

# The Treasured Cup

*An Egyptian Story by Ruth Hovanec*

A long time ago, a little girl named Fatma walked slowly home from school, thinking about what her father would bring her. Two days ago, Fatma's father and her two brothers had gone to Cairo, a large city close to her home in Egypt. Her father had promised to bring her a very special present from the market there. She skipped along still thinking about what her gift might be.

Soon, Fatma arrived home. She lived in a very small brick house on the banks of the Nile River. She ran to hug her mother, who was feeding the chickens, then Fatma began her own chores, feeding the camels, watering the garden, and making dinner over a blazing hot fire. As she fell asleep that night she prayed for her father's speedy return, and went on imagining what her gift might be. The next morning while Fatma and her mother were eating breakfast they heard a wagon rumbling up the dusty road, it was her father! Once her father came inside, she thanked God for his speedy return, and happily hugged him. Then she eagerly waited for her present. Finally, her father handed her a small, heavy sack. As she opened the bag, she was careful not to drop whatever was inside. And then, inside, she saw the present, it was a new clay cup, with the words Cairo, Egypt engraved on the bottom!

The next few days the cup went everywhere with Fatma, and she found many uses for it. She would feed the chickens with it, water the plants, and give her father a drink while he was working in the fields. During that year Fatma continued to use her cup for everything, but

the next year... disaster struck. The crops had failed, so Fatma and her family had to move away.

After many weeks of extreme heat, and many miles of travel, the oxen were too tired to continue the journey, so the family had to sell everything they owned to get new oxen, even Fatma's cup. Then, Fatma's family continued on and settled in a new place. Meanwhile, the cup, which was Fatma's most treasured possession, was sold to another little girl named Layla, who lived in the desert of Egypt. Layla also used the cup for many things, like feeding the chickens and camels, just like Fatma. This cup now became Layla's most treasured possession. Once, while Layla was feeding the chickens, a big wind storm hurled the desert sand towards her! In her hurry to get back home, and because of the hard desert winds, the cup flew from her hand and was buried in the soft white sand. The next day Layla went back to where she had lost the cup and searched diligently for many hours, but she eventually gave up. Never to see her treasured cup again...

Thousands of years later a team of archeologists were digging near Layla's old house. While they were working, they happened upon an old clay cup, with the words Cario, Egypt, engraved on the bottom. This was the same cup Fatma and Layla had owned many years ago. The team of archeologists were so astonished at what they found, because at that time no one knew Egyptians made cups out of clay. Finding the old cup advanced the study of Egyptian history and taught us more about their way of life.

“For where your **treasure** is  
there your **heart** will be also.”

Matthew 6:21