



Sinbad the sailor

Description

A long time ago, there lived in Baghdad a young man who complained about the hardness of his work as a carrier. One day, after finishing his day, he sat down to rest for a while near the door of a rich merchant's house. The man, who was inside, heard him complaining.

– Work and work again. Is this what life is all about?

The merchant took pity on the boy and invited him to a hot dinner. The boy accepted and was surprised to enter such a luxurious house with such rich food on the table.

He was amazed;



« I don't know what to say, sir!...I've never seen so much wealth.

– It's true – the man answered politely – I am very lucky, but I want to tell you how I got everything you see. Nobody gave me anything and I would like you to understand that it is the result of a lot of effort.

The merchant, whose name was Sinbad, told his story to the intrigued boy.

– When my father died, » he began, « he left me a good fortune, but I wasted it until I had nothing left. So I decided to become a sailor.

– A sailor! What a wonder!

– Yes, but it was not so easy. On the first trip, I fell in the water and swam to an island that turned out to be the back of a whale. Fortunately, I managed to escape, clinging to a barrel floating in the water, until the current deposited me on the shores of an unknown city. I wandered for days until I was hired on a new boat that finally brought me back to Baghdad. Those were very hard days!



He finished speaking and gave the boy a hundred gold coins in exchange for coming back the next day to hear his stories. The young man, with his pockets full, jumped for joy. The first thing he did was to buy a good piece of meat to invite his friends.

The next day, he returned to Sinbad's house, as agreed. After dinner, the man closed his eyes and remembered another part of his life.

– My second trip was very strange... I saw an island and beached the boat on the beach. I started to look for food, and I saw a giant egg.

I saw a giant egg;



As I was about to grab it, a giant bird landed on my shoulders, grabbed me with its powerful claws, and lifted me into the sky. I flew like an eagle and although I was scared to death, I was thrilled to see the earth from so high.



At first, I thought he would throw me over the sea, but he changed direction, and dropped me over a valley full of diamonds. As I fell, I was badly injured, but despite this I seized the opportunity and collected as many gems as I could before finding my crew and the ship on the beach.



When he had finished recalling his second journey, Sinbad gave the young man another hundred gold coins, inviting him to return the next day. The boy was beginning to enjoy the tale of old Sinbad's adventures and was always punctual for their appointment. Once again, the man was lost in the meanderings of his fiery memories.

– This will seem strange to you, » he said. Thanks to the diamonds, I was now a rich man and lived like a prince. But despite this, the call of the sea and the open sea was stronger and so I prepared a new journey.

This time again I had many exciting adventures. We landed on an island where hundreds of wild pygmies lived and destroyed our boat. They tied us up and took us to their chief, who was a big, one-eyed, ugly-looking giant.

– A one-eyed giant? What a horror!

What a horror!



« Yes, it was terrifying! » He ate all my sailors, but since I was very skinny and he was already quite full, he left me on the side. He fell asleep and I took the opportunity to grab the poker from the fire, which was burning hot, and stuck it in his one eye. He became very angry and shouted so that the mountain would shake, but he could not see me anymore and I took the opportunity to run away.

Having escaped from the giant and his pygmies, I met a merchant who took me on his boat. I helped him so well to sell his rare paintings from port to port, that he associated me with his business and we made our fortune again.



The young man was exhilarated as he listened to the stories of the intrepid sailor. What adventures this man had experienced!...

For seven nights, Sinbad told seven new stories, seven voyages, seven adventures, each one more breathtaking than the last. And every night, after the story, he gave him another hundred coins.

At their last meeting, they said goodbye with friendship. Before the young man left, Sinbad wanted to tell him something important:

– Now you know that to get something, there is always a price to pay. And also that destiny is something to fight for and that everyone has to forge it. Nobody in this life gives anything for free! And if it happens, you have to make good use of it. I hope that the money I gave you will help you to start new projects and that my stories will serve you.

The young man understood that old Sinbad had accomplished his dreams, thanks to his courage, his intelligence and his decisions. Now he had seven hundred gold coins, he was rich, but he had learned not to rest on his laurels. And after a while, what do you think he did with his money?



Short adaptation of the classic tale from the Arabian Nights. Illustration taken from the Larousse adaptation by Miss Latappy except for the first one (Roland Beaussant)

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