



The Presidente who had Horns

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Intermediate
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Once there was a presidente who was very unjust to his people, and one day he became so angry that he wished he had horns so that he might frighten them. No sooner had he made this rash wish, than horns began to grow on his head.

He sent for a barber who came to his house to cut his hair, and as he worked the presidente asked:

“What do you see on my head?”

“I see nothing,” answered the barber; for although he could see the horns plainly, he was afraid to say so.

Soon, however, the presidente put up his hands and felt the horns, and then when he inquired again the barber told him that he had two horns.

“If you tell anyone what you have seen, you shall be hanged,” said the presidente as the barber started away, and he was greatly frightened.

When he reached home, the barber did not intend to tell anyone, for he was afraid; but as he thought of his secret more and more, the desire to tell someone became so strong that he knew he could not keep it. Finally he

went to the field and dug a hole under some bamboo, and when the hole was large enough he crawled in and whispered that the presidente had horns. He then climbed out, filled up the hole, and went home.

By and by some people came along the road on their way to market, and as they passed the bamboo they stopped in amazement, for surely a voice came from the trees, and it said that the presidente had horns. These people hastened to market and told what they had heard, and the people there went to the bamboo to listen to the strange voice. They informed others, and soon the news had spread all over the town. The councilmen were told, and they, too, went to the bamboo. When they had heard the voice, they ran to the house of the presidente. But his wife said that he was ill and they could not see him.

By this time the horns had grown until they were one foot in length, and the presidente was so ashamed that he bade his wife tell the people that he could not talk. She told this to the councilmen when they came on the following day, but they replied that they must see him, for they had heard that he had horns, and if this were true he had no right to govern the people.

She refused to let them in, so they broke down the door. They saw the horns on the head of the presidente and killed him. For, they said, he was no better than an animal.

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