



JOHN'S FABLE

Once upon a time, there was a rich man who was so bored he promised a chest full of gold to anyone who would come up with such an outrageous lie that he would have no choice but to say no such thing could have ever happened. He ordered his servant John to prepare the gold and the chest. People from every corner of the town soon gathered in his luxurious house to tell their lies, and indeed, standing before him they all lied through their teeth.

But each of them left empty-handed. The rich man always sent them away, saying their fables could be true and giving them an example of how. So with everyone gone, he ordered John to carry the gold back into the treasury.

But instead, John mustered his courage and asked the master if he too could try his luck telling him an unbelievable tale.

“Go ahead, you can tell me any tale you want, my boy,” the master encouraged him.

And so John began: “Once I was in heaven and it was really nice and cosy there. But after some time, I got bored and lonely and decided to return back on earth.”

“Yes, yes, I believe you. Every word” yawned the master from boredom.

But John kept talking: “But no matter how hard I was thinking, I couldn't figure

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out how to get down. Finally, I tried tying together every rope I could find and climbed down to the ground.”

The master listened while lazily scratching his belly and nodding at John to show that he believed him.

“But the ropes weren’t long enough to reach the ground and so I had no choice but to let go and freefall the rest of the way down, into a large pile of mud where I became stuck.”

The master believed that too, so John went on.

“I screamed my lungs out to get some help. Finally, someone came to me. It was a poor ugly swineherd who came to my rescue. And if only you knew, sir, who that commoner spending all his days tending to his pigs was!”

The curious master waited in anticipation of John’s next words until finally, John said: “That man, that swineherd, was none other than your father!”

The master’s face grew red with anger. He slammed his fist on the table and snapped at John: “Oi, you goddamn liar! There’s no way that could have been my father!”

“Are you saying I’m lying, then?” asked John. He smiled and quickly grabbed the chest of gold and ran away from the fuming man.

The master was furious, but what could he do? The rules of his game were clear. Ever since then, John hasn’t had to serve anymore. Instead, he bought himself a farm where he lives happily, being his own master, to this day.