

The best story ever written -- well, *one* of the best stories -- I mean, I'm not sure it's better than Kafka or Nabokov, but still...

One of the best stories ever is *The Tale of the Hunchback*, from the *Thousand and One Nights*.



In the story, the Emperor's favorite *jester*, a hunchback, accidentally *chokes* to death on a fish bone at the home of a tailor and his wife.

Terrified of the wrath of the Emperor, they dump his body on a doctor, who accidentally trips over him in the dark and thinks *he* killed him.

Then the *doctor* gets rid of the body, tricking someone else into thinking *they* killed the hunchback...

This passing of the corpse just continues, over and over again... Until someone is finally *caught* with the dead body by the city guard.



But when this man is about to be executed for the murder of the Emperor's jester, the story unwinds the other way...

One by one, the men and women who think *they* killed this poor hunchback step forward to confess...

Unable to let anyone else be punished for their crime.



And in typical fairy tale fashion, the Emperor is so amused by all this that he pardons them...

And then, even better, the hunchback turns out to not actually be *dead*, and they're all *rewarded* with riches and titles.

They spent the entire night passing around a supposedly dead body, and they all end up *wealthy* for it...

Because they made some old man laugh.

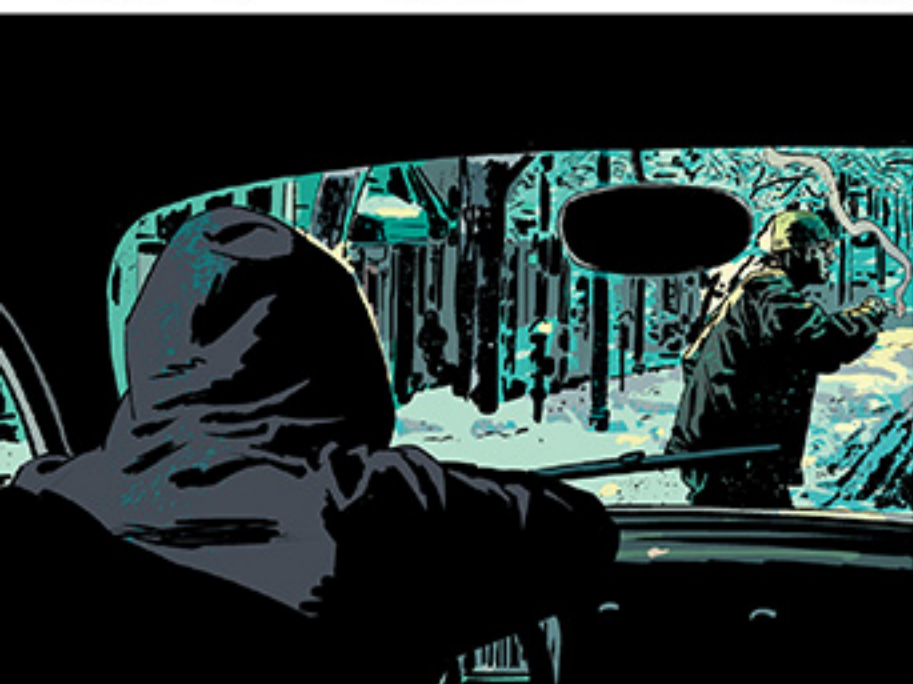




So *why* is this the best story ever?

Not just because it's inventive, or because even though it's **ancient** it still totally makes you laugh.

No, it's because it tells us a very simple *truth* about people...



They all want to *get away* with it.

Whatever *crime* they've committed, whatever they've done... They want to blame it on *somebody else* and run the **away**.



And I know what you're thinking -- that I should be focusing on the *positive* message instead.

All those people stepping up to do the right thing in the end... But I don't know.

That implies this is a story about being unable to live with *guilt*, but I don't think that's what it is.

I mean, look at what happens... These are awful people, who all think they've *murdered* this poor hunchback...

And they get **rewarded**... For trying to get away with it.

I think the part where they all try to do the right thing is a lie, put in there to reassure little kids...

So they can drift off to sleep believing that people are good underneath everything, no matter what.

But I think whoever first wrote this story knew the truth...





That in *real life*, the bad sleep well... And guilt doesn't trouble them.

Hell, real bad men? They don't even live in the *same world* as we do...

When they look around themselves, they see a whole other reality...



They see *sheep*, and they're looking through the eyes of *wolves*.

I know it's true, because *I'm* a wolf now, too...



Aw crap -- I [REDACTED] did it *again*, didn't I?