

Three Brothers and the Magic Apple

By Jonathan Noble

Once upon a time in a far off land lived three brothers named Abdul, Jabbar, and Sabir. These brothers were ruled by a very evil and powerful king, but the three brothers lived as happily as they could considering the situation. They were farmers who tended their crops and minded their own business.

One day the king sent out a decree that all farmers had to participate in a contest to see who could grow the most delicious apple. The winner of this contest would be given enough food to feed his village. When the messenger reached the brothers' village, he informed them of the king's decree. The brothers were very upset at this decree. They liked to mind their own business and not get involved with the king or anyone connected with the king. It would mean instant death if any of the farmers didn't participate in the contest.

The contest would take place the following year so all the farmers in the land would have enough time to come up with the perfect apple. Abdul and his two younger brothers were considered the best farmers in the village. Many of the people thought that winning would be a great blessing, as they were very poor and hardly had enough food to stay alive. Everyone in the village then hoped and prayed that the brothers would win and get the food to feed the whole village.

The brothers owned this magnificent apple tree. It was quite magical and produced apples all year round in a variety of colors. The time finally came for Abdul to choose which apple from this tree that would be used for this contest. The apple he chose was a beautiful golden yellow color and tasted delicious. They believed it would be good enough to win the contest and bring great joy to their village.

The brothers started on the 300-mile trek to the great city where the contest was to be held. The brothers made this journey on foot and they reached the city in two weeks. Their apple had already been taken by one of the king's servants a week before they left. The king used his magic to keep all the apples fresh so that way everyone would have a fair chance.

The brothers reached the great city a day before the contest would commence. The king himself would be the judge; he would eat all the apples and then chose three. Whosever apple was chosen would have another year to grow an even better one. At that time the winner would be decided.

Thousands of apples were submitted differing in color from yellow, red, green, and even a few orange apples. The king loved the apple Abdul selected very

much, and it was given an instant spot in the final three. The other two apples were chosen and the contest ended until the following year.

The brothers traveled home and for another year they kept to themselves and tended to their crops. Before they knew it, it was time to choose another apple from their magical tree to give to the king's servant. This time Jabbar picked the apple. He chose a light red apple with little streaks of gold on it.

Like the year before, the brothers traveled to the great city to see if their apple was chosen as the winner of the contest. The king came out of his castle with a royal fanfare, and the apples were presented before him in magnificent golden dishes. The remaining farmers all stood together near the king watching these proceedings. The king tried all of the apples, and then he made the decree that the winner of the contest was Abdul, Jabbar, and Sabir. The brothers were overjoyed! Now they could supply food to their poor village. The king informed the brothers that in return for giving their village food, the king would receive one apple per week. Every Sunday one of the king's servants would come and collect the apple and then on the following Saturday food would be brought the village.

The brothers traveled home, overjoyed at their success. Once the village was informed that the brothers had won, they began to jump up and down with joy. This was the best day of their lives. For five years everyone in the village lived happily with enough to eat until one day during the summer a mischievous little boy sneaked on to the brothers' farm. He discovered the magical tree, and he ate a few of the delicious apples. Not knowing any better, the young rascal thought he could move the tree to his backyard. So, he got his little hatchet and cut down the tree. Two unfortunate things happened because of this. First, the tree fell and crushed the little boy. Second, the tree never grew fruit again and there was no way to get another magical apple tree.

This was a tremendous blow to the brothers. How would they be able to give one of the magical apples to the king the next Sunday? The next Sunday came and the king's servant came and Sabir gave him the best apple he could find from one of the regular apple trees. All three of the brothers hoped that this apple would be good enough and that the king wouldn't notice the difference. The following Saturday came and the food was delivered as usual. The brothers hoped that the king had been satisfied with the other apple.

The next Sunday when the servant came he informed the brothers that the king was very angry with them. He wanted the perfect apples and not the one that was delivered the week before. Jabbar explained to the messenger what happened,

and he gave him another apple from a regular tree. They waited anxiously for the next Saturday. Saturday came and no food was delivered. Everyone in the village was very puzzled until a royal messenger arrived. He read from a scroll that the king was going to punish the village for the brothers' actions. Instead of killing Abdul, Jabbar, and Sabir, he was going to turn everyone in the village into dogs. This would take effect the next week.

The next week was a very sad one for the village. Nobody blamed the brothers because everyone knew about the boy cutting down the magical apple tree. Some of the villagers decided it was better to end their lives rather than become a dog and in a panic several of them killed themselves.

The rest of the villagers prepared for their sad fate. Abdul was not going to accept this. He told his brothers that he was going to try to do something to overthrow the evil king and restore the village. Both Jabbar and Sabir agreed to help him in this endeavor. As the king promised everyone in the village was turned into a dog. However, the brothers couldn't bear to see this happen so they had left the villages a few days before. Their mission was to find a way to destroy the king and then find a way to restore the village.

The brothers traveled around for a year. It was extremely hard for them because they didn't really know what they were looking for. They tried to ask several other kings for help, but they were turned down by every king they tried.

One day as they were walking in a valley, Sabir pointed to the top of a hill at a huge castle. The brothers made their way up the hill to the massive castle; the young men were surprised to find that the castle was abandoned. The brothers explored the whole castle where they found skeletons, broken weapons, and such like things. Jabbar exclaimed, "There must have been a big battle here." The young men went down to the armory where they found a variety of weapons, shields, and other devices used in war.

Then Sabir opened a trapdoor and found a ladder that led down to the treasury. As they expected, almost everything was gone except for a few opened chests and an old golden box that lay hidden in the corner. Abdul went over and tried everything he could to try and open the box but he couldn't. In frustration, Abdul was about to throw the box on the floor when he heard a voice from the box. It was a genie, and the genie said that he would grant the person who opened the box anything they wanted. Abdul was very excited by this, and he told the genie that he couldn't open the box. The genie said that Abdul must go to a far away castle and overthrow the king who put the genie in the box. Once they

destroyed the king, they could get the key and open the box to let the genie out. Once that happened, the genie would grant them a wish.

Abdul placed the box back in the corner, and the three brothers climbed the ladder. They closed the trapdoor and went to the armory. They equipped themselves with swords, knives, bows, and spears. The genie had given Abdul directions of how to get to the castle of the king who had entrapped him. It was a long journey for the brothers to reach the castle. They had to follow a river, cross a desert, and go across a lake. At that point they would be at the base of the mountain and at the top of that mountain was the castle.

The brothers followed the river for many miles; this took them about a month. It was very slow going because the vegetation was very dense. Once they reached the desert, they filled up as many water containers as they could before starting. As they crossed the desert, Sabir almost died because of dehydration. Because of the intense heat, Jabbar was badly sunburned and was in excruciating pain every time he took a step. Stumbling along, the brothers had just about given up any chance of surviving when Abdul yelled that he could see the lake! They were almost there. The brothers walked as fast as they could to get to the lake to get water and take a cold bath.

They revived themselves for a few days before they decided it was time to climb the ominous mountain. They discarded all the unnecessary equipment so it would be easier to climb up the mountain. They only carried their weapons, food, and water. The beginning of the climb was not hard, but all of a sudden, it started to get very steep. It got very treacherous as the brothers had to blaze their own trail going up. The king had his own trail going up but the brothers had to enter the castle by surprise.

The hike was very slow going along the steep, slippery terrain so it took the brothers about two weeks to reach the summit of the mountain. They decided the best course of action was to get inside the castle, leaving the weapons outside. Somehow they would sneak their weapons into the castle and then try to kill the king.

The brothers hid the weapons in the bushes near the castle and approached one of the guards at the castle's entrance. Jabbar asked the guard if they could meet the king. Jabbar's request was granted, and the guard brought the brothers to the king. Abdul spoke to the king and told him that they were innocent farmers who had gotten lost on a long journey and ended up on top of the mountain. They

had seen the castle and had hoped that the ruler would give them a room for a few nights before they continued their journey.

The king was a little annoyed by this request, but he decided to give them a room. The brothers thanked the king several times before being ushered to their room. Unfortunately the king gave them the worst room available; it was in the back of the castle practically in the woods. It was as far from the king's room as possible. The brothers thanked the king several times before they were ushered to their room.

This room was quite convenient for the brothers. They would be able to sneak weapons into their room at night unnoticed. That night using the bed sheets to make a rope, and Sabir climbed out of the castle to get the weapons that were hidden in the woods. Jabbar and Abdul hid the weapons under the beds and in the closets. Once this was done, they pulled up the bed sheets and went to sleep.

In the morning, the brothers had a "Counsel of War" and decided that the best time to kill the king would be at night. There would not be as many guards, and it would be easier to escape in the darkness down the mountain.

The brothers stayed in their room most of the day. Jabbar scouted out the location of the king's room. The king's servants brought meals to the brothers' room. The king gave them some old stale food, but it was the best food they had eaten in weeks.

Finally, it was time! At midnight, the brothers fully armed, left their room. Fortunately, they didn't encounter any of the king's guards. Sabir quietly opened the king's door, and the three brothers sneaked in. The king lay asleep and his wife was by his side. Jabbar slowly shook the king while Abdul got a crossbow trained on his head. Once the king woke up and realized that he had been tricked, he was livid.

"Where is the key to the box?" asked Sabir. "You will never find it!" yelled the king. Abdul nodded to Jabbar, and he grabbed a towel and stuffed it over the king's mouth. Abdul pulled the trigger of the crossbow and sunk an arrow into the king's leg. At this the king's wife awoke, and she realized what was going on. Sabir ran over to gag her so she wouldn't scream. The queen ran and jumped out the window, plummeting to her death in the castle courtyard. Abdul loaded another arrow into the bow and Jabbar pulled the towel off the king's mouth. "Where is the key or the next one is in your head." Still horrified by seeing his wife, the king stammered, "The key is in the chest over there." He pointed to a corner of the room where a small chest was sitting. Sabir walked over and found the key. Jabbar

and Abdul picked up the king and threw him out the same window that his wife jumped out of.

“We have to get out of here now,” said Abdul. So, the brothers ran down the hall. On the way back to their room, they encountered one guard along the way. They knocked him out before continuing to the room. Once they reached their room, they threw the bed sheet rope out the window. They left all their extra weapons in the room, climbed out the window, and disappeared into the woods.

One of the guards discovered the bodies of the king and queen about an hour after the brothers had left. He alerted the other guards and the king’s son. They looked all over the castle and finally one of the guards discovered the brothers’ room where weapons lay under the bed and a sheet rope was dangling out the window.

The king’s son rallied the armed troops and started down the king’s private road to the lake. They were planning to take revenge on the brothers for killing their king.

Abdul, Jabbar, and Sabir went as fast as the terrain allowed down the mountain. They arrived at the exact same time as the king’s son and the troops.

A magnificent battle followed. The brothers were only outnumbered 5 to 1. Abdul was able to take out a few of the men before the battle even started, with his crossbow. Sabir and Jabbar were severely wounded. The final two were Abdul and the king’s son, Rasheed. Abdul was finally able to destroy Rasheed using his sword but not before Rasheed put a very deep gash in Abdul’s leg. Abdul hobbled over to his injured brothers to make sure they were still alive—Jabbar had a head injury as well as a long slash running down his back. Sabir lost a hand and had gotten knocked out. They tended to their physical ailments as well as they could.

Abdul grabbed one sword, and they were ready to cross the desert again. This time they made it across the desert without much difficulty, although their travel time along the river was very slow and it took them about a month. Finally, they reached the castle where the genie was. The three brothers descended the ladder, and Abdul picked up the box from the corner. He told the genie that they had killed the king and his son and that they had gotten the key. Abdul unlocked the box and let the genie out. The genie was enormous and took up the whole room. He was very pleased with the young men, and he asked them what their wish was. Abdul said that they wanted their whole village to be turned back into people and the son of the evil king destroyed and all of his followers. The genie said some

magical words and told the young men, “Your wishes have been granted. Go back to your land, and you will see that everything is as you said.”

The brothers traveled home and they realized that the genie had given them everything they had asked for. Everyone in the village was safe. The great city had been destroyed, and the king was no more. The excited brothers finally returned to their farm happy that they had completed the quest. For the rest of their days they lived happily ever after.