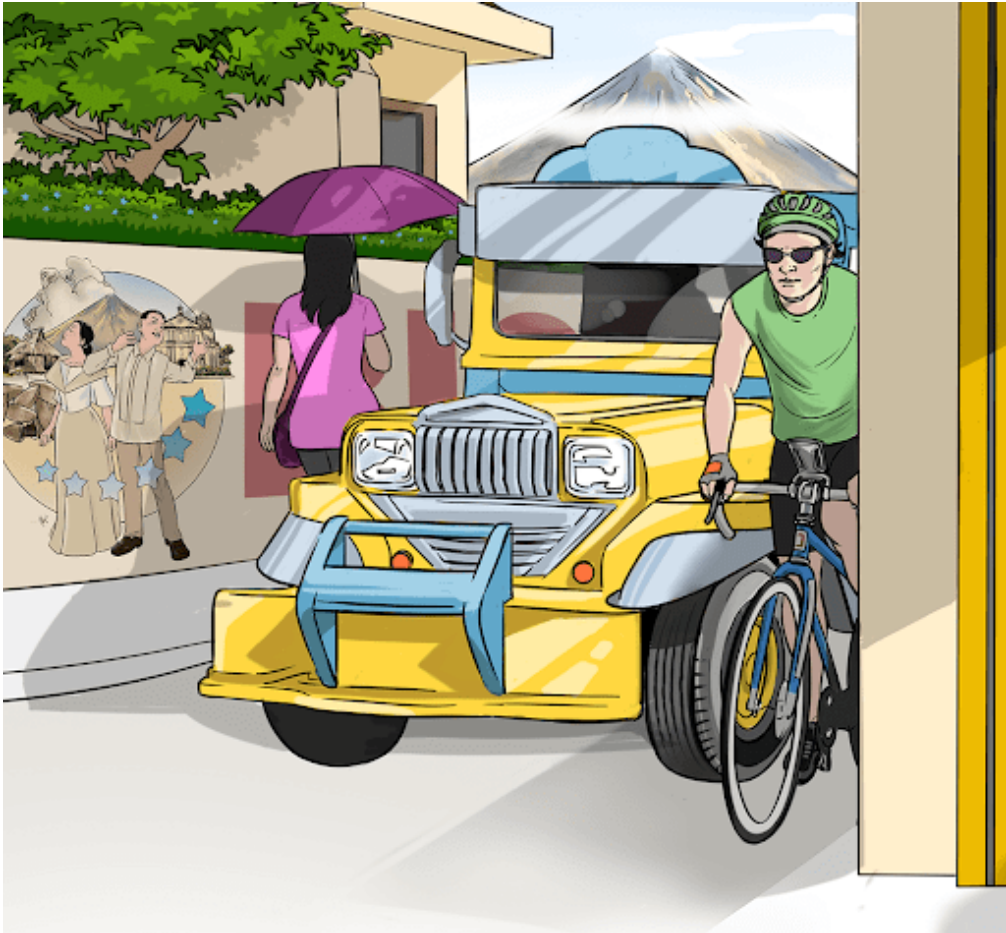
I was about to leave, when Kiko called to me, "Thank you!" He moved to my side and hugged me.



I fell asleep on Kiko's chest.

"Iko, let's play!" Kiko called.

Kiko and his family took me in. Now they feed me and love me. I always play with Kiko and sleep by his side. I'm happy now.





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Original Story

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