

Story 726 (1976 Tape 10)

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Poor Man and Rich Man in the Haunted Mill

Once there were and once there were not two friends living in the same village. One of these men was rich and other was poor. One day these two friends left their village together to seek whatever fortune they could find elsewhere. Before leaving home, each put a quantity of in his knapsack.

They went little; they went far. After a while the rich man became hungry and said to his friend, "Let us eat some of your bread and other food." So they sat down together and ate the poor man's food. Then they resumed their journey.

They went little; they went far. After traveling for some distance, the poor man began to feel hungry, and so he to his friend, "I am hungry. Let us eat your food now."

But the rich man answered, "I am not hungry yet." He refused to let the poor man have any of his food. They walked still farther, but the poor man grew weak from hunger and was unable to walk any farther. So the rich man left him behind and walked on alone.

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At night the poor man saw a light shining on the side of a mountain. He made his way to the light and found that it was in an old mill. Entering the mill, he found in a central room a dinner laid out, all cooked and ready to eat. Inasmuch as he was very hungry, he proceeded to take a taste from every dish. After he had appeased his hunger somewhat, he realized that if the owner of the mill should come along and see him eating the food, this man might treat him harshly. He therefore hid himself among the bags of grain in the mill.

Soon there entered a strange group of beings: ^{96, 99}ghosts, ^{96, 99}spirits, ^{96, 99}jinnns, and ^{96, 99}devils. Some of them were playing musical instruments. All of them seemed to be enjoying themselves as they ate the food and drank the wine they found ready for them. As they caroused in this way, they talked among themselves

One of them said, "There is a certain village in this area which has a serious water shortage. The people of that village do not know that very near to them is an untapped source of water that is almost limitless. Access to that water is covered by a large stone. If they but knew of this water source, they would never again suffer from drought."

Another said, "The padişah of this land has a daughter who is ^{blind}blind. He has called in doctors from many places to try to cure her blindness, but none of them can help her.

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Now there is a feather located at such-and-such a place which, if touched to her eyes, would cure them at once, but none of his counselors and wise men knows of its existence." Each of those present gave an account of something wonderful or powerful. The poor man remained quiet but listened to all of these stories.

When dawn arrived, all of these strange creatures left the mill. The mill owner entered shortly afterwards and saw the poor man there. The miller asked, "What happened in here last night?" After the poor man had told him what had gone on during the night, the miller continued: "We fix a meal every evening for them. They come at night and eat the food. We have no choice but to do this, for if we did not, they would destroy my mill."

Later that morning the poor man left the mill and started out in the direction of the village suffering from a water shortage. When he reached that village, he walked all around it before entering it. Talking to the leading members of that village, he asked, "If I could find for you all of the water that you could use, how much gold would you give me?"

"If you can do that for us," they said, "we shall fill one whole side of your knapsack with gold." This became a bargain to which both sides agreed.

The villagers were so excited about the possibility of

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having an unlimited supply of water that they followed the poor man to the stone which capped it. With the help of these people, the poor man finally managed to move the stone and thus release the water, which flowed out like a small river. Well satisfied with the supply of water, the villagers filled half the poor man's knapsack with gold.

Leaving that village then, the poor man set out for city where lived the padişah and his blind daughter. After walking a great distance, he arrived at that city. He went directly to the palace and requested permission from the guards to see the padişah. When he was shown into the ruler's presence, he asked, "Your majesty, if I could cure your daughter's blindness, how much gold would you give me?"

"If you can do that, I shall gladly fill one half of your knapsack with gold." Both of them agreed to this arrangement.

Saying "I shall return soon," the poor man went to the place where the ^{magic effect} magic feather was said to be. After searching the area for a short time, he located the feather and returned to the palace with it. He then brushed the eyes of the princess lightly with the magic feather, and almost immediately the girl began to see. As soon as the padişah had paid him the gold he had promised, the poor man set out for his own village.

¶ Both the poor man and the rich man arrived back in their village at about the same time, but now the poor man was and the rich man was poor. The once-rich man asked his friend, "How did you manage to acquire so much money?"

The once-poor man was a good person, and he held no enmity toward his friend. Thus he had no hesitation about explaining to his friend the events which had led to his becoming rich

The once-rich man decided to repeat all of the things that his friend had done to see if that would bring riches to him, too. He took the same route that the once-poor man had followed, and after a while he reached the same mill. Entering the mill at dusk, he went to the central room and found a large meal set out, all cooked and ready to be eaten. He, too, was very hungry, but instead of just taking a taste from each of the dishes, he ate plentifully from it. Then he hid himself among the grain sacks and waited.

When it was totally dark outside, the ghosts, spirits, jinns, and devils arrived. They looked at the half-empty dishes of food and realized that someone else had come there. One of them said, "Friends, last time our food had been just nibbled a little. Someone later learned some of our secrets and stole from us some valuable property. So much of our food has been consumed this time that we know very well some-

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one else has come. This person must still be here in the mill somewhere. Let us find him!"

They searched the mill and found the once-rich man among the grain sacks. Pulling him from his hiding place, they beat him badly and threw him out of the mill.