

PUBLIC HEALTH INSURANCE
SHOULD NOT COVER THE
COSTS OF TREATMENT FOR
SMOKING-RELATED CANCER.

TAX EVASION SHOULD NOT
BE FINED IF THE EVADER
DECIDES TO DECLARE
THE AMOUNT EARNED.

THOSE WHO DO NOT HAVE A
FAMILY BACKGROUND IN
ACADEMIA SHOULD HAVE
PRIVILEGED ACCESS TO
THE UNIVERSITY.

THE TALE OF ABU HASAN AND THE FART – 1001 NIGHTS

Although it was ancient wisdom that marriage was joy for a month and misery for a life, yet everyone agreed that Abu Hasan should marry. With a healthy personal fortune, a keen wit and a generous heart, he was quite the most eligible bachelor in Baghdad. But when his friends would reproach him for remaining single, he would reply:

“Far be it for me to take to my chest a sack full of snakes! I am free – why, then, become a slave?” Then he’d order another round of wine and all would drink to his health.

But whether the pressure of loneliness as he aged began to weigh heavy on him, or whether it was the desire to have a son to continue the family name, when matchmakers approached him with news that the daughter of the governor was seeking marriage, he finally agreed to wed and all rejoiced with exceeding joy.

A fabulous ceremony was prepared – the greatest Baghdad had seen in many years; the tables were laden with chickens stuffed with pistachios, whole roast goats with fresh dates in their mouths, walnut and cream pastries, and any number of sherbets and sweets; the finest musicians in the land played throughout the day and in the evening Abu Hasan sallied forth on the balcony to cast gold coins out to the waiting hands of the poor gathered outside.

Then, as he and his friends reclined on silk cushions with ebony pipes of the finest honey tobacco, the bride was brought forth wearing the first of seven dresses – and behold! She was as lovely as the moon at its fullest, wrapped in a turquoise gown dripping with gems and silver. Each following dress she wore was more lovely than the last until she finally appeared in a simple white dress with a necklace of pearls around her smooth neck, her lips like a piece of coral and her eyes putting the stars to shame.

She retired to the lavish bedroom chamber to coyly await the arrival of her husband. Abu Hasan, however, could not yet bear to forsake his guests and entertained them with a great store of stories and wit, tempered with sober reflections on the spiritual and politic, increasing his esteem in their eyes and giving all cause for merriment and reflection.

At last, when his duty as host was fulfilled, Abu Hasan felt the juices of desire stir within him and he rose to bid his guests good night so that he might join his bride beneath the silken sheets of the conjugal bedchamber. But alas! He had eaten and drunk so heavily that as he raised himself from the cushions, he could not help but release a loud and thundering fart that echoed from wall to wall and silenced every voice in the room.

His friends at once began talking again, pretending they hadn’t noticed and Abu Hasan quickly slipped away in the direction of the bedchamber – but then dashed down another corridor, out of a side door to the house, saddled his favourite horse and rode all the way to Basra at top speed. There he boarded a ship bound for the East and set sail that night, gazing back at his homeland with tears in his eyes until the horizon swallowed the view.

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Abu Hasan landed in India and by virtue of his gift for languages, impeccable manners and irreproachable character, he soon secured himself a position in the services of a local rajah. Winning himself a reputation for incorruptibility and sobriety – he never so much as left his quarters at night to take a pipe with the other men – he soon rose in the ranks until he was responsible for the discipline and welfare of the rajah's personal guard.

But though he was loved and respected by all in the court, Abu Hasan was never seen to so much as smile and when, of an evening he would climb to the highest battlement to gaze west in the direction of his homeland and sigh heavily, the servants knew better than to disturb him and all assumed he was a great man living under a cloud.

At last, after ten years, despite the fierce regret of the rajah in losing such a valuable servant, Abu Hasan packed his few belongings and declared that he would return to his native country. He boarded a ship bound for Basra and could barely sleep for the entire voyage, riddled with anxiety as to his reception back home.

Once on land, he rode to Baghdad but paused at the outskirts of the city, suddenly too afraid to enter. For days he wandered around the hills, hoping to learn by some fortuitous circumstance whether his reputation was still intact, when at last he came across a shepherd's hut one night and heard a mother putting her child to sleep. He pressed his ear to the side of the hut and heard the child ask:

"Mother, when was I born?"

"Oh, that's easy, my dear," the mother laughed, "You were born in the year that Abu Hasan farted!"

And with these words, hope died in his heart forever. He fled the land and was never seen again.

SOURCE: <http://www.tomthumb.org/422/the-tale-of-abu-hasan-and-the-fart-1001-nights/>

THE FROGS DESIRING A KING – AN AESOP'S FABLE

MORAL OF AESOP'S FABLE: "Better no rule than cruel rule"

The Frogs were living as happy as could be in a marshy swamp that just suited them; they went splashing about caring for nobody and nobody troubling with them.

But some of them thought that this was not right, that they should have a king and a proper constitution, so they determined to send up a petition to Jove to give them what they wanted.

"Mighty Jove," they cried, "send unto us a king that will rule over us and keep us in order." Jove laughed at their croaking, and threw down into the swamp a huge Log, which came down splashing into the swamp.

The Frogs were frightened out of their lives by the commotion made in their midst, and all rushed to the bank to look at the horrible monster; but after a time, seeing that it did not move, one or two of the boldest of them ventured out towards the Log, and even dared to touch it; still it did not move.

Then the greatest hero of the Frogs jumped upon the Log and commenced dancing up and down upon it, thereupon all the Frogs came and did the same; and for some time the Frogs went about their business every day without taking the slightest notice of their new King Log lying in their midst.

But this did not suit them, so they sent another petition to Jove, and said to him, "We want a real king; one that will really rule over us."

Now this made Jove angry, so he sent among them a big Stork that soon set to work gobbling them all up.

Then the Frogs repented when too late.

SOURCE: <http://www.taleswithmorals.com/aesop-fable-the-frogs-desiring-a-king.htm>

GESTA ROMANORUM VOL. I (1871):

TALE LXIX. OF CHASTITY.

The emperor Gallus employed a singularly skilful carpenter in the erection of a magnificent palace. At that period, a certain knight lived who had a very beautiful daughter; and who, perceiving the extraordinary sagacity of the artificer, determined to give him the lady in marriage. Calling him, therefore, he said, "My good friend, ask of me what you will; so that it be possible, I will do it, provided you marry my daughter." The other assented, and the nuptial rites were celebrated accordingly. Then the mother of the lady said to the carpenter, "My son, since you have become one of our family, I will bestow upon you a curious shirt. It possesses this singular property, that as long as you and your wife are faithful to each other, it will neither be rent, nor worn, nor stained. But if — which heaven forbid! — either of you prove unfaithful, instantly it will lose its virtue." The carpenter, very happy in what he heard took the shirt, and returned great thanks for the gift.

A short while afterward, the carpenter being sent for to superintend the building of the emperor's palace, took with him the valuable present which he had received. He continued absent until the structure was complete; and numbers, observing how much he laboured, admired the freshness and spotless purity of his shirt. Even the emperor condescended to notice it, and said to him, "My master, how is it that in despite of your laborious occupation, and the constant use of your shirt, it still preserves its color and beauty?" "You must know, my lord," said he, "that as long as my wife and I continue faithful to each other, my shirt retains its original whiteness and beauty; but if either of us forget our matrimonial vows, it will sully like any other cloth."

A soldier, overhearing this, instantly formed the design of proving the fidelity of the lady. Wherefore, without giving any cause of suspicion to the carpenter, he secretly hastened to his house, and solicited his wife to dishonor. She received him with an appearance of pleasure and seemed to be entirely influenced by the same feelings. "But," added she, "in this place we are exposed to observation; come with me, and I will conduct you into a private chamber."

He followed her, and closing the door, she said, "Wait here awhile; I will return presently." Thus she did every day, all the time supplying him only with bread and water. Without regard to his urgency, she compelled him to endure this humiliating treatment; and before long, two other soldiers came to her from the emperor's court, with the same evil views. In like manner, she decoyed them into the chamber, and fed them with bread and water.

The sudden disappearance, however, of the three soldiers, gave rise to much enquiry; and the carpenter, on the completion of his labors, received the stipulated sum, and returned to his own home. His virtuous wife met him with joy, and looking upon the spotless shirt, exclaimed, "Blessed be God! our truth is made apparent—there is not a single stain upon the shirt." To which he replied, "My beloved, during the progress of the building, three soldiers, one after another, came to ask questions about the shirt. I related the fact, and since that time nothing has been heard of them." The lady smiled, and said, "The soldiers respecting whom you feel anxious, thought me a fit subject for their improper solicitation, and came hither with the vilest intent. I decoyed them into a remote chamber and have fed them with bread and water." The carpenter, delighted with this proof of his wife's fidelity, spared their lives, and liberated them, on condition that they became honest men.

APPLICATION

My beloved, the emperor is God; the palace is the human heart. The soldier who married his daughter to the carpenter is Christ; the carpenter is any good Christian, and the mother is the Church. The shirt is faith; the three soldiers are pride, lusts of the eyes, and lusts of the heart.

SOURCE: [https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Gesta_Romanorum_Vol. I \(1871\)/Of Chastity](https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Gesta_Romanorum_Vol._I_(1871)/Of_Chastity)