

St. Anthony's Godchild

Elsie Spicer Eells

Portuguese

Intermediate
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Long ago there lived a man who had so many children that he could scarcely find godfathers for them all. He had requested so many of his friends to serve, that when his last baby was born, a little dark-eyed daughter, he vowed that he'd ask the first man he met upon the street.

As luck would have it, he happened to meet the good St. Anthony.

"Will you be godfather to my baby daughter?" he asked.

Kind St. Anthony gladly consented. He named the baby Antonia, and said to the father:

"Train up this child in the way she should go. Teach her all you can. When she is thirteen years old I'll come to get her and I'll give her a good start in life."

The years flew by and soon little Antonia was thirteen years old. The father was afraid that St. Anthony had forgotten his promise, but one day the saint appeared.

"Is this my godchild?" he asked as he looked at Antonia. "Surely she has grown prettier each year of her life."

Antonia blushed shyly and looked even more attractive than before.

“Dress yourself in your brother’s garments,” he said to her. “I am going to take you to the king’s court and you are entirely too pretty to go there in your own dresses.”

Accordingly, Antonia put on her brother’s clothes and went to serve as a page to the king. She was now called Anthony instead of Antonia.

Now the king had a sister who grew very fond of the little page. She became angry that the page did not love her in return and plotted against him.

One day she went to the king and said:

“Your little page says that he can separate all the chaff from the wheat in a single night.”

“Let him try,” responded the king.

When Anthony heard what the king required he was decidedly worried. Then he remembered that he was the godchild of St. Anthony and that the saint was always ready to aid those in need. He called upon St. Anthony to help him fulfill the king’s command. In the morning the king’s wheat was entirely free from chaff.

The king loved his little page more and more, and the king’s sister was angrier than before that she could not win the affection of the youth. She made a new plot against him.

“What do you suppose that page is saying now?” she asked her brother. “He boasts that he can go to the palace of the king of the Moors and steal the purse of gold pieces from beneath his pillow.”

The king sent Anthony to the palace of the king of the Moors. With St. Anthony’s help he climbed up the high wall of the palace and crept in through a window. The king of the Moors was so sound asleep that Anthony had no difficulty whatever in slipping his hand under the pillow and stealing the purse. Then he crept out again without awakening the king.

“That young page, Anthony, has grown so very boastful,” remarked the king’s sister a few days after his return, “that he now claims that he can carry away the king of the Moors himself.”

Then she added, "I'll marry him if he fulfills this boast."

"Bring home the king of the Moors as your captive," were the king's orders to Anthony.

The page was very much worried for he thought that it would be more difficult to capture the king of the Moors than it had been to capture his purse.

"Not at all, dear godchild," said the kind St. Anthony when he had heard about the king's new command.

Anthony climbed quietly up the wall as before and crept in through the window. Then he rolled the king of the Moors up in the bedclothes and tossed him out of the window. By the time the king was really awakened from his sleep he was in the boat ready to sail away.

When Anthony returned to the palace with his captive, the king said:

"My best and bravest page, you are worthy indeed of any honor. You shall wed my sister."

"I can't marry her," said Anthony. "My name is Antonia."

"In that case," said the king, "I'll marry you myself."

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