

came in he said to her, “Have you prayed in the church?”

“Yes,” she answered; “but I thought continually of the faithful John, who has come to such misfortune through us.”

Then he replied, “My dear wife, we can restore his life again to him, but it will cost us both our little sons, whom we must sacrifice.”

The Queen became pale and was terrified. Finally she said, “We are guilty of his life on account of his great love for us.”

Then he was very glad that she thought as he did. Going up to the closet, he unlocked it and brought out the children and the faithful John.

“God be praised! He is saved, and we have still our little sons.” Then he told her all that happened. Afterward they lived happily together to the end of their days.

## FAITHFUL JOHN



By The Brothers Grimm



A LearningIsland.org  
15 - Minute Book

*Editor: Jennifer Robinson*

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The King replied, “All that I have in the world I will give up for you.”

The statue spoke again: “If you, with your own hand, cut off the heads of both your children, and sprinkle me with their blood, I shall be brought to life again.”

The King was terrified when he heard that he must himself kill his two dear children. Then he remembered his servant's great love, and how the faithful John had died for him. Drawing his sword he cut off the heads of both his children with his own hand.

As soon as he had sprinkled the statue with blood, life came back to it. The trusty John stood again alive and well before him.

Then he said, “Your faith shall not go unrewarded.” Taking the heads of the two children he set them on again, and sprinkled their wounds with their blood. Suddenly they healed again, and the children ran away and played as if nothing had happened.

Now the King was full of happiness. As soon as he saw the Queen coming, he hid the faithful John and both the children in a great closet. When she

crows which he heard at sea. He spoke of how, in order to save his master, he must do all he had done.

Then the King cried out, “Oh, my most trusty John, pardon, pardon. Lead him away!” But the trusty John had fallen down at the last word and was turned into stone.

Then both the King and the Queen were in great grief. The King thought, “Ah, how wickedly have I rewarded his faithfulness!”

Then he had the stone statue raised up and placed in his sleeping-chamber, near his bed. Every time he looked at it, he wept and said, “Ah, could I bring you back to life again, my faithful John!”

After some time had passed, the Queen bore twins; two little sons, who were her great joy. Once, when the Queen was in church, and the two children at home playing by their father's side, he looked up at the stone statue full of sorrow. He exclaimed with a sigh, “Ah, could I restore you to life, my faithful John!”

At these words the statue began to speak, saying, “Yes, you can make me alive again, if you will bestow on me that which is dearest to you.”

## FAITHFUL JOHN

Once upon a time there lived an old King, who fell very sick. He thought he was lying upon his death-bed; so he said, “Let faithful John come to me.”

This faithful John was his affectionate servant. He was called Faithful John because he had been true to the king all his lifetime.

As soon as John came to the bedside, the King said, “My faithful John. I feel that my end is near. I have no other care than about my son. He is still so young that he cannot always guide himself aright. If you do not promise to instruct him in everything he ought to know, and to be his guardian, I cannot close my eyes in peace.”

Then John answered, "I will never leave him; I will always serve him truly, even if it costs me my life."

So the old King was comforted, and said, "Now I can die in peace. After my death you must show him all the chambers, halls, and vaults in the castle, and all the treasures which are in them. But the last room in the long corridor you must not show him. In it hangs the portrait of the daughter of the King of the Golden Palace. If he sees her picture, he will fall in love with her. He will fall down in a swoon, and on her account undergo great perils. Therefore you must keep him away."

The faithful John pressed his master's hand. Soon after, the King laid his head upon the pillow and died.

After the old King had been borne to his grave, faithful John told the young King all that his father had said upon his death-bed. He declared, "All this I will certainly fulfill. I will be as true to you as I was to him, if it costs me my life."

When the time of mourning was passed, John said to the young King, "It is now time for you to see your inheritance. I will show you your castle."

So he led the King all over it, upstairs and downstairs. He showed him all the riches, and all

Soon after, the wedding was celebrated, and a grand ball was given. Midway through, the bride began to dance. The faithful John paid great attention, and watched her carefully.

All at once she grew pale, and fell as if dead to the ground. Then he sprang up. He raised her up and carried her to a chamber, where he laid her down. He kneeled beside her, and drew the three drops of blood out of her right breast, and then he threw them away.

As soon as she breathed again, she raised herself up. The young King had seen everything. He did not know why Faithful John had cut his bride. He was very angry, and called out, "Throw him into prison!"

The next morning the trusty John was brought up for trial. He was found guilty, and led to the gallows. As he stood upon them, and was about to be executed, he said, "Every one condemned to die may once before his death speak. Shall I also have that privilege?"

"Yes," answered the King. "It shall be granted you."

Then the faithful John replied, "I have been unrighteously judged, and have always been true to you". Then he told of the conversation of the



the splendid chambers. Only one room he did not open; the one containing the perilous portrait. It was placed so that one saw it as soon as the door was opened. Moreover, it was so beautifully painted that one thought it breathed and moved. Nothing in all the world could be more lifelike or more beautiful.

The young King noticed that faithful John always passed by the one door. One day he asked, “Why do you not open that one?”

“There is something in it which will frighten you,” John replied.”

But the King said, “I have seen all the rest of the castle. I want to know what is in there.” He went and tried to force open the door by force.

Faithful John pulled him back, and said, “I promised your father before he died that you should not see the contents of that room. It would bring great misfortunes both upon you and me.”

“Oh, no,” replied the young King. “If I do not go in it will be my certain ruin. I should have no peace night or day until I have seen it with my own eyes. Now I command you to unlock the door.”

Then faithful John saw that it was of no use. With a heavy heart and many sighs, he picked the key out of the great bunch. When he had opened

the door, he went in first. He thought he would cover up the picture so the King would not see it; but it was of no use. The King rose up onto his toes and looked over his shoulder.

He quickly saw the portrait of the maiden. It was so beautiful and it glittered with precious stones. The young king fell down on the ground in front of it.

Faithful John lifted him up and carried him to his bed. He thought with great concern, “Mercy on us! The misfortune has happened. What will come of it?”

He gave the young King wine until he came to himself. The first words he spoke were, “Who does that beautiful picture represent?”

“That is the daughter of the King of the Golden Palace,” was the reply.

“My love for her is so great that if all the leaves on the trees had tongues, they should not tell of it,” said the King. “My heart is set upon the search for her. You are my faithful John. You must come with me.”

The trusty servant thought for a long time how to do the task. It was very difficult to get into the presence of the King's daughter. At last he thought of a way.

“Great!” said the King. “This shall carry me to my castle.” He tried to mount, but the faithful John jumped forward. He swung himself quickly on. He drew the firearms out of the holster and shot the horse dead.

There were other servants of the King, who were not on good terms with Faithful John. They exclaimed, “How shameful to kill the beautiful horse, which might have borne the King to the castle!”

But the King replied, “Be silent, and let him go. He is my Faithful John. Who knows the good he may have done?”

Then they made their way to the castle. There stood a dish in the hall, and the splendid bridal shirt lay in it. It looked like it was made of gold and silver.

The young King went up to it and reached forward, but Faithful John pushed him away. Taking it up with his gloves on, he quickly threw it into the fire and let it burn.

The other servants began to murmur, saying, “See, now he is burning the King's bridal shirt!”

But the young King replied, “Who knows what good he has done? Let him alone. He is my faithful John.”

knows it, and tells him, will be turned to stone from his knee to his heart.”

Then the third Crow spoke: “I know still more. Even if the bridal shirt be consumed, still the young King will not keep his bride. After the wedding, a dance will be held. While the young Queen dances she will suddenly turn pale, and fall down as if dead. Someone must raise her up and take three drops of blood from her right breast and throw them away, or she will die. But whoever knows that, and tells it, will have his whole body turned to stone, from the crown of his head to the toes of his feet.”

After the crows had talked with one another, they flew away. The trusty John, who had perfectly understood all they had said, was from that time very quiet and sad. If he concealed from his master what he had heard, misfortune would happen to him. If he told him all he must give up his own life.

At last he thought, “I will save my master, even if I destroy myself.”

As soon as they came on shore, it happened just as the Crow had foretold. A huge, fox-red horse sprang up.

He said to the King, “Everything which she has around her is of gold—chairs, tables, dishes, bowls, and all the household utensils. Among your treasures are five tons of gold. Let one of the goldsmiths of your kingdom make bowls and utensils of all kinds from the gold. Also, all kinds of birds, and wild and wonderful beasts, such as will please her. Then we will travel with these, and try our luck.”

Then the King summoned all his goldsmiths. They worked day and night until many very beautiful things were ready.

When everything had been placed on board a ship, the faithful John put on merchant's clothes. The King dressed the same, so that they might travel in disguise.

Then they sailed over the wide sea. They sailed away until they came to the city where the daughter of the King of the Golden Palace lived.

Faithful John told the King to stay on the ship, and wait for him. “Perhaps,” said he, “I shall bring the King's daughter with me. Therefore see that all is in order. Set out the golden vessels and adorn the whole ship.”

Then John placed some of the golden cups in a napkin. He stepped on land, and went straight to the King's palace.



will spring toward them. He will jump upon the horse. As soon as he is on it, it will jump up with him into the air. Then he will never again see his bride.”

The second one asked, “Is there no escape?”

“Oh, yes. If another person quickly jumps on the horse he can take out the firearms which are in the holster. With them he can shoot the horse dead. Then the young King will be saved.”

“But who knows that? And if any one does know it, and tells him, that person will be turned to stone from the toe to the knee.”

Then the second spoke again, “I know still more. If the horse should be killed, the young King will not keep his bride. When they come into the castle a beautiful bridal shirt will lie there upon a dish. It will seem to be woven of gold and silver, but it is nothing but sulphur and pitch. If he puts it on it will burn him to his bones.”

Then the third Crow asked, “Is there no escape?”

“Oh, yes,” answered the second, “if some one takes up the shirt with his glove on, and throws it into the fire, so that it is burnt, the young King will be saved. But what does that signify? Whoever

“Oh no,” she cried. “I am betrayed. I am carried off and taken away in the power of a strange merchant. I would rather die!”

But the King, taking her by the hand, said, “I am not a merchant, but a king. I am your equal in birth. It is true that I have carried you off; but that is because of my overwhelming love for you. Do you know that when I first saw the portrait of your beautiful face I fell down in a swoon before it?”

When the King's daughter heard these words, she was reassured. She decided the King was not a bad man and she willingly became his bride.

One day while they were still on the high seas, Faithful John sat on the deck of the ship. He was playing music. He saw three crows in the air, who came flying toward them. He stopped playing, and listened to what they were saying to each other, for he understood them perfectly.

The first one exclaimed, “There he is, carrying home the daughter of the King of the Golden Palace.”

“But he is not home yet,” replied the second.

“But he has her,” said the third. “She is sitting by him in the ship.”

Then the first crow exclaimed, “What does that matter? When they go on shore a fox-colored horse



When he came into the castle yard, a beautiful maid stood by the brook. She had two golden pails in her hand, and was filling them with water. When she had filled them and had turned round, she saw a strange man. She asked who he was.

Then John answered, "I am a merchant." He opened his napkin and showed her its contents.

Then she exclaimed, "Oh, what beautiful golden things!" She set the pails down and looked at the cups one after another.

"The King's daughter must see these," she said. "She is so pleased with anything made of gold that she will buy all these."

Taking John by the hand, she led him into the castle; for she was the lady's maid.

When the King's daughter saw the golden cups, she loved them. "They are so finely worked that I will purchase them all," she said.

But Faithful John replied, "I am only the servant of a rich merchant. What I have here is nothing in comparison to those which my master has in his ship. Nothing more delicate or costly has ever been worked in gold."

Then the King's daughter wished to have them all brought to her. But John said, "It would take many days, and so great is the quantity that your

palace has not halls enough in it to place them around."

Then she became even more excited. Finally she said, "Take me to the ship. I will go myself and look at your master's treasure."

Faithful John led her to the ship with great joy. When the King beheld her, he saw that her beauty was greater than the picture had shown. He thought that his heart would jump out of his mouth.

Finally she stepped on board, and the King led her below. Faithful John remained on deck by the steersman. He quickly told him to untie the ship and put on all the sail he could, that it might fly as a bird through the air.

Meanwhile the King showed the Princess all the golden treasures—the dishes, cups, bowls, the birds, and the wild and wonderful beasts. Many hours passed while she looked at everything. In her joy she did not notice that the ship sailed on and on. As soon as she had looked at the last item she thanked the merchant. She was ready to depart.

But when she came on deck, she saw that they were upon the high seas, far from the shore, and were hastening on with all sail.