

Now comes the sad part of the story. John soon found himself surrounded by robbers who took what little he had and injured him greatly. (The soldiers, though grieved, could not help him, for they were not given any orders to do so--and they only followed orders.)

In desperation, John began to reveal his true identity to the robbers. I'm not sure if they believed him, but, by the time they finished laughing at him and picking apart his story--he wasn't too sure about it himself. The more he said, the more ludicrous is sounded. Finally, he admitted that he must have been dreaming (for such things surely only happen in dreams).

John soon went back to his old way of life, but every now and then, when he got real still, he sometimes thought he had the same dream all over again. But each time he questioned it more and more until he finally quit having that dream.

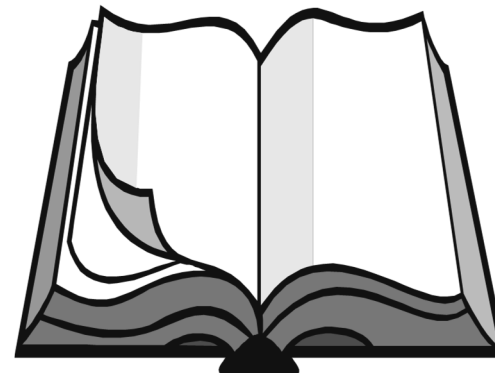
Somehow the book turned up in his path one day and he kept it because of the pleasant dreams it reminded him of--but he knew he couldn't understand it--so he didn't open it. *(A few soldiers were left nearby to patiently wait, just in case John ever did speak the words of the book--so they could act on his behalf.)*

End of Story

My prayer is that you will read The Book (the Bible)--and the book of John is a good place to begin. *(Reading it, thinking about what it says, and trying to live by it has changed who I am and given me love, hope & purpose.)* And, I believe, there are angels waiting to perform what God has said in His Word. (Psalm 103:20). Let God's Word be made flesh **in you** this year!

# The Book

(a short story)



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Once upon a time, in a not-so-far-away place, there lived a small boy who was a beggar. One day a beautiful carriage pulled up beside him and a man from inside beckoned him to enter. Looking down at his rags and remembering all his naughty thoughts and deeds, he ran away. The carriage pursued him



and when he was unable to outrun it and was totally exhausted, he fell into a mud puddle and heard the voice once again tell him to 'come in.' Partly from

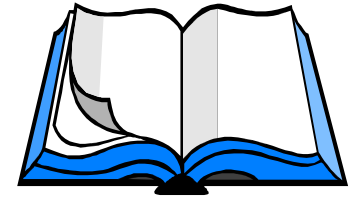
weariness and partly from fear of doing otherwise, he entered the carriage.

Now, this young man knew not his heritage--having been a street beggar and alone for many years.

What happened next greatly frightened him--the stranger told the beggar boy that he had been sent by a king to find the boy---that the boy's real name was 'John' and he was the son of the greatest king in all the world. Finally, John began to understand and grin, and, through his eyes, one could see that he was planning all sorts of mischief. This did not alarm the stranger at all (for he seemed to know the boy better than the boy knew himself).

John was told that the kingdom was all his--as decreed by his father--but that the carriage could not take him there--he had to walk and get there on his own. This puzzled him. He didn't want to walk. After further discussion, the boy was told to get out of the carriage and was given a book.

He was told that in the book were instructions and a map to the kingdom!



His response was: 'O boy, this will be a cinch--like a treasure hunt, I'll be there by tomorrow!'

Now, the man in the carriage grinned. He told John that if he lost his way to simply stand still and be very quiet and wait--the carriage would find him again.

Unknown to John, as he stepped out of the carriage and watched it pull away, a whole company of soldiers was positioned to follow him at a distance. They were dispatched for his safety and were his to command--but

ONLY if he used the words given in the book!

But, unfortunately, not having opened the book--he never did figure that out.

John's first thought was to head north (weren't all the great Kings in the north?) A bright lad, like himself, certainly didn't need any instructions. And, everybody went that way. Just in case, though, he peeked in the book. Greatly to his amazement, it made no sense at all to him, and, not willing to humble himself and ask a more learned person to explain the book--he simply threw it down in a childish tantrum. 'I'll find the way by myself' said the boy and he began to run northward.

The soldiers were horrified that the book had been thrown down, but they quickly fell in step behind John and pursued him without being seen.