



# *The Price of Greed*

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Magic

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There once lived a young man and his young wife. They had tried and tried to conceive a child with no luck. One night, when it was storming out, there was a knock on the door. There stood a very little and very old man.

“Please won’t you let me come in and warm myself by the fire?” Begged the old man. The couple took pity and let the old man in and sat him by the fire.

The little old man could smell the stew cooking on the stove and asked, “Please, may I have some of what smells so good? I have traveled all day with no nourishment.” The couple agreed and presented him with a bowl of hot stew and a cup of wine.

The little old man finished his meal and saw his host packing tobacco in his pipe. “Please, may I have some tobacco? It would ease my worried digestion after such a hardy meal.” The young man agreed and handed him a pouch and pipe.

“Ah, such fine people you are!” Stated the little old man as he rose from his seat. “For treating me so kindly, I will grant you the thing you want most. By the next full moon, you shall be with child and good fortune shall follow you.” With this the little old man left.

Soon after, as the old man had said, the young couple were expecting their first child. They had been blessed with a bountiful crop that year, and the young man prospered at his work.

The woman had grown ripe and was about to burst any day, when there was a knock on the door. There stood

the same very little and very old man.

“It seems you have done well and prospered greatly.” Said the old man to the young couple. “Won’t you invite me in to warm myself by your fire?”

The couple were hesitant for they had become somewhat wealthy and had collected many riches since the last time they had seen the old man, but they agreed and let him in.

“You have had a blessed harvest!” Said the old man, looking about the kitchen. “Will you not make me a meal to quiet my grumbling stomach?” The couple again were hesitant though the food was plentiful, but again, they agreed.

A short time later, the old man was presented with the smallest piece of dry bread, a few berries and a glass of water. The old man looked at the plate and asked, “Is this what I am deserving? I who put a child in your belly? I who blessed this house and helped it prosper so?”

The little old man stood and walked to the door. Before he left he turned to them and said, “You act like swine, so shall you breed swine.” With this, the little old man left.

Three days later, under the next full moon, the woman began to go into labor. When the infant came the screams from the midwife could be heard all across the town. For the woman had given birth to a squealing pig.

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