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ÉS MÁΣ MESÉK, by Benedek Elek

The face of the king

One day a King was hunting in the fields when he came across a poor farmer. They started to talk, and the King asked the farmer: How much money do you earn a day?

Three copper coins each day, answered the poor farmer.

What do you do with those coins?, asked the King.

I eat the first coin, I invest the second, and I give back the third, said the poor farmer.

I don't understand this riddle, said the King. Explain to me what you meant.

It's quite simple, said the poor farmer. For the first coin I buy bread, and I eat the bread. For the second coin I use to provide for my children. They will support me in my old age, so that's the investment. The third coin I give to my old father, because he raised me and put food on the table. That way I give back.

Now, I understand, said the King. I want you to promise me something. Don't give out the answer to your riddle until you see my face a hundred times.

The poor farmer agreed, and the King went back to the palace, where he bragged to all the people in the palace about the riddle. The people were all ashamed that they couldn't solve the poor farmer's riddle, and one man searched the country until he found the poor farmer, and asked him to explain him the solution to the riddle.

The poor farmer told the man that he promised the King that he would not reveal the answer until he saw the King's face a hundred times.

Well, that's no problem, said the man. He put one hundred gold coins on the table and said: Look at these coins you see the face of the King on each one of them.

The man returned to the palace, and told the King the solution of the riddle. Now, the King got upset, and brought the poor farmer in the palace, and questioned him: Didn't you promise me that you don't give out the answer to the riddle until you see my face a hundred times?

Your highness, I did see your face a hundred times; I saw it on the gold coins your minister gave me.

The King burst into laughter, reached into his pocket, and said to the poor farmer: Here is bag of gold coins to reward your smartness, and here is another bag of gold coins to reward your honesty.

This how the poor farmer become wealthy and was remembered in the village for his intelligence and for always telling the truth.