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THE PONGO'S DREAM

Once upon a time, there was a very poor man whom everyone called the pongo. He was small, thin, and quiet. He worked in the house of a very rich master, doing everything he was told to do. He swept, carried things, ran from one place to another, and obeyed almost without ever resting. He was always attentive, always with his head lowered, as if he wanted to go unnoticed.

The master was a harsh and proud man. He liked giving orders and feeling more important than everyone else. Many times, he treated the pongo with contempt, as if he were worth nothing. He

made fun of him in front of other people and made him feel very sad.

—Look at the way this pongo walks —the master would say, laughing—. It seems as if the wind could carry him away.

The others stayed silent or lowered their eyes. No one wanted to get into trouble.

The pongo kept working in silence. He did not answer with anger. He did not raise his voice. He only pressed his lips together and continued with his tasks. Inside, he felt pain, but he also kept thoughts that no one knew.

Many days passed, and then many weeks. The pongo continued to be humiliated by the master. Sometimes they spoke to him harshly, and sometimes they laughed at his old clothes or at the way he always looked so tired. But he remained there, enduring it all.

One night, after a long and heavy day of work, the pongo lay down to rest. He was very tired. He closed his eyes and fell deeply asleep. Then he had a very strange dream.

In his dream, the pongo saw that he and his master had died and were in another place, a great and silent place, as if they were waiting for something important. Everything looked different, as if the whole world had become still.

Suddenly, two angels appeared.

One of them carried a jar full of golden honey, bright and soft like sunlight. The other carried a jar full of something thick, dark, and dirty, with a very unpleasant smell.

The angels came closer and heard an order coming from above.

—For the master —said the voice—, cover him with honey.

—For the pongo —said the voice—, cover him with that dark and dirty thing.

Then the angels did as they were told. They covered the master with honey from head to toe. His whole body became shiny, sticky, and sweet. Then they covered the pongo with that ugly and heavy substance. The poor man was completely stained.

The master smiled with satisfaction.

—That is how it should be —he said proudly—. I deserve the best.

The pongo, however, remained silent. But he kept watching everything carefully.

After a moment, the voice from above was heard again.

—Now let the pongo lick the master for a long time, until all the honey is gone.

The master felt pleased when he heard that. He liked the idea of still being served even in that strange place. He looked at the pongo as he always did, with superiority.

But the voice continued:

—And when he finishes, let the master lick the pongo for much longer, until he is completely clean.

When he heard that, the master stopped smiling.

—What? —he asked, frightened—. Me?

For the first time in a long while, the pongo lifted his eyes. He did not speak with anger or mockery. He only looked at the master with a new calm, as if at last something were being set right.

In the dream, everything became silent.

The master no longer looked strong or proud. Now he was afraid. He did not understand why he had to do something he never would have wanted to do. But the order had been given, and no one could change it.

The pongo understood then that in that dream, things were different. There, wealth did not rule, nor fine clothes, nor a loud voice. What mattered there was justice.

When he woke up, it was still dark. The pongo opened his eyes and took a deep breath. He remembered every part of the dream. He stayed thinking for a long time, lying there in silence.

The next morning, he went to work as always. The master still gave orders and walked around with an air of greatness. But inside, the pongo no longer felt the same. He was still humble, yes, but now he carried a truth in his heart.

Later, he gathered courage and went up to the master.

—Sir—he said respectfully—, last night I had a dream, and I want to tell it to you.

The master looked at him with curiosity.

—Then speak —he said.

And the pongo began to tell his dream, step by step, without hurrying. He told him about the other world, about the two angels, about the shining honey and the dark substance. He told him about the first order and then the second. Every word fell into the air like a stone falling into water.

As he listened, the master's face began to change. At first he seemed amused. Then he stopped smiling. And at last he became serious and silent.

The pongo finished telling the dream and lowered his eyes.

—That was all, sir —he said.

The master did not answer right away. Perhaps he understood the message. Perhaps for the first time he thought about all the harm he had done with his mockery and contempt. Perhaps he felt shame. No one knows for sure.

But by telling his dream, the pongo had said something very important without shouting or fighting. He had shown that no person is worth less than another, and that treating someone badly can carry a very heavy weight.

And so, the story of the pongo's dream reminds us that all people deserve respect, no matter if they are rich or poor, strong or weak, or whether they have much or very little. Because no one should humiliate another person, and true justice sees what many eyes do not want to see.

THE END

