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The Master Of Magic

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Once upon a time there lived a man who had three sons. The two older ones worked in the fields, but the youngest one went to school. He learned how to read and write and do sums and make drawings. At last he even learned magic.

The two elder brothers complained to their father about him one day. Their hearts were bitter against him.

"It is not fair, father," they said. "We work hard every day in the fields and bring home money to enrich the family. Why shouldn't our brother work, too? He does nothing except study."

The youngest son heard their words of complaint.

"Will you go hunting with me to-morrow, father?" he asked. "I have learned much magic. In fact, I have become a master of magic. I will turn myself into a hunting dog if you will go into the fields with me."

The next day the young man changed himself by magic into a hunting dog, and his father went into the fields with him. He bagged many rabbits that day. As they returned home, he met one of his friends.

"What luck to-day?" asked his friend.

The hunter proudly displayed the rabbits he had in his bag. "I have them, thanks to my dog," he said.

"I'd like to buy that dog of yours," said his friend. "What will you take for him?"

The father named an enormous price, and to his great surprise his friend accepted it. The money was passed over at once, and the hunting dog went home with his new master.

The next day they went on a hunting expedition into the deep forest. Suddenly the dog disappeared. His master called and whistled to him in vain. Finally he was obliged to return home without him. He had lost both the dog and the money he had paid for him.

"Have you seen my hunting dog?" were his words for many weeks to every one he met.

His hunting dog had fled into a deep forest and once more resumed his original

form. He returned home and told his two brothers that in a single day he had earned for his father more than their combined efforts for many weeks. Indeed it was quite true.

The next day the young man said to his father: "Will you buy a saddle and bridle for me if I turn myself into a horse?"

His father made the purchase, and then the young man changed into a handsome black horse. His father rode him up and down the streets very proudly. The Great Magician noticed the beautiful beast.

He called the man to him and said: "That is a very good horse you are riding. What will you sell him for?"

The father named an enormous price, but he at once paid it cheerfully. He ordered the horse placed in his stables.

Now this Great Magician had a beautiful daughter who was very fond of horses. She went out to inspect his new purchase as soon as it was brought home. She noticed that the horse ate nothing.

"What a beauty!" she cried as she stroked his glossy black coat. "You are the handsomest horse in the stable. Why don't you eat? I believe your bridle is hurting you. I'm going to take it off."

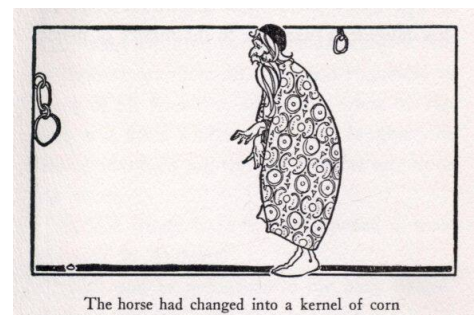
As soon as the bridle was removed it was changed into a bird and flew out the window. The Great Magician at that moment changed himself into a hawk and killed the bird, never dreaming that it was the bridle of the new horse he had purchased.

The next morning when the Great Magician went to mount his beautiful black steed there was no new horse to be found in the stable. The horse had changed into a kernel of corn.

The Great Magician transformed himself into a hen to eat up the corn, but the youth was too quick for him. He changed into a dog and seized the hen between his teeth and gave it a good shaking. Then he returned to his own form and explained the whole affair to the Great Magician.

"You are surely a master of magic," was the comment of the magician.

When the Great Magician had forgiven him for the shaking he had received when he was in the form of a hen, he gladly gave his consent to his daughter's marriage to the master of magic.



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