

Giufà and the Plaster Statue

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Italian

Easy
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Once upon a time there was a very poor woman who had a son called Giufà, who was stupid, lazy, and cunning. His mother had a piece of cloth, and said one day to Giufà: "Take this cloth, and go and sell it in a distant town, and take care to sell it to those who talk little." So Giufà set out, with the cloth on his shoulder.

When he came to a town, he began to cry: "Who wants cloth?" The people called him, and began to talk a great deal; one thought it coarse, another dear. Giufà thought they talked too much, and would not sell it to them. After walking a long way, he entered a court-yard where he found nothing but a plaster image. Giufà said to it: "Do you want to buy the cloth?" The statue said not a word, and Giufà, seeing that it spoke little, said: "Now I must sell you the cloth, for you speak little;" and he took the cloth and hung it on the statue, and went away, saying: "To-morrow I will come for the money."

The next day he went after the money, and found the cloth gone. "Give me the money for the cloth." The statue said nothing. "Since you will not give me the money, I will show you who I am;" and he borrowed a mattock, and struck the statue until he overthrew it, and inside of it he found a jar of money. He put the money in a bag, and went home to his mother, and told her that he had sold the cloth to a person who did not speak, and gave him no money; that he had killed him with a mattock, and thrown him down, and he had given him the money which he had brought home. His mother, who was wise, said to him: "Say nothing about it, and we will eat this

money up little by little.”

Another time his mother said to him: “Giufà, I have this piece of cloth to be dyed; take it and leave it with the dyer, the one who dyes green and black.” Giufà put it on his shoulder, and went off. On his way he saw a large, beautiful snake, and because it was green he said to it: “My mother has sent me with this cloth which she wants dyed. To-morrow I will come for it.” And there he left it.

He went home and told his mother, who began to tear her hair. “Ah! shameless fellow! how you ruin me! Hasten and see whether it is there still!” Giufà went back, but the cloth had disappeared.

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