

THE TALE OF TWO ORPHANS

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Long ago there was a widower with two very young sons. He loved them very much, doing every thing he could for them! For the proper maintenance of the house and for the care of the children, he remarried. He eventually had two sons from the second wife, too.

Unfortunately, the latter lavished much care and love on her own sons only. She openly maltreated the stepchildren, becoming more and harder on them. She forced them to do whatsoever her caprice dictates within and without the family circle. The food she gave them was very poor and badly prepared. Thus, they even were faced with starvation! While things were thus unfortunate, one day as they were looking after their cows, they had an apparition of their deceased mother who told them a secret that at an appointed time and hidden place, they should: “call your own milk-cow whose faecal matter will become porridge and whose urine will turn into butter for you.” This event seemed to them a sheer dream, but they did exactly as they were bidden and all turned out to be true. They ate of the delicious porridge and were exceedingly delighted!

From that day on, they grew stronger and healthier than ever. Their stepmother was puzzled and upset by the incomprehensible outcome of her discriminatory behaviour. In order to solve the mystery she sent her own sons with the stepchildren to spy. The four of them took the cattle to the forest; and when the mysterious lunch time arrived the older two couldn't help revealing the mystery after having obtained a solemn pledge of secrecy from their stepbrothers. They ate their fill!

When they came back home, however, the two spies hurried to reveal the whole secret to their mother! The woman then ordered her step sons to stay at home all the day while her own sons were directed to look after the cattle. The order was carried out; but her own sons couldn't succeed in making the cow yield the prodigious lunch it used to provide the others. The news of that utter failure made the woman mad with anger. She conceived another evil plan, entreating her husband who was unaware of the intrigue, to do what ever she wanted. She then asked him to slaughter the cow. Though reluctant to do so, he killed the cow.

Despair and dismay beclouded the hearts and minds of the two orphans. Once more the ghostly being appeared to the orphans who were ordered to collect and bury the bones of the cow. They did this. The buried bones grew fast in ant-hills which transformed into many cows and camels. The two orphans soon became rich and powerful lords, whereas the stepmother and her sons submitted to become their servants.

Having carefully instructed their stepbrothers how they should behave and cautioning them that in the act of drinking they not let a drop of milk fall on the ground. The young lords gave then bowls full of milk. This milk was so tasty that they drank to excess. When each one emptied the third bowl, a drop of milk fell right on the navel. They bent down with difficulty to lick the milk off their abdomens which, unfortunately, burst! Each of the boys thus suffered a tragic death.

N.B. In this tale the primary principles of moral teaching are clearly pinpointed and can be summed up:

- a) The helpless, such as the orphan, is the first to deserve the care, love, and sympathy of all his neighbours. Such behaviour is of the nature of justice.
- b) Divine providence does not abandon the innocent. Hope is required.
- c) Greed blinds one's conscience and leads to extremes of behaviour. Modesty prevents such disorder.
- d) He who persists in evil and in harming others will have an evil end. Repentance is required.

Blin Folk Tales written by
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