

Story 4: Story of dog and cat

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Representing: *Roma and lives in Belgrade.*

The Story:

The world came into existence as we know it today on an ordinary afternoon, when a simple housewife was stretching dough for the pies she planned to bake that day. At that fateful moment, it so happened that her child relieved itself on the doorstep of the kitchen. Realizing there was no paper in the house, the housewife was at a loss. Unaware of the consequences of her actions, she took the dough from the table and cleaned the child, not wanting to leave the little one, innocent as it was, in its own filth. However, such ingratitude and arrogance did not escape the Lord's notice. In His wrath and indignation, He retaliated by stripping humanity of everything that allowed them to be so prideful. There was no more flour for making pies and bread, nor any other food or drink. This was their punishment, the price of ingratitude.

At that time, all living beings had their own language – from the ant to the elephant. Likewise, man's friends, the cat and the dog, could speak. Before God took everything from man, the cat and the dog cried out, and He paused to listen to them. The cat spoke first and, with a melodic voice, said: "Lord, I beg you, the child away from the man. Let him bear no more children, let him not bear them and let him love me as he would love his own child. Let him hug me, let him kiss me, and let him give all his food to me." God looked at her but did nothing. Then He turned His gaze to the dog as if waiting for its counsel. The dog, humble, patiently waited before making his request and said: "Dear Lord, if it pleases you, leave man as he is. I will give up my voice. Let me never speak again. Let me only communicate through my thunderous bark, but let the man keep what is his. He does not need to remember me; I will not ask for that from him. All I ask of you is to leave him a seed so that he can feed me."

God considered both supplicants and smiled. The cat, a cunning, selfish, and deceitful creature, had enjoyed its place beside man, sharing in the same comforts, receiving food and affection it hadn't earned with its soul. In contrast, the loyal and devoted dog, in his request, showed humility and goodness, wishing no harm to man. God looked at them both once more, then turned to the dog and said: "My good little friend, I see your wish is sincere and pure, and I see the light in your soul, so it shall be as you ask." The cat bristled, her eyes bulging, and her fur turned sharp as needles, and she, no longer melodious, hissed: "What do you mean by this, Lord? To give this foul, filthy creature command over the world? That's an injustice!" The dog responded: "I know, dear sister, you do not love me. I know you would scratch out my eyes with your claws if you could, but your life will remain the same. I am the one who will sit outside, in the rain, snow, and storms, chained, protecting you all. I am the one whom man will often forget, the one who will rejoice at man's presence, and it is precisely my joy that will make you more beloved than I." The cat stared at him, each of his words stabbing her like a needle. "And you will be the one who sits in warmth every day, eating the crumbs man makes, being cherished and petted while I sit alone outside, guarding. But that's fine; one day, the burden I have taken upon myself will tip the scales in the afterlife in my favour."



The cat, without another word, retreated into the shadows, and God completed His work, taking away all of humanity's abundance, leaving them with only one seed, with which man fed the dog. That afternoon, the dog initiated the world anew through the cycle of sowing the seed into the ground from which plants would grow. Over time, the world regained most of its colour, and man learned to treat what was given to him with dignity. Throughout all this time, the dog remained outside, fulfilling his duty without tear or complaint, while the cat remained inside, reigning over her small kingdom. But even she knew that one day, when she crossed to the other side, she would regret what she had been, and the dog would finally find peace and contentment.