Reading 1

Fortune and the Poor Man



One day a ragged man was creeping along from house to house. He carried an old wallet in his hand and was asking at every door for a few cents to buy something to eat. As he was grumbling at his misfortune, he kept wondering why it was that folks who had so much money were never satisfied and were always wanting more. “Here,” said he, “is the master of this house—I know him well. He is a good business man, and he made himself wondrously rich a long time ago. Had he been wise, he would have stopped then. He would have turned over his business to someone else, and then he could have spent the rest of his life in ease. What did he do instead? He built ships and sent them to sea to trade with foreign lands. He thought he would get mountains of gold.”



“However, there were great storms on the water; his ships were wrecked, and his riches were swallowed up by the waves. Now all his hopes lie at the bottom of the sea, and his great wealth has vanished.” “There are many such cases. Men seem to never be satisfied unless they gain the whole world.” “As for me, if I had only enough to eat and to buy clothing, I would not want anything more.” Just at that moment, Fortune came down the street. She saw the poor man and stopped. She said to him: “Listen! I have long wished to help you. Hold your wallet, and I will pour this gold into it, but only on this condition: all that falls into the wallet shall be pure gold, but every piece that falls upon the ground shall become dust. Do you understand?” “Oh, yes, I understand,” said the poor man. “Then be careful,” said Fortune. “Your wallet is old, so do not load it too heavily.”



The beggar was so glad that he could hardly wait. He quickly opened his wallet, and a stream of yellow dollars poured into it. The wallet grew heavy. “Is that enough?” asked Fortune. “Not yet.” “Isn't it cracking?” “Never fear.” The beggar's hands began to tremble. Ah, if the gold would only pour forever! “You are the richest man in the world now!” “Just a little more, add just a handful or two.” “There, it's full. The wallet will burst.” “But it will hold just a little more!” Another piece was added, and the wallet split. The treasure fell upon the ground and turned to dust. The beggar had nothing now but his empty wallet, and it was torn from top to bottom. He was as poor as before.

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Questions:

1.Why did the master of the house lose all of his money?

a. A robber stole it from him

b. His ships sank at sea.

c. His treasure turned to dust.

d. He gave it all away to the poor.

2.What is the poor man's wallet like?

a. red

b. fancy

c. slippery

d. old

3.Which word best describes the poor man?

a. greedy

b. happy

c. wise

d. weak

4.Why do you think Fortune gives the gold to the poor man?

a. He has too much gold already

b. to teach him a lesson

c. He likes the way the beggar dresses

d. to make him the richest man in the world

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