

## Blume visits a friend

“I haven’t seen my friend Emma lately”, said Blume to Hoppy and Squeaky one cold December day. “She always plays with me during morning service.” “Don’t we know it”, replied Hoppy. “What a fuss she makes until somebody finds you and hands you to her to keep her quiet. I think she is a bit spoilt.” “Oh no”, said Blume, “She just likes me a lot and I like her. I do wonder where she is.”

Just then Squeaky came home from a foray into the hall to see if there were any biscuit crumbs about. “Guess what!” he said. “That little girl Emma who loves to play with you, Blume, has been very ill. Reverend Andrews is just going to visit her now.” The three friends felt very worried about Emma then, because they all really liked her and secretly enjoyed it very much when she insisted on having Blume to play with.

Meanwhile Reverend Andrews put on his coat and went tramping down the cold, icy streets to Emma’s house which was not very far away. “Oh I’m so glad to see you”, Emma’s mother said. “The doctor says she’s over the worst now but we must get her to eat so that she’ll become strong again. You know how she was looking forward to being in the Christmas Play, but if she doesn’t start eating and gaining strength soon, I don’t think she will be at school until January.” “Oh dear”, said the minister. “Let’s see if I can coax her to eat something.” He went into Emma’s room and saw a very pale, thin little girl with an unhappy look on her face. “Now Emma”, he said. “You must eat some food so that you’ll get better. How about trying a little nice hot soup.” “Ugh, No!” she said. “I’m not hungry.” “Well, how about some toast and jam - that’s nice and tasty.” “I don’t want any toast!” “I don’t want anything”, she whined. “Please, Emma, just try to eat a little something,” pleaded her mother. “No, no no! No food, no food”, shouted Emma, “Go away go away!”, and she started to cry.” “I’d better go”, said the Reverend Andrews. “But I’ll think of something and I’ll come back.” He walked home thoughtfully, kicking a pebble down the street without even noticing he was doing it because he was so worried.

He went into church to say a little prayer for Emma, and then he spotted Blume. “Of course”, he said to himself. “Here is her good friend, Blume, he’ll help”. Then he took Blume into his office, tied a little scarf about his neck and carried him rapidly to Emma’s house. “I have an idea Blume can help,” he told Emma’s mother. “Just give me a little bowl of soup, two spoons and an empty bowl as well.” “What on earth can Blume do?” Emma’s mother wondered, but she gave him what he asked for just the same.

“Hello again, Emma”, said Reverend Andrews, tiptoeing into her bedroom. “Look who I have here - it’s your friend Blume and he isn’t very well. He’s been missing you very badly and he says he’s so sad that he can’t eat. But we must get him to eat something or he won’t get well. Do you think you could help by giving him some of his soup and then having a spoonful of your soup to encourage him? I’m sure if you set a good example he will follow you because he is so fond of you.” Then Reverend Andrews sat Blume on a chair beside Emma and gave her a tray with the bowl of soup and a spoon on it. He put the empty bowl and the other spoon in front of Blume.

“Oh poor Blume”, said Emma, “I’m sorry I haven’t been to play with you. Now I’m going to eat a spoonful of soup and then feed you a spoonful of your soup and we can take turns until we eat it all up. Then perhaps mummy will bring us some cake”. The

minister and Emma's mummy watched them eat together, smiling to themselves at what a good little nurse Emma had become. "I shall go home now," said the minister. "But Blume can stay here with you until you make him all better again. Just make sure he gets plenty to eat."

Hoppy and Squeaky had been very surprised when Reverend Andrews carried Blume away and even more surprised that he stayed away for nearly two weeks. But one Sunday morning, in walked Emma with her parents, looking as bright and healthy as usual and this time no one had to find Blume for her because she was already carrying him back to his home. "I'm going

to be in the school play on Monday", she told her friends at church. "I'm all better now. And Blume is feeling fine too".

