



Ririro

READ ANYWHERE, ANYTIME

A Heart of Stone

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Long ago, in the Black Forest, there lived a poor and discontented charcoal burner named Peter Munk. He wished he were a wealthy timber merchant or glassblower instead. Therefore, he decided to go to the Evil Michiel and ask him for riches. However, he didn't dare to do so because his mother had told him that the Evil Michiel was a dreadful man who always demanded a reward. And if people used his help, they would lose their hearts and good conscience.

Peter first wanted to try his luck with the Glassman Treasureman. He dressed neatly and set out. When he arrived, he politely took off his hat and asked shyly, "Mr. Treasureman, have pity on my miserable existence."

"So, what do you want?", asked a fine voice. "I want to be filthy rich. I want to have the biggest glassblowing workshop in the area and so much money that I can't even count it," said Peter. This angered the Glassman, but he gave Peter what he wanted anyway. "You shall have it," he said and disappeared.



Peter went home ecstatic with joy. What a miracle! A large glassblowing workshop with a fancy house instead of his small cottage. However, he could neither read, write nor calculate, and he didn't care about such things. This caused the money to run out in no time, and he was even poorer than before.

Now Peter became angry with the Glassman Treasureman because his help was short-lived. He didn't even think that his renewed poverty was his own fault. Not at all. He therefore visited Treasureman again at the Three Pine Trees and cried out, "Mr. Treasureman, help me again, but better than the last time, so that everything doesn't run out so quickly."

"Say," came the shrill voice of the little man. "Isn't that that rude Peter? Get out of here! You won't get a penny more from me! Your duty was to pray and work, and you did neither."

Now Peter became angry and cried out, "Work! Then you picked the wrong guy. You're a miser. If I have to, I'll go to the Evil Michiel. He doesn't talk so much!"

And before Peter could think about it, the Evil Michiel suddenly appeared, saying,

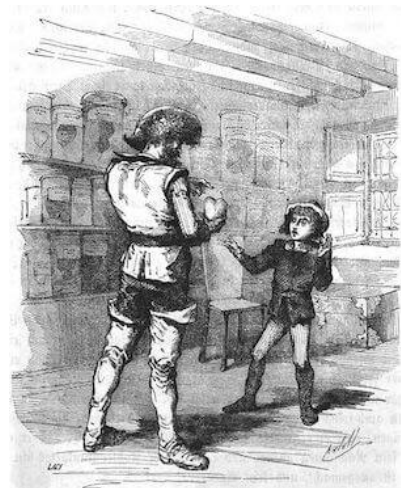
"What do you want?" "Nothing, nothing, sir!" stammered Peter and ran away as fast as he could.

Once home, Peter couldn't shake off the thought of riches, so he decided to visit the Evil Michiel. In his underground dwelling, they made an agreement. Peter gave away his heart and received a stone in return with as much money as he wanted. Now Peter fell into a deep sleep and was awakened in the morning by a cheerful tune. But Peter felt nothing. No pleasure from the music. No sadness. Nothing at all. He had a stone instead of a heart and returned home discontented.

Peter now started trading in timber and lent money at high interest rates. He soon became known as a ruthless person and was feared everywhere. In his sleep, he dreamed that his mother spoke to him: "What an insensitive heart you have!"

Peter found this so dreadful that he went to the Glassman Treasureman again to ask if he could get his heart back. He was willing to give all his money for it. The Glassman wanted to help him and gave him a glass cross and instructions on how to get his heart back.

Peter now visited Michiel and accused him of deception. He still possessed his own warm heart. "That's not true," said Michiel angrily. "Look here. Your heart is in this glass."



While Peter looked at it in disbelief, Michiel tried to rip his heart out of his chest. But Peter was prepared, he took his glass cross and started praying. This caused the Evil Michiel to shrink down to the size of a worm.

Peter took advantage of the moment and ran as fast as he could to the Glassman. Once there, he felt remorse for his lack of love and was comforted by the Glassman. When he arrived home, his mother lovingly embraced him, and they lived happily ever after in their old hut.



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