

The Farmer's Assistant



Long ago, a rich farmer lived. He grew large amounts of food and raised animals that he sold and traded with others in the surrounding counties. He had an assistant, Tryge, who cared for his animals and helped him in the fields. Tryge had worked for the farmer for twenty years. The farmer depended on Tryge's work and considered him a friend. Tryge lived in a small house with his family on the rich man's property. He did not grow rich, but he was happy and never lacked for any food, shelter, or needs for his family. One year, the rich man decided that in the autumn he would leave his farm for a month to travel to his brother's home about sixty miles away. The other traders asked him who he would trust to watch his farm and manage the stores of food and the trading. The rich man said that his assistant, Tryge, would manage everything. The other traders laughed at him for his stupidity. "You cannot trust a poor man with all that wealth. He will surely cheat you and steal from you while you are gone."

The rich man was troubled, and he questioned his own judgment. That night he had a dream. In his dream, a small bird perched on the shoulder of a powerful lion. The lion could have eaten the bird, but when it yawned widely, the bird pecked a crumb stuck in the teeth of the lion, and the bird showed no fear. When the farmer awoke, he felt sure of his decision. He walked to the home of his assistant and shared a cup of tea with him. They talked about the day, and they made their plans for the month when the farmer would be gone and Tryge would be in charge.

Questions:

1. What hints in the story tell you that Tryge is trustworthy?
2. Why do the other traders think he would not be trustworthy?
3. How do you think the farmer's dream influenced his decision to trust Tryge?

