

The Earthworm

–translated by Chelsie Culp–

(written by Cha, Bo-Kum)

It is a beautiful dazzling sunny spring day.

Bom and Dad were planting a young tomato tree.

"Tomato, tomato, shoot out and grow."

"Let's put a lot of pesticide."

"Bom, Hello? I'm also planting tomato trees."

When Bom plucked the grass.

Suddenly an earthworm came out of the ground.

"Yikes! That's gross. Go away!"

Bom quickly threw away the earthworm.

Heuktol whizzed, flew in the air, and fell onto the ground.

When Heuktol came to his senses he wriggled into the dirt.

"Heuktol, are you okay?"

"Aren't you hurt?"

Heuktol's friends were worried.

"I'm okay, I wasn't being chased by a mole, you know."

Heuktol tried to speak calmly.

But not long after, something really serious happened.

The earthworm friends were becoming sick one by one.

Heuktol felt uneasy for some reason.

"Ugh, I'm dizzy."

"My head is hot and my whole body itches."

The soil was becoming more and more hardened and was nasty smelling.

"Spit, spit, yucky, I can't eat the soil because it tastes strange."

It was because the ground was becoming sick because of the pesticides and chemical fertilizer Bom's Dad had sprayed.

"The sow bugs and the ladybugs are all gone."

"I'm afraid we should also leave."

The friends said to Heuktol.

Heuktol decided to go out and look for new land.

Heuktol crawled around and under the ground all day long.

When he proceeded a little while, he smelled fragrant manure coming off from somewhere.

Finally Heuktol arrived at the village of Plump Moisture.

"Hello, I'm Heuktol, Hoo Hoo this is a really nice place!"

"Can I live here with you?"

Heuktol asked the earthworms of the village of Plump Moisture.

"Hehe, of course! Earthworms are always welcome."

Heuktol went back to all of his friends and told them stories about the village of Plump Moisture as a good place to live.

Heuktol and all of his friends moved to the village of Plump Moisture

Heuktol and his friends lived happily in the village of Plump Moisture.

They rode a watermelon seesaw, a cabbage leaf slide, and had fun in a pool of water.

They ate soil full of nutrients and pooped wriggly.

When the rain soaked into the small roads that the earthworms had made here and there, the soil breathed healthily and soundly.

The hot summer came.

It has been raining all week long.

When the rain stopped, Bom came out to the tomato field.

"What's this? Look, the field became a mess."

Bom said with a tearful face.

"Hahaha, our field has no problem because an underground monster has protected it."

Kang said smiling bashfully from across the field.

"An underground monster? What's that?"

Bom asked, but Kang just laughed.

"Would its face be round? Or long?"

"Would its mouth be big? Or sharp?"

"Maybe it has horns on its head."

Bom thought hard about the underground monster.

"I'll find out for myself what the underground monster looks like."

Bom went over to Kang's field and dug up the ground repeatedly with stones.

Then an earthworm wriggled out.

"Argh! It's an earthworm! Argh!"

As Bom was about to throw away the earthworm, Kang said.

"Don't! Earthworms are the underground monster."

"What did you say?" Bom was surprised.

"Gee, it's not a big deal. As for earthworms, we have lots of them in our field too."

Bom returned to her field and dug up the hard ground

However, she didn't see a single earthworm.

"Huh, that's weird. Where did all of the earthworms go?"

"Earthworms where are you?"

"Did everyone run away because of me?"

"Now, I am not going to hurt you anymore."

"Help our tomatoes grow well."

However, no matter how hard Bom dug up the ground she could not find any earthworms.

Bom cried out toward Kang's field.

"Earthworm, Earthworm! Come to our field."

Heuktol and his friends heard Bom calling them when coming out to poop.

"We will not go back. We can't live in that sick land."

Heuktol said firmly.

"I'm sorry, I did wrong. Let us be friends now."

Bom asked sincerely.

"You have to make a few promises to be friends with us."

"Promise? What kind of promise?"

"First, no pesticides."

"Second, no chemical fertilizers either."

"Third, please love and cherish earthworms."

Heuktol and his friends went back to Bom's field again.

Wriggle, Wriggle, Wriggle

Every day they roamed through the tomato roots, ate bits of soil, and were busy pooping wriggly.

Bom was also busy every day.

She gave plenty of water instead of chemical fertilizers, she put rice grains and fruit peelings in the soil.

Bom desperately wanted big, delicious tomatoes to grow.

"Dad, don't use pesticides."

And it really became like that.

지렁이다

-차보금-

햇살이 눈부신 봄날이에요.

봄이는 아빠와 함께 어린 토마토 나무를 심고 있었어요.

“토마토야, 토마토야, 쑥쑥 자라라.”

“농약을 듬뿍 주자.” (아빠)

“봄이야, 안녕? 나도 토마토 나무 심는다.” (동생)

봄이가 쑥쑥 자란 풀을 뽑을 때였어요.

갑자기 지렁이가 땅 위로 나왔어요.

“앗! 징그러워. 저리 가!”

봄이는 지렁이를 획 던져 버렸어요.

흙톨이는 공중으로 붕 날아올랐다가 땅 위로 떨어졌어요.

정신이 들자 흙속으로 꼬물꼬물 들어갔지요.

“흙톨이, 괜찮아?”

“다친 데는 없니?”

친구들이 흙톨이를 걱정했어요.

“난 괜찮아, 두더지한테 쫓긴 것도 아닌데 뭘.”

흫톨이는 애써 태연한 듯 말했어요.

그런데 얼마 지나지 않아 진짜 큰일이 났지 뭐예요.

지렁이 친구들이 하나둘씩 아픈 거예요.

흫톨이는 왠지 불안한 마음이 들었어요.

“으으 어지러워.”

“난 머리가 뜨끈뜨끈하고 온몸이 간지러워.”

흫톨이는 점점 딱딱해지고 고약한 냄새도 났어요.

“뿡뿡. 어우 흫 맛이 이상해서 못 먹겠어”

바로 봄이 아빠가 뿌린 농약과 화학비료 때문에 땅이 병들어 가고 있었기 때문이에요.

“쥐며느리도 무당벌레도 다 떠났어.”

“우리도 떠나야 할 것 같아.”

친구들이 흫톨이에게 말했어요.

흫톨이는 새로운 땅을 찾아 나서기로 결심했어요.

흫톨이는 온종일 땅 속을 꼬물꼬물 기어 다녔어요.

얼마쯤 더 가니까 어디선가 향긋한 두엄 냄새가 풍겼어요.

드디어 흫톨이는 오동통 축축 마을에 도착했어요.

“안녕? 난 흫톨이야. 흐흐 여기는 정말 좋은 곳이구나!”

“이 곳에서 함께 살아도 될까?”

흫톨이가 오동통 축축 마을에 지렁이들에게 물었어요.

“흐흫 물론이지! 지렁이라면 언제든 환영이야.”

흫톨이는 다시 친구들에게 돌아가 살기 좋은 오동통 축축 마을에 대해 이야기를 들려주었어요.

흫톨이와 친구들은 모두 오동통 촉촉 마을로 이사를 떠났어요.

흫톨이와 친구들은 오동통 촉촉 마을에서 행복하게 지냈어요.

수박 시소를 타고 배춧잎 미끄럼틀도 타고 물웅덩이에서 신나게 놀았어요.

영양분이 듬뿍 든 흫을 먹고 울룩불룩 똥도 싸지요.

이리저리 지렁이들이 만든 작은 길로 빗물이 촉촉히 젖어 들면 흫은 푹푹 건강한 숨을 쉬었지요.

무더운 여름이 찾아왔어요.

일주일 내내 쉬지 않고 비가 내렸어요.

비가 그치자 봄이는 토마토 밭으로 나왔어요.

“이게 뭐야 밭이 엉망이 됐잖아?”

봄이는 울상을 지으며 말했어요.

“허허허 우리 밭은 땅 속 괴물이 지켜줘서 끄떡없지.”

강이가 건너편 밭에서 배시시 웃으며 말했어요.

“땅 속 괴물이라고? 그게 뭐야?”

봄이가 물었지만 강이는 웃기만 했어요.

“얼굴이 동글동글할까? 길쭉길쭉할까?”

“입은 클까? 뾰족할까?”

“어쩌면 머리에 뿔이 달렸을지도 몰라”

봄이는 땅 속 괴물에 대해 곰곰이 생각해보았어요.

“땅 속 괴물이 어떻게 생겼는지 내가 직접 찾아볼 거야”

봄이는 강이네 밭으로 가서 돌맹이로 푹푹 땅을 팠어요.

그러자 지렁이 한 마리가 꿈지락대며 나왔어요.

“으아아앙 지렁이다. 으아앙”

봄이가 지렁이를 획 내던지려는데 강이가 말했어요.

“안 돼~ 지렁이가 바로 땅 속 괴물이란 말이야”

“뭐라고?” 봄이는 깜짝 놀랐어요.

“치~ 별거 아니잖아. 지렁이라면 우리 밭에도 많아.”

봄이는 자기네 밭으로 돌아와 딱딱해진 땅을 파보았어요.

하지만 지렁이는 한 마리도 보이지 않았어요.

“어, 이상하다. 지렁이들이 다 어디로 갔지?”

“지렁아 어디에 있니?”

“나 때문에 다 도망간 거야?”

“이제 너희를 괴롭히지 않을게.”

“우리 토마토도 잘 자랄 수 있게 도와줘.”

하지만 아무리 땅을 파보아도 지렁이는 보이지 않았어요.

봄이는 강이네 밭을 향해 외쳤어요.

“지렁아, 지렁아 우리 밭으로 가자.”

흙톨이와 친구들이 똥을 누러 나왔다가 봄이가 부르는 소리를 들었어요.

“우리 다시는 돌아가지 않을 거야. 병든 땅에서 살 수 없어.”

흙톨이가 딱 잘라 말했어요.

“미안해 내가 잘못했어 우리 이제부터 친구가 되자.”

봄이가 진심으로 부탁했어요.

“우리과 친구가 되려면 몇 가지 약속을 해야 해.”

“약속? 어떤 약속인데~?”

“첫째, 농약은 안 돼.”

“둘째, 화학비료도 안 돼.”

“셋째, 지렁이를 아끼고 사랑해줘.”

흙놀이와 친구들은 다시 봄이네 밭으로 돌아왔어요.

꼬물꼬물 꿈지락꿈지락

날마다 토마토 뿌리 사이를 요리조리 돌아다니며 야금야금 흙을 먹고 울룩볼룩 똥도 싸느라 바빴지요.

봄이도 날마다 바빴어요.

물도 듬뿍듬뿍 주고 화학비료 대신 밥알과 과일 껍질을 흙에 넣어 주었거든요.

봄이는 크고 맛있는 토마토가 열리기를 간절히 바랬어요.

“아빠 농약은 안 돼요”

그리고 정말로 그렇게 되었답니다.