# The Nobleman and the Dog

In one village there was a peasant, and not far away lived a nobleman in his estate. Once the peasant happened to pass by the estate. The nobleman had a vicious dog. The dog attacked the peasant, and he struck the dog with his staff and killed it.

The nobleman took the matter to court. The peasant was summoned to stand trial against the nobleman. And so when they came to court, the judges asked the nobleman:

"What do you want from this peasant, what punishment should be given him?"

"Here is what I want to do — strip him of his human status and voice, and let him become a dog, guard my estate and live at my court."

Well, of course, that is what the court decided. They stripped the peasant of his human status and forced him to live with the nobleman, guarding the nobleman's property.

The peasant had to come to the nobleman and take the place of the dog: bark at night and guard his property.

And so at one fine time he made a deal with thieves:

"Come, thieves, on such-and-such a night, rob the place, and then we will split it."

And so one night the thieves came. When the nobleman got up in the morning, he saw that a great deal of his property had been carried off. And he filed a suit against the dog, saying it had guarded poorly: there had been thieves and a robbery. When they came to court, the judges began to ask the nobleman:

"Well, nobleman, tell us, did your dog bark that night?"

"It barked very well, it barked loudly that night when the theft took place."

Then the judges answered the nobleman:

"So what do you want from the dog? What else could it have done, since it has been deprived of the human voice?"

And the judges decided that the dog was in the right, and gave him the right to speak with a human voice again.

Then the nobleman was dissatisfied with the court and took the peasant to the city for a retrial. And they went there together. They drove into the forest. And it was already dark. The peasant said to the nobleman:

"Look, nobleman, a bear is standing in the road!"

"Well, peasant, scare it off!"

"No, I won't bark now — I have regained my human rights. You bark, nobleman, or the bear may eat us."

"Peasant, bark a little, at least show me how."

The peasant barked a little and said:

"Now you bark, or the bear will eat us."

And so the nobleman began to bark. And the peasant said to him:

"Bark, nobleman, bark, the bear has come closer!"

And he himself sat there, not laughing. And the nobleman barked so long that dawn broke. The peasant said:

"Stop, nobleman, stop, don't bark! It wasn't a bear, it was a snag we imagined."

Then the nobleman spoke:

"Ah, so you deceived me! Now I will hand you over to the court."

"Well then, nobleman, hand me over, and I will tell everyone that you barked like a dog all night."

"Listen, peasant, I will let you go home and give you money and a cow. Go, live in peace, just don't tell anyone that I barked like a dog!"

And so they returned home. The nobleman gave the peasant a cow and money, and the peasant went home.

And from then on he lived without want, ever since he had outwitted the nobleman.