

# *Right Always Remains Right*

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Slavic

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There was once upon a time a huntsman, who had a son, who was also a huntsman. He sent his son into a foreign land, to look about him and learn something additional. Here he went into a tavern, where he found a stranger, with whom he entered into conversation. They told each other all the news, till they also began to talk about right and wrong. The stranger asserted that the greatest wrong could be made right for money. But the huntsman opined that right always remained right, and offered to bet three hundred dollars upon it, if the stranger would do the same.

The stranger was content therewith, and they agreed to ask three advocates the question at once. They went to the first advocate, and he said that it was possible to make wrong right for money. They then went to another. He also asserted that wrong could be made right for money. Finally, they went to a third. He also told them that wrong could be made right for money. They then went back again, and as they had been going about the whole day, it wasn't till late in the evening that they got to their tavern. The stranger then asked the huntsman whether he still disbelieved that the greatest wrong could be made right for money, and the huntsman replied that he should soon be obliged to believe it on the assertion of the three advocates, although he was very unwilling to do so. The stranger was willing to grant him his life if he consented to pay three hundred dollars; but as they were talking about it, in came a man who overpersuaded the stranger that he must needs abide by what they had previously agreed upon. He did not, however, do this, but only, with a red-hot iron, took his eyesight from him, and told him at the same time, that he would then and then only believe that right remained right in the world, when the huntsman regained his sight.

The huntsman entreated the host of the tavern to put him on the right road to the town. He put him on the road to the gallows, and went his way. When the huntsman had gone a little further, there was the end of the road, and he heard it strike eleven. He couldn't go any further, and remained lying where he was in hope that perhaps somebody would come there in the morning. After a short time he heard a clatter, and soon somebody came up; nor was it long before a second and a third arrived. These were three evil spirits, who quitted their bodies in the night time, and perpetrated all manner of villainy in the world. They began to talk together, and one said: 'To-day it is a year and a day since we were here together and related the good deeds that we had done during the year before. A year has again elapsed, and it is therefore time that we should ascertain which of us has done the best action during the past year.'

The first spoke, and said: 'I have deprived the inhabitants of the city of Ramul of their water supply; they can only be helped if somebody finds out what it is that stops up the spring.' 'What's that?' said the second; and the first replied: 'I have placed a great toad on the spring out of which the water at other times flowed; if that be removed, the water will spring up again as before.' The second said: 'I have caused the beauty of the princess of Sarahawsky to disappear, and herself to fade away to skin and bones; she cannot be helped until the silver nail, which hangs above her bed, be pulled out.' The third said: 'Yesterday I caused a person to be deprived of his eyesight with a red hot iron; he can only be helped by washing his eyes with the water that is in the well not far

from this gallows.' It then struck twelve in the town, and the three disappeared at once, but the huntsman remembered all that he had heard, and rejoiced that it was in his power to regain his eyesight.

Early on the morrow he heard somebody passing by, and begged him to send him people from the town, to tell where the healing spring was. Then all manner of people came to him, but no one could show him the spring, save at length one old woman. He caused himself to be led thither, and as soon as he had washed his eyes in it, he immediately obtained his eyesight again.

He now asked the way to the city of Ramul, and went thither. As soon as he arrived, he told the town council that he would restore them their water. But plenty of people had been there already, and the city had spent a great deal of money upon them, yet no one had effected aught, so, as it had been all in vain, they intended to have nothing more to do with the matter. Well, he said that he would do it all for nothing, only they must give him some labourers to help him. It was done. When they had dug as far as the place where the pipes, through which the water used to flow, were laid into the spring, he sent all the work-men away and dug a little further himself, and behold! a toad, like a boiler, was sitting on the spring. He removed it, and immediately the water began to flow, and ere long all the fountains were filled with water. The citizens got up a grand banquet in his honour, and paid him a large sum of money for what he had done.

He then went on and came to Sarahawsky. Then in a short time he learnt that the princess was ill, just as he had heard, and that no physician was able to help her; moreover that the king had promised that the person who could cure her malady should obtain her to wife. He therefore equipped himself very handsomely, went to the king's palace, and there declared that he had come from a far country, and would cure the princess. The king replied to him that he had scarce any hope left, but would nevertheless make the experiment with him. The huntsman said that he would fetch his medicine. He went out and bought all manner of sweet comfits, and then went to the princess. He gave her a first dose, and looked about to see in what part of her bed's head the silver nail was sticking. Early on the second day he came again, gave her again some of his medicine, took the opportunity of laying hold of the nail, and pulled it till it began to move. In the afternoon the princess felt that she was better. The third day he came again, and while the princess was taking the medicine, pulled again at the bed's head, pulled the nail clean out, and put it secretly into his pocket. At noon the princess was so far recovered, that she wanted to have her dinner, and the king invited the huntsman to a grand banquet. They settled when the wedding was to take place, but the huntsman considered that he must first go home.

And when he had got home, he went again to the tavern where he had lost the sight of his eyes, and the stranger was there also. They began to tell each other all the news, and the huntsman related what he had heard under the gallows; how he had discovered the water, and finally how he had regained the sight of his eyes, and said that the stranger must now believe that in the world right always remained right. The stranger marvelled exceedingly, and said that he would believe it.

After this the huntsman went on and came to his princess, and they had a grand wedding festival, which lasted a whole week. The stranger bethought himself that he, too, would go under the gallows; peradventure he might also hear some such things as the huntsman had heard, and might in consequence also obtain a princess to wife. And when the year had elapsed, he also went there. He heard it strike one, and in a short time he heard a clatter; then up came somebody again, and it wasn't long before a second and third arrived. They began to talk together, and one said: 'It cannot but be, that some one overheard us last year, and through that everything that we have done is ruined. Let us, therefore, make a careful search before we again recount to each other what we have done.' They immediately began to search, and found the stranger. They tore him into three pieces and hung them up on the three corners of the gallows.

When the old king died they took the huntsman for king, and if he has not died, he is reigning still at the present day, and firmly believes that in his realm right will always remain right.

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