



#116 The First Blindness



Once upon a time, long, long ago, in a land far, far away, there lived a painter. He loved to paint because everything he saw was beautiful! The sky was beautiful. The mountains and trees were incredibly beautiful. The huts and flowers and roads and creatures were all beautiful beyond his belief. Every day, when he awoke, he looked out to the mountains and saw how good the world was, and then he said out loud, “Thank you for how exceedingly beautiful the world is.” And then he would get washed, have his breakfast, and then make a painting as a payment for what he was just given.

Then, one day it happened. Something was different. He awoke like every other day. He looked out to the mountains like every

other day. But, today, he did not notice how beautiful they were! Why? He sat down looking down at the ground to think about it. "I know!" he exclaimed, "I must be PREOCCUPIED!" Now, if you don't know what "preoccupied" is, let me tell you. It means that when you are doing one thing, you are thinking of something else. And that was what the painter was doing. He was looking at the mountains, but his mind was filled with thoughts of washing and breakfast and painting. While he was preoccupied with the next things he would do, he could not see beauty. It was like the beauty was not there. He was BLIND to beauty.

The painter became sad. Before today, he had never been separated from beauty. He did not know how anything could NOT be beautiful. But today, it was like he was cast out of the place where everything was good, and he had seen what it was like to see something bad. It was not that the mountains looked bad, they just were not incredibly good. "This is a day of growing up," he realized. Today, I have learned that there is not just one way to see - there are two ways - preoccupied and not preoccupied. So, he made up his mind to try to empty his mind of the preoccupied thoughts and look back at the mountains. Lo and behold! There stood the mountains in such beauty that it took the painter's breath away.

On the third day, the painter awoke like every day of his life. But today, he asked himself, "Do I want beauty or not?" Then, he calmed himself, intentionally emptied his mind, and went about his day.

TO BEAUTY OR NOT TO BEAUTY