Review of The Endless Tale by James Baldwin

The Endless Tale is an interesting short story which takes a dig at some people who think that even the longest of the stories are too short for them. The name itself is an antithesis to the length of the story.

The story introduces us to its antagonist, the King of the Far East, at the beginning. He is shown as a man who has no relation whatsoever to his duties as a king and just relaxes all day listening to stories. He is shown to be never tired of hearing stories no matter how long it goes and also says to the story-teller that the story is too short.

The story further progresses and shows that the King puts up a challenge to his people to tell him an endless story and if successful, his daughter as a wife and becoming an heir will be the prize. But if failed to do so then their head will be cut off. This is where the story gets interesting.

As the punishment was severe not many people were confident to take up the challenge, one story-teller even got his head cut off for a story that lasted three months. Enter the protagonist, the story-teller of the South.

He told the king he would tell him a story about locusts to which the king agreed. The story he told was not that long but he made it an endless one using his wits. He kept on continuing his story by saying “Then another locust went in and carried away a grain of corn.” And he continued this for two years!

At last the king lost his patience and announced him the winner and the king forever lost his interest in listening to stories. All-in-all James Baldwin managed to tell his readers to never underestimate a short story.