In a distant kingdom, there lived a wise king who had a loyal advisor whom he trusted above all others. The king valued his advisor's wisdom and never sought counsel from anyone else if he could avoid it. One day, when the king was called away to a neighboring kingdom for urgent matters of state, he visited a market renowned for its magical artifacts and purchased a crystal ball. This crystal ball was not only enchanted to speak, but it also had the ability to reveal all that had transpired before it. He brought it back to his palace and asked his advisor to place it in his study, instructing him to take great care of it while he was away. Then the king departed. Upon his return, he asked the crystal ball what had happened in his absence, and the ball revealed some things that made the king question his advisor's loyalty.

The advisor, thinking that one of the palace servants must have been spreading rumors about him, was told it was the crystal ball. He decided to teach it a lesson. When the king was away again for a short trip, the advisor instructed one servant to place a candle beneath the crystal ball's stand; another to wave a fan above it, creating a draft; and a third to hold a piece of black velvet in front of it, blocking its view. The servants did this for part of the night, and they did it very effectively.

The next day, when the king returned, he asked the crystal ball what it had seen. The ball replied, "My noble king, the flickering light, the cold draft, and the darkness troubled me so much all night long that I cannot tell you what I have endured."

The king, knowing that there had been no disturbances in the palace that night, concluded that the crystal ball was not speaking the truth. So he took it from its stand and cast it so violently against the wall that it shattered into pieces. However, he soon regretted his actions, for he discovered that the crystal ball had indeed been telling the truth.