



# *The Vilas' Spring - The Story of the Brother Who Knew that Good was Stronger than Evil*

Parker Fillmore

Slavic

---

*Intermediate  
8 min read*

There was once a rich man who had two sons. The older son was overbearing, greedy, and covetous. He was dishonest, too, and thought nothing of taking things that belonged to others. The younger brother was gentle and kind. He was always ready to share what he had and he was never known to cheat or to steal.

“He’s little better than a fool!” the older brother used to say of him scornfully.

When the brothers grew to manhood the old father died leaving directions that they divide his wealth between them, share and share alike.

“Nonsense!” the older brother said. “That fool would only squander his inheritance! To every poor beggar that comes along he’d give an alms until soon my poor father’s savings would be all gone! No! I’ll give him three golden ducats and a horse and tell him to get out and if he makes a fuss I won’t give him that much!”

So he said to his younger brother:

“You’re a fool and you oughtn’t to have a penny from our father’s estate. However, I’ll give you three golden ducats and a horse on condition that you clear out and never come back.”

“Brother,” the younger one said quietly, “you are doing me a wrong.”

“What if I am?” sneered the older. “Wrong is stronger than Right just as I am stronger than you. Be off with you now or I’ll take from you even these three golden ducats and the horse!”

Without another word the younger brother mounted the horse and rode away.

Time went by and at last the brothers chanced to meet on the highway.

“God bless you, brother!” the younger one said.

“Don’t you go God-blessing me, you fool!” the older one shouted. “It isn’t God who is powerful in this world but the Devil!”

“No, brother,” the other said, “you are wrong. God is stronger than the Devil just as Good is stronger than Evil.”

“Are you sure of that?”

“Yes, brother, I’m sure.”

“Well, then, let us make a wager. I’ll wager you a golden ducat that Evil is stronger than Good and we’ll let the first man we meet on this road decide which of us is right. Do you agree?”

“Yes, brother, I agree.”

They rode a short distance and overtook a man who seemed to be a monk. He wasn’t really a monk but the Devil himself disguised in the habit of a monk. The older brother put the case to him and the false monk at once answered:

“That’s an easy question to decide. Of course Evil is stronger than Good in this world.”

Without a word the younger brother took out one of his golden ducats and handed it over.

“Now,” sneered the older one, “are you convinced?”

“No, brother, I am not. No matter what this monk says I know that Good is stronger than Evil.”

“You do, do you? Then suppose we repeat the wager and ask the next man we meet to decide between us.”

“Very well, brother, I’m willing.”

The next man they overtook looked like an old farmer, but in reality he was the Devil again who had taken the guise of a farmer. They put the question to him and of course the Devil made the same answer:

“Evil is stronger than Good in this world.”

So again the younger brother paid his wager but insisted that he still believed Good to be stronger than Evil.

“Then we’ll make a third wager,” the other said.

With the Devil’s help the older brother won the third golden ducat which was all the money the younger one had. Then the older brother suggested that they wager their horses and the Devil, disguised in another form, again acted as umpire and the younger one of course lost his horse.

“Now I have nothing more to lose,” he said, “but I am still so sure that Good is stronger than Evil that I am willing to wager the very eyes out of my head!”

“The more fool you!” the other one cried brutally.

Without another word he knocked his younger brother down and gouged out his eyes.

“Now let God take care of you if He can! As for me I put my trust in the Devil!”

“May God forgive you for speaking so!” the younger one said.

“I don’t care whether He does or not! Nothing can harm me! I’m strong and I’m rich and I know how to take care of myself. As for you, you poor blind beggar, is there anything you would like me to do for you before I ride

away?”

“All I ask of you, brother, is that you lead me to the spring that is under the fir tree not far from here. There I can bathe my wounds and sit in the shade.”

“I’ll do that much for you,” the older one said, taking the blinded man by the hand. “For the rest, God will have to take care of you.”

With that he led him over to the fir tree and left him. The blinded man groped his way to the spring and bathed his wounds, then sat down under the tree and prayed God for help and protection.

When night came he fell asleep and he slept until midnight when he was awakened by the sound of voices at the spring. A company of Vilas were bathing and playing as they bathed. He was blind, as you remember, so he couldn’t see their beautiful forms but he knew that they must be Vilas from their voices which were as sweet as gurgling waters and murmuring treetops. Human voices are never half so lovely. Yes, they must be Vilas from the mountains and the woods.

“Ho, sisters!” cried one of them, “if only men knew that we bathed in this spring, they could come to-morrow and be healed in its water—the maimed and the halt and blind! To-morrow this water would heal even the king’s daughter who is afflicted with leprosy!”

When they were gone the blind man crept down to the spring and bathed his face. At the first touch of the healing water his wounds closed and his sight was restored. With a heart full of gratitude he knelt down and thanked God for the miracle. Then when morning came he filled a vessel with the precious water and hurried to the king’s palace.

“Tell the king,” he said to the guards, “that I have come to heal his daughter.”

The king admitted him at once to the princess’s chamber and said to him:

“If you succeed in healing the princess you shall have her in marriage and in addition I shall make you heir to my kingdom.”

The moment the princess was bathed in the healing water she, too, was restored to health and at once the

proclamation was sent forth that the princess was recovered and was soon to marry the man who had cured her.

Now when the evil older brother heard who this fortunate man was, he could scarcely contain himself for rage and envy.

“How did that fool get back his sight?” he asked himself. “What magic secret did he discover that enabled him to heal the princess of leprosy? Whatever it was he got it under the fir tree for where else could he have got it? I’ve a good mind to go to the fir tree myself to-night and see what happens.”

The more he thought about it the surer he became that if he went to the fir tree in exactly the same condition as his brother he, too, would have some wonderful good fortune. So when night came he seated himself under the tree, gouged out his eyes with a knife, and then waited to see what would happen. At midnight he heard the Vilas at the spring but their voices were not sweet but shrill and angry.

“Sisters,” they cried to each other, “have you heard? The princess is healed of leprosy and it was with the water of this, our spring! Who has spied on us?”

“While we were talking last night,” said one, “some man may have been hiding under the fir tree.”

“Let us see if there is any one there to-night!” cried another.

With that they all rushed to the fir tree and took the man they found sitting there and in a fury tore him to pieces as though he were a bit of old cloth. So that was the end of the wicked older brother. And you will notice that in his hour of need his friend, the Devil, was not on hand to help him.

So after all it was the younger brother who finally inherited all his father’s wealth. In addition he married the princess and was made heir to the kingdom. So you see Good is stronger than Evil in this world.

Read more fairy tales on [Fairytalez.com](http://Fairytalez.com)