



The Ramadan lantern story

Once upon a time there was a young prince who lived alone with his father, the caliph, after his mother died. The caliph married again, but his new wife was often unkind to the prince. The caliph didn't care much and this made the young prince very unhappy.

Short story



On the fifteenth day of the month of Sha'aban, the son said to his pet pigeon, 'Let's not stay here any more. Let's run away because nobody here cares about us.' So they both ran away into the jungle.

After a long time, they came to a grand palace which belonged to a lonely ghoulish man. 'This is the awful ghoulish man's palace,' said the prince, 'but we are very hungry and cold and he might be asleep. Let's sneak in and rest till the morning.' But the ghoulish man wasn't asleep. He was watching them.

The prince found a bed and fell asleep. When he woke up, he was surrounded by golden prison bars: he was in a jail! The ghoulish man said, 'I know all about your evil stepmother. Your father doesn't love you. I'm lonely, so I'll keep you here as my pet!'

The little prince pleaded with the ghoulish man to set him free. Finally, the ghoulish man growled, 'I'll send your pigeon home. If the caliph misses you, he'll follow the pigeon back here and save you. If not, you'll spend the rest of your life here!' The pigeon raced to the caliph's palace.

Since his son had run away, the caliph cried and prayed every night that he would see him before the holy month of Ramadan. On the last night of Sha'aban, he felt that his son was close. He opened the window and found the pigeon sitting on the ledge! He knew that he had to follow the pigeon, but it was really dark.

A princess, the caliph's sister, suggested that everyone in the palace held a candle and lit the way for the grieving father. In minutes the news spread. Every man, woman and child held a candle and followed the caliph.



On their way, the children sang songs to celebrate the beginning of the holy month of Ramadan. The prince heard the songs and saw the light from his prison window. He knew it was his father. The ghoul was touched by the whole scene. He whispered, 'I was mistaken. Your father deserves a second chance. Go back home.'

The young prince was reunited with his father. They returned to the caliph's palace and fasted together on the first day of Ramadan. To reward his loyal subjects, the caliph gave them gold lanterns to put outside their houses. Then he ordered his ministers to light the streets and mosques with colourful lamps.

Since that day children have bought lanterns to mark the beginning of the holy month of Ramadan.

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