

# A Tale of Two Loving Brothers

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In a village in far-off Khurasan lived Shahryar, an honest hardworking youth and his brother Hoshyar, an indolent book-worm, who was fond of food but loathed to work. When news of a job at Akhoonji's rich farm reached their hungry ears, Shahryar begged his brother to stay back and let him go.

Mean though he was. Akhoonji was reputed never to break his word. The injustice and cruelty he delighted in was from the diabolical cleverness of his mind.

"Hark now lad, for I will not say it again," Akhoonji told Shahryar. "Work and eat exactly as instructed. Lest you give up the job, there's no money for you; on the other hand if sack you from work, a whole year's pay is yours—and that's a hundred pieces of silver!

"To work now ye miserable brat, or be off with you!"

Tired and panting for breath, Shahryar finished gathering hay and feeding the cattle. But Akhoonji had forbidden him to use the oxen to till the land; so poor Shahryar pulled the plough with his own shoulders.

At the end of the day, wincing with blisters and bruises, the new farm hand sat down to eat.

"Beware lad, for you must eat your loaf without breaking the edge; and, what's more—eat this honey without opening the lid!" So saying, Akhoonji personally offered him large, disc-shaped loaves of bread, and a big pot of honey.

"Eat as much as you like," guffawed Akhoonji, "for there's a lot more of it in my larder!"

Poor Shahryar went to sleep without food, for how could he eat bread without breaking the edge or honey without opening the lid?

"What do you think of that, woman!" Akhoonji snickered at his wife, as both of them waddled to their bedroom.

"Generous Aqa!" she simpered. "Several loaves of bread and a whole pot of honey—all for a miserable wretch . . . why, even our hounds don't feast half as well; and to think people call you cruel!"

Shahryar worked for another day and yet another; but simply couldn't go on with an empty stomach. Before long, tired and forlorn, bruised and fatigued, hungry as he'd never been, Shahryar limped back home. Read the rest of this story in Expressions Magazine. [Download it today!](#)