

Story 96 written by informant

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Strapleg

Before time, when the sieve was in the wheat, there were three brothers. One of them was called Strapleg. Now, Strapleg was very intelligent. One day the king of the country made an announcement: "The one who can succeed in bringing to our city the horse of the big giant will receive a reward." Of course, the two brothers went to the king and said, "Strapleg, our third brother, can do this."

Strapleg was very much afraid. "Oh, my king," he said, "how can I do this? I am sure the giant will eat me."

But would the king listen to him? No. "You will go," said the king. "If you refuse to go, your head will be cut off."

Strapleg thought a while, and then he decided that the best thing to do was to go, so he started on his way. He went a little, he went far; he went by rivers and mountains, until at last he came to the house of the giant. The stable where the horse was kept was near the house. Strapleg entered the stable and hid himself in a corner.

After a while, the giant came in to feed the horse. But the horse was not acting normally instead, he was neighing. The giant thought, "Perhaps there is someone here." He began to search everywhere, but he could not find anyone, so he left the stable. Of course, Strapleg took the horse and very easily brought him to the king.

This time, the king ordered, "Now you will bring back the bed of the giant."

Strapleg was alarmed. "My king, how can I bring it? If I entered the giant's house, he would eat me without cooking me."

The king answered, "Make your choice. Either you go or your head will be cut off."

Did Strapleg have a choice? So again he started toward the giant's house. He had a lot of fleas in his handkerchief. He entered the house and secretly put all the fleas in the bed. It was not long before the fleas began to bite the giant. He could not sleep, so he said, "Dear wife, throw this bed outdoors."

When the wife had taken the bed outside, Strapleg got hold of it and took it to the palace. What do you think the king asked him this time? "You will bring the giant himself to me," he said.

Strapleg did not argue this time, because he knew he had no choice. He changed his clothes, putting on an artificial beard and moustache. He pretended to be very old. Then he

Disguise

came to the house of the giant, Strapleg saw him workin outside. He greeted the giant, saying, "O honorable giant I am a very crafty carpenter. I build boxes, big and small. Do you want me to build one just your size?"

The giant said, "Yes."

Strapleg began to build the box. After a while, he had finished it. Then he said, "Honorable giant, why do you not get into it, so that we can see if my measurements are just?"

The giant agreed, and lay down in the box.

This time, Strapleg made another request. "Let me put the top on it, to see whether it will fit." And he closed the box and nailed it on every side. He put it on his shoulder and went on his way to the palace.

On the way, the giant asked, "Can I come out, now carpenter? Are you done?"

Strapleg laughed. "I caught you. I caught you. Do you think I will let you go?"

But as you can imagine, the box was very heavy. Suddenly it slid down and fell on the ground, breaking into pieces. The angry giant got out of it and began to follow Strapleg. At last, Strapleg climbed a tree. The giant was so angry that he opened his big mouth and swallowed the whole world except for Strapleg and the tree. The tree by chance was standin right by the corner of his mouth.

Strapleg knew the giant would eat him, too, so he said, "Why do you not open your mouth, giant? I will jump into it."

The stupid giant opened his mouth. Straple cut a thick branch from the tree and threw it into the giant's mouth. Of course, the giant died suddenly. Then Strapleg lived by himself in the whole empty world

(I heard this story from my mother, and she heard it from her mother.)