



ONCE UPON
PLANET NOG

THE TRUTH OF THE PURPLE WALLS

"King Bloggish would like for you to paint one of his guest rooms purple," explained Toshgi the Meek to the three palace painters—Misang, Oskorn, and Bershag.

"But how?!" the painters asked.

"Paint is only white," added Bershag. "We've never had purple paint."

Toshgi answered, "Because of the great love all in Nog have for the color purple, the kind and generous King Bloggish would like to make purple paint available to everyone, so that not only our clothes, but our houses and carts can be purple as well."

"A marvelous new idea!" exclaimed Misang.

"I would love to have purple walls in my house," said Oskorn. "But how do we make purple paint?"

"As you know, Lord Tray oversees the extraction of purple sap from the purplish tree which we use to dye our clothes. King Bloggish has invited him to stay at the castle this weekend to discuss the need to extract a greater quantity of sap, so that there is enough to make purple paint," explained Toshgi.

"The king wishes to have the walls painted purple in the room where Lord Tray will stay, so that he will see how beautiful purple paint looks."



On Thursday morning the three painters met in a room at the east end of the king's palace to paint the walls purple for the king's guest, Lord Tray.

"Here's the white paint," said Bershag as he set a heavy pail down in the room.

"And here's the purple sap." Oskorn pulled a large flask from his pocket and began to pour some of the sap into the white paint.



Soon the paint in the bucket was a brilliant purple hue. The three painters dipped in their brushes to begin painting. By the middle of the afternoon, all the walls inside the room were bright purple. The men stood back to admire their work with satisfaction.

"King Bloggish will be so very pleased," said Bershag.

"Oh yes," agreed Oskorn. "These walls are beautiful."

"I'll return tonight after dinner to make sure it has dried properly," said Misang. And the three friends retired to dinner.



It was evening when Misang entered the dark room, so he switched on the light.

He gasped. The walls were not the bright purple he remembered. In fact, he could barely make out a faint purple tint. It was obvious they had not added enough purple sap to the white paint. Misang hurried to find his fellow painters.

"There's no time to repaint the walls and have them dry before Lord Tray arrives tomorrow morning," said Misang. "First thing tomorrow we must tell the king that we failed in painting the walls purple."

"King Bloggish will be so very disappointed," said Bershag.

The three friends stood in quiet despair for a moment, when Oskorn finally said, "Perhaps, he doesn't need to know."

Misang looked at Oskorn questioningly. "But how can we not tell him?"

"We can make sure the curtains are closed, so the sun will shine through them," Oskorn suggested. Then King Bloggish and Lord Tray will see purple walls!"

"Yes, that would work. We saw the painted walls with the sun casting a bright purple hue over them as it shone through the purple curtains," said Bershag. "That is what made the walls look a brighter purple than they were."

"But that's dishonest!" Misang retorted. "It's wrong to lie!"

"We won't actually be lying," said Bershag. "We can truthfully tell the king we painted the walls purple because that's what we did! We simply didn't know that the sun shining through the curtains was unexpectedly enhancing the color."

"I-I don't want to lie," said Misang.

"Bershag and I will explain it to the king," said Oskorn. "You can stand there quietly."

"The plan sounds good to me," Bershag agreed.



"What spectacular color and enhancement!" exclaimed Lord Tray as he admired the purple walls.

"I want you to meet the painters who did this fine work," said King Bloggish. "Please meet Misang, Bershag, and Oskorn."

"You have done a splendid job," said Lord Tray.

"You see!" said Oskorn after the king and Lord Tray walked away. "That was easy. King Bloggish and Lord Tray were pleased with the purple walls as they were."

"But when the sun goes down tonight and Lord Tray turns on the light switch, the walls will no longer look purple," said Misang.

"We'll shine the balcony light through the curtains," said Bershag.

"Something will go wrong," said Misang. "It's better to be honest. I think we should tell the king about our mistake."

"NO!!" shouted Oskorn and Bershag.

"We can wire the balcony light so it can't be turned off," suggested Oskorn.



Bershag agreed, and while Misang felt exceedingly uncomfortable with how the situation was developing, he didn't continue his protests.



That night Lord Tray retired to his room only to find the balcony light brightly shining through his curtains. He flipped the light switch, but it seemed to have been broken, and the light remained on.

Lord Tray tossed and turned throughout the night, trying to shield his eye from the bright light coming through the curtains. The next morning, he arrived at the breakfast table with a puffy, red eye.

"You look as if you hardly slept last night," said King Bloggish, as he greeted his visitor.

"The balcony light switch seems to be broken. I'm not accustomed to sleeping in a room so well lit," answered Lord Tray. "However, I did enjoy the purple walls, which I gazed at all night long."

After breakfast King Bloggish summoned the three painters. "You were in Lord Tray's room the night before he arrived. Did you notice the balcony light would not turn off? And if so, why didn't you have it fixed?" asked King Bloggish. "Lord Tray said he was kept awake due to that light shining into his room."

Misang stood quietly while his two friends answered.

Oskorn went first. "We noticed it was broken, but we couldn't find an electrician to repair it."

Bershag continued. "So I tried to repair it, and thought I had."

"Yes," said Oskorn, "we thought it was working."

King Bloggish turned to Misang. "Misang, you have remained quiet. Is there something you wish to say?"

Misang could not keep quiet any longer, and went on—to the dismay of his partners—to explain the truth about the pale purple paint to the king. His friends hung their heads in shame. Then Misang, Bershag, and Oskorn apologized to the king for not having told him the truth earlier.

"My dear friends," said the king, "I'm sad to discover you have been dishonest in covering up a mistake instead of telling me about the problem. We've always enjoyed honesty between ourselves, have we not?"

"Yes, Your Majesty, always," replied Misang.

"Absolutely!" added Oskorn.

"We're so ashamed," said Bershag. "Please forgive us. Please tell us what we can do to help set things right."

"To begin with," the king answered, "I want the three of you to tell Lord Tray the truth about the paint, and how you broke that light switch in order to cover up your mistake. Poor Lord Tray hardly slept a wink all night long.

"And though I know today is your day off, this afternoon I want you to paint the walls purple in another room of the castle. Lord Tray can move there once the paint has dried."

The three painters headed off to apologize to Lord Tray, who graciously accepted their apologies.





The three painters mixed a triple dose of purple sap into the white paint this time, and made sure the curtains were open. When they had finished painting, the walls were a beautiful, bright purple, even with the curtains open.

Lord Tray hired more workers to extract more purple sap from the trees. With time the walls inside the Noggians' houses were shades of vibrant purple.

"Long live King Bloggish," shouted the people of Nog, "for he has given us purple paint!"

"Long live King Bloggish," exclaimed Misang to his two friends, "for he has shown us true mercy!"

"And he reminded us of the importance of telling the truth," said Oskorn.

"May we always be known for our honesty, and never again try to cover up our mistakes with an untruth," said Bershag.

"He that covers his sins will not prosper, but whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy"
(Proverbs 28:13 NKJV).

It was a relief for me when Misang told the king what had really happened. It's difficult to cover up the truth with a lie, as one falsehood often leads to another.

Have you ever been tempted to lie to cover up a mistake that you have made? It might seem difficult to tell the truth, but you'll be relieved and happier once you do.

We should have told the king right away about our mistake with the paint.

S&S link: Character Building: Values and Virtues: Truthfulness-1b

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