

The Greenwood Library of

world folktales

STORIES FROM THE GREAT COLLECTIONS

volume three

Europe



EDITED BY THOMAS A. GREEN

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of
World Folktales

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Jack Zipes, Advisory Editor



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Introduction to Volume 3

Europe is the westernmost peninsula of the Eurasian-African landmass, including the British Isles and Iceland far to the west. To the south, the Strait of Gibraltar establishes the boundary between the Iberian Peninsula and Africa. The eastern boundary between Asia and Europe is not so clearly defined, however. For purposes of *The Greenwood Library of World Folktales*, Europe includes not only the territory west of the Ural Mountains, the Ural River, and Caspian Sea, but those nations of the former Soviet Union such as Georgia, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan with cultural as well as political ties to Russia. The following divisions have been established for this collection: Britain and Ireland, Central Europe, Eastern Europe, the Mediterranean, the Nordic countries, and Western Europe.

Britain and Ireland have preserved a traditional narrative repertoire influenced by an indigenous Celtic culture and a culture of Germanic invaders who began arriving in the fifth century B.C.E. Later influences included Viking incursions and settlement in the ninth century and the Norman Conquest of the late eleventh century. The Celtic heritage appears not only in tales from Ireland (Éire) and those constituent countries of the United Kingdom that maintained Celtic identities into the twenty-first century (Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales), but also in Brittany across the English Channel and in the English county of Cornwall (see introductory notes to “Jack the Giant-Killer,” page 3 for further discussion). The preservation of traditional narratives in the British Isles was stimulated by the Celtic Revival of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, which sought to foster an appreciation for the art that gave voice to Celtic identity. One product of this cultural renaissance is “Death of Cuchulain” (page 39). Local legends (for example, “The Legend of Savaddan Lake,” page 61) and internationally distributed *märchens* (see, for example, “The Red Calf,” page 58 and “Lady Featherflight,” page 12) are well represented, also.

Central Europe, for purposes of this collection, includes those countries associated with the political entities formerly known as Austria-Hungary and

Prussia (Austria, the Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Slovakia, Slovenia) and Switzerland. Historically, Central Europe constituted of a buffer zone between the Ottoman Empire and the Western European nations. This historical experience, as well as the Magyar founders of Hungary, is called forth in “The Boy Who Could Keep a Secret” (page 96). Just as the appreciation and collection of the Celtic folklore of Britain and Ireland was furthered by the Celtic Revival, the study of German folktales was inspired by the work of brothers Jacob (1785–1863) and Wilhelm (1786–1859) Grimm. Although the Grimms were not the first to collect and publish German folktales, their *Kinder und Hausmärchen* (“Children’s and Household Tales”) has appeared in multiple editions; the individual tales have been included in hundreds of anthologies, and among the general public they remain the most well-known collectors of folk narrative. Variants of seven of their classic tales appear in this volume (cited as Grimm). See Germany (pages 67–95).

Eastern Europe constitutes not only Poland, Romania, Russia, and those countries that were members of the former United Soviet Socialist Republic (for example, Belarus, Georgia, and Ukraine), but also groups strongly associated with Eastern Europe that were dispersed across national borders both within and outside Eastern Europe. The two of the latter groups include the Ashkenazic Jewish community and the Roma, or Romani, most widely known as the gypsies—a label considered derogatory by group members. Narratives told by the Ashkenazim range from personal experience narratives recalling religious persecution (see, for example, “Return of a Cantonist,” page 141 and “Contempt for His Torturers,” page 147) to trickster tales in which a clever member of the group gets the better of a superior adversary (for example, “How Rabbi Joshua Went to Paradise Alive,” page 142). The Roma repertoire commonly recounts the folk beliefs of the area in which they reside, but in some cases confronts prejudice by presenting group members in a heroic light (see, “Jack and His Golden Snuff-box,” page 163). While many of the tales of Eastern Europe are variants of cross-culturally disseminated tales, they often contextualize the narratives by references to local customs and social institutions. For example, the plot of “The Fisherman and the Boyard’s Daughter” (page 182) is constructed around the customs that control the relationships between peasants and nobility in Romania from the fifteen through the twentieth centuries.

The **Mediterranean** subregion joins Europe, Asia, and Africa, and the Mediterranean Sea has served as a passage for trade goods, people, and ideas for millennia. Among the cultures that arose in this environment were the Classical European civilizations of Greece and Rome. The fact that the sea was one of the preoccupations of Greek antiquity is demonstrated in myths such as “How Theseus Slew the Devourers of Men” (page 231). Despite the Christian character of later Greek folktales, the classical myths appear to have an enduring effect as seen in the motif of the black sail in the modern “The Seven-Headed Serpent” (page 253). Given the access the location of Greece provides to the rest

of Eurasia and Africa, however, it comes as no surprise that other tales such as “The Golden Crab” (page 256) represent common tale types. The Italian tales included in this collection are equally widely distributed. The cultural diversity of Italy notwithstanding, “The Crystal Casket” (page 261), “The Crumb in the Beard” (page 266), and “Cinderella” (page 270) are variants of well-known tales found throughout Europe and most notably included in the collections of the Brothers Grimm. “King Pig” (page 274) is a literary version of the tale later collected by the Grimms as “Hans My Hedgehog” (Grimm 108). Therefore, although the story has the characteristics of literary invention rather than of folk performance, author Giovanni Francesco Straparola (1480–1557) obviously used a traditional tale as his model. The practice of composing literary works by elaborating on traditional tales was put to good use in Western Europe as well.

The narrative examples from the **Nordic Countries** of Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden, and Iceland draw on three bodies of narrative. The tales of the Sami (or Lapps) represent the aboriginal oral traditions of Finland, Norway, and Sweden. As the narratives demonstrate, shamanism and animism play central roles in Sami culture (see, for example, “How Some Wild Animals Became Tame Ones,” page 313, and “How the Stalos Were Tricked,” page 316). A second body of narrative that is central to the Nordic subregion is myth and saga. A selection from “The Prose Edda” (page 292) and “Thor in Peril” (page 298) are drawn from the former, and “From ‘Gisli the Outlaw’” (page 303) illustrates the nature of the Icelandic saga. Finally, the modern Danish folktales “The Suitor” (page 289) and “Peter Ox” (page 285) exemplify the narratives of Nordic folk culture, as distinct from aboriginal narrative or narratives of the “classic” period.

Much of the subregion **Western Europe**, in the broadest sense of that term, has been treated elsewhere in this introduction under more specific categories (for example, Central Europe). The following comments, therefore, focus on France and the Iberian Peninsula as representing the Western European subregion. France, which shares borders with both Central European and Mediterranean countries and coasts on both the Mediterranean Sea and the English Channel, has had the opportunity to absorb diverse European traditions in addition to the aboriginal Celtic, Romanized Celtic, and Germanic cultures that provided the raw materials for French regional cultures. The Basques residing in the Pyrenees, a mountain range partitioning off the Iberian Peninsula from France, constitute one of these distinctive folk groups. The Basques maintain an intense sense of cultural identity that comes to life in their narrative traditions (see, for example, “Roldan’s Bugle Horn,” page 339). Unique customs and folk beliefs also shape their tales, as in “The Grateful Tartaro and the Heren-Suge” (page 350). France, like Italy and Germany, developed literary versions of traditional tales, narratives that are more widely known to contemporary readers than their folk models. This literary tradition gave rise, in fact, to the phrase “fairy tale” (see notes for “The Story of Pretty Goldilocks,” page 364) and the

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fictional persona “Mother Goose” (see notes for “Bluebeard,” page 360). On the other side of the Pyrenees, the tales of the Iberian Peninsula blended the European Catholic worldview with North African (Moorish) Islamic culture. The folktale collections of novelist Cecilia Francisca Josefa De Arrom (1796–1877), writing under the pseudonym of Fernà Caballero, indicate that Moorish influence persisted well into the nineteenth century. Moreover, the tolerant attitudes of Moorish Spain (Al-Andalus) and the accessibility of the Iberian Peninsula to North Africa allowed the Sephardim (Jews who traced their origins to Spain and Portugal) to flourish from around the eighth century until their expulsion following the “Reconquest” of the subregion by Spain and Portugal in the late fifteenth century. “The Saragossan Purim” (page 379) and “The Slave’s Fortune” (page 380) are products of Sephardic traditional narratives dating from the post-expulsion period.

EUROPE

Britain and Ireland

ENGLAND

JACK THE GIANT-KILLER

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Hartland, Edwin Sidney. *English Fairy and Other Folktales*. London: Walter Scott, 1890, 3–17.

Date: Unavailable

Original Source: Chapbooks

National Origin: England

Sharing the island of Great Britain with Scotland and Wales, England is the largest of the four constituent countries of the United Kingdom: England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales. The county of Cornwall is located on a peninsula west of Devon and extending southwest into the Atlantic Ocean. Historically, Cornwall has been noted as a mining region and elements of the tale reflect this occupation. Jack overcomes his first giant adversary using a miner's shovel and pickaxe, and in many of his adventures, he retrieves treasure from subterranean regions. Jack accomplishes his goals by wit and makes the world safe for humanity. Therefore, he serves the functions of **culture hero** by using the means of **trickster**, a common practice in **myth**. While "Jack the Giant-Killer" (AT 328) does not meet all the criteria of myth, the period of Arthur's reign in England is used here and elsewhere (see "The History of Tom Thumb," page 21, for example) to denote a long-ago age embodying more possibilities than the historical past of performers and audiences. The tale as published by Hartland was collated from chapbooks. The term chapbook refers to pamphlets, cheaply printed and widely distributed, that served as a medium of entertainment, current news, and history. The news most often consisted of rumor, and the

history was unreliable. The chapbooks, however, were important media for popular culture well into the nineteenth century.

In the reign of King Arthur, there lived in the county of Cornwall, near the Land's End of England, a wealthy farmer who had one only son called Jack. He was brisk and of a ready lively wit, so that whatever he could not perform by force and strength he completed by ingenious wit and policy. Never was any person heard of that could worst him, and he very often even baffled the learned by his sharp and ready invention.

In those days the Mount of Cornwall was kept by a huge and monstrous giant of eighteen feet in height, and about three yards in compass, of a fierce and grim countenance, the terror of all the neighboring towns and villages. He lived in a cave in the midst of the Mount, and would not suffer any one else to live near him. His food was other men's cattle, which often became his prey, for whensoever he wanted food he would wade over to the mainland, where he would furnish himself with whatever came in his way. The good folk, at his approach, forsook their habitations, while he seized on their cattle, making nothing of carrying half-a-dozen oxen on his back at a time; and as for their sheep and hogs, he would tie them round his waist like a bunch of bandoliers. This course he had followed for many years, so that all Cornwall was impoverished by his depredations.

One day Jack, happening to be present at the town hall when the magistrates were sitting in council about the giant, asked what reward would be given to the person who destroyed him. The giant's treasure, they said, was the recompense. Quoth Jack, "Then let me undertake it."

So he furnished himself with a horn, shovel, and pickaxe, and went over to the Mount in the beginning of a dark winter's evening, when he fell to work, and before morning had dug a pit twenty-two feet deep, and nearly as broad, covering it over with long sticks and straw. Then strewing a little mould upon it, it appeared like plain ground. This completed, Jack placed himself on the contrary side of the pit, farthest from the giant's lodging, and, just at the break of day, he put the horn to his mouth, and blew, Tantivy, Tantivy.

This unexpected noise aroused the giant, who rushed from his cave, crying, "You incorrigible villain, are you come here to disturb my rest? You shall pay dearly for this. Satisfaction I will have, and this it shall be, I will take you whole and broil you for breakfast," which he had no sooner uttered, than tumbling into the pit, he made the very foundations of the Mount to shake.

"Oh, giant," quoth Jack, "where are you now? Oh faith, you are gotten now into Lob's Pound, where I will surely plague you for your threatening words: what do you think now of broiling me for your breakfast? Will no other diet serve you but poor Jack?" Thus having tantalized the giant for a while, he gave him a most weighty knock with his pickaxe on the very crown of his head, and killed him on the spot.

This done, Jack filled up the pit with earth, and went to search the cave, which he found contained much treasure. When the magistrates heard of this, they made a declaration he should henceforth be termed Jack the Giant-Killer, and presented him with a sword and an embroidered belt, on which were written these words in letters of gold—

Here's the right valiant Cornish man,
Who slew the giant Cormelian.

The news of Jack's victory soon spread over all the West of England, so that another giant, named Blunderbore, hearing of it, vowed to be revenged on the little hero, if ever it was his fortune to light on him. This giant was the lord of an enchanted castle situated in the midst of a lonesome wood. Now Jack, about four months afterwards, walking near this wood in his journey to Wales, being weary, seated himself near a pleasant fountain and fell fast asleep. While he was enjoying his repose, the giant, coming for water, there discovered him, and knew him to be the far-famed Jack, by the lines written on the belt. Without ado, he took Jack on his shoulders and carried him towards his enchanted castle.

Now, as they passed through a thicket, the rustling of the boughs awakened Jack, who was strangely surprised to find himself in the clutches of the giant. His terror was not yet begun, for on entering the castle, he saw the ground strewed with human bones, the giant telling him his own would ere long increase them. After this the giant locked poor Jack in an immense chamber, leaving him there while he went to fetch another giant living in the same wood to share in Jack's destruction. While he was gone, dreadful shrieks and lamentations affrighted Jack, especially a voice which continually cried:

Do what you can to get away,
Or you'll become the giant's prey;
He's gone to fetch his brother, who
Will kill, likewise devour you too.

This dreadful noise had almost distracted Jack, who, going to the window, beheld afar off the two giants coming towards the castle. "Now," quoth Jack to himself, "my death or my deliverance is at hand." Now, there were strong cords in a corner of the room in which Jack was, and two of these he took, and made a strong noose at the end; and while the giants were unlocking the iron gate of the castle he threw the ropes over each of their heads. Then drawing the other ends across a beam, and pulling with all his might, he throttled them. Then, seeing they were black in the face, and sliding down the rope, he came to their heads, when they could not defend themselves, and drawing his sword, slew them both.

Then, taking the giant's keys, and unlocking the rooms, he found three fair ladies tied by the hair of their heads, almost starved to death. "Sweet ladies," quoth Jack, "I have destroyed this monster and his brutish brother, and obtained

your liberties.” This said, he presented them with the keys, and so proceeded on his journey to Wales.

Having but little money, Jack found it well to make the best of his way by traveling as fast as he could, but losing his road, he was benighted, and could not get a place of entertainment until, coming into a narrow valley, he found a large house, and by reason of his present needs took courage to knock at the gate.

But what was his surprise when there came forth a monstrous giant with two heads; yet he did not appear so fiery as the others were, for he was a Welsh giant, and what he did was by private and secret malice under the false show of friendship. Jack, having told his condition to the giant, was shown into a bedroom, where, in the dead of night, he heard his host in another apartment muttering these words:

Though here you lodge with me this night,
You shall not see the morning light:
My club shall dash your brains outright!

“Say’st thou so,” quoth Jack; “that is like one of your Welsh tricks, yet I hope to be cunning enough for you.” Then, getting out of bed, he laid a billet in the bed in his stead, and hid himself in a corner of the room. At the dead time of the night in came the Welsh giant, who struck several heavy blows on the bed with his club, thinking he had broken every bone in Jack’s skin. The next morning Jack, laughing in his sleeve, gave him hearty thanks for his night’s lodging.

“How have you rested?” quoth the giant; “did you not feel anything in the night?”

“No,” quoth Jack, “nothing but a rat, which gave me two or three slaps with her tail” With that, greatly wondering, the giant led Jack to breakfast, bringing him a bowl containing four gallons of hasty pudding.

Being loath to let the giant think it too much for him, Jack put a large leather bag under his loose coat, in such a way that he could convey the pudding into it without its being perceived. Then, telling the giant he would show him a trick, taking a knife, Jack ripped open the bag, and out came all the hasty pudding.

Whereupon, saying, “Odds splutters, hur can do that trick hurself,” the monster took the knife, and ripping open his belly, fell down dead.

Now, it fell in these days that King Arthur’s only son requested his father to furnish him with a large sum of money, in order that he might go and seek his fortune in the principality of Wales, where lived a beautiful lady possessed with seven evil spirits. The king did his best to persuade his son from it, but in vain; so at last granted the request, and the prince set out with two horses, one loaded with money, the other for himself to ride upon.

Now, after several days’ travel, he came to a market-town in Wales, where he beheld a vast concourse of people gathered together. The prince demanded the reason of it, and was told that they had arrested a corpse for several large

sums of money which the deceased owed when he died. The prince replied that it was a pity creditors should be so cruel, and said, "Go bury the dead, and let his creditors come to my lodging, and there their debts shall be discharged." They accordingly came, but in such great numbers that before night he had almost left himself moneyless.

Now Jack the Giant-Killer, coming that way, was so taken with the generosity of the prince, that he desired to be his servant. This being agreed upon, the next morning they set forward on their journey together, when, as they were riding out of the town, an old woman called after the prince, saying, "He has owed me twopence these seven years; pray pay me as well as the rest,"

Putting his hand to his pocket, the prince gave the woman all he had left, so that after their day's refreshment, which cost what small spell Jack had by him, they were without a penny between them.

When the sun began to grow low, the king's son said, "Jack, since we have no money, where can we lodge this night?"

But Jack replied, "Master, we'll do well enough for I have an uncle lives within two miles of this place; he is a huge and monstrous giant with three heads; he'll fight five hundred men in armor, and make them to fly before him."

"Alas!" quoth the prince, "what shall we do there? He'll certainly chop us up at a mouthful. Nay, we are scarce enough to fill one of his hollow teeth!"

"It is no matter for that," quoth Jack; "I myself will go before and prepare the way for you; therefore tarry and wait till I return." Jack then rode away full speed, and coming to the gate of the castle, he knocked so loud that he made the neighboring hills resound.

The giant roared out at this like thunder, "Who's there?"

He was answered, "None but your poor Cousin Jack."

Quoth he, "What news with my poor Cousin Jack?"

He replied, "Dear uncle, heavy news, God wot!"

"Prithee," quoth the giant, "what heavy news can come to me? I am a giant with three heads, and besides thou knowest I can fight five hundred men in armor, and make them fly like chaff before the wind."

"Oh, but," quoth Jack, "here's the king's son a-coming with a thousand men in armor to kill you and destroy all that you have!"

"Oh, Cousin Jack," said the giant, "this is heavy news indeed! I will immediately run and hide myself and thou shalt lock, bolt, and bar me in, and keep the keys until the prince is gone." Having secured the giant, Jack fetched his master, when they made themselves heartily merry whilst the poor giant laid trembling in a vault under the ground.

Early in the morning Jack furnished his master with a fresh supply of gold and silver, and then sent him three miles forward on his journey, at which time the prince was pretty well out of the smell of the giant. Jack then returned, and let the giant out of the vault, who asked what he should give him for keeping the castle from destruction.

“Why,” quoth Jack, “I desire nothing but the old coat and cap, together with the old rusty sword and slippers which are at your bed’s head.”

Quoth the giant, “Thou shalt have them; and pray keep them for my sake, for they are things of excellent use. The coat will keep you invisible, the cap will furnish you with knowledge, the sword cuts asunder whatever you strike, and the shoes are of extraordinary swiftness. These may be serviceable to you, therefore take them with all my heart.”

Taking them, Jack thanked his uncle, and then having overtaken his master, they quickly arrived at the house of the lady the prince sought, who, finding the prince to be a suitor, prepared a splendid banquet for him. After the repast was concluded, she wiped his mouth with a handkerchief, saying, “You must show me that handkerchief tomorrow morning, or else you will lose your head.” With that she put it in her bosom.

The prince went to bed in great sorrow, but Jack’s cap of knowledge instructed him how it was to be obtained. In the middle of the night she called upon her familiar spirit to carry her to Lucifer. But Jack put on his coat of darkness and his shoes of swiftness, and was there as soon as her.

When she entered the place of the evil one, she gave the handkerchief to old Lucifer, who laid it upon a shelf, whence Jack took it and brought it to his master, who showed it to the lady the next day, and so saved his life.

On that day, she saluted the prince, telling him he must show her the lips tomorrow morning that she kissed last night, or lose his head. “Ah,” he replied, “if you kiss none but mine, I will”

“That is neither here nor there,” said she; “if you do not, death’s your portion!” At midnight she went as before, and was angry with old Lucifer for letting the handkerchief go.

“But now,” quoth she, “I will be too hard for the king’s son, for I will kiss thee, and he is to show me thy lips.”

Which she did, and Jack, who was standing by, cut off the devil’s head and brought it under his invisible coat to his master, who the next morning pulled it out by the horns before the lady. Thus broke, the enchantment and the evil spirit left her, and she appeared in all her beauty. They were married the next morning, and soon after went to the court of King Arthur, where Jack, for his many great exploits, was made one of the Knights of the Round Table.

Having been successful in all his undertakings, Jack resolved not to remain idle, but to perform what services he could for the honor of his king and country, and besought King Arthur to fit him out with a horse and money to enable him to travel in search of strange and new adventures. “For,” said he, “there are many giants yet living in the remotest part of Wales, to the unspeakable damage of your majesty’s liege subjects; wherefore, may it please you to encourage me, I do not doubt but in a short time to cut them off root and branch, and so rid all the realm of those giants and monsters of nature.” When the king had heard this noble request, he furnished Jack with all necessaries, and Jack started on his

pursuit, taking with him the cap of knowledge, sword of sharpness, shoes of swiftness, and invisible coat, the better to complete the dangerous enterprises which now lay before him.

Jack traveled over vast hills and wonderful mountains, and on the third day came to a large wood, which he had no sooner entered than he heard dreadful shrieks and cries. Casting his eyes round, he beheld with terror a huge giant dragging along a fair lady and a knight by the hair of their heads, with as much ease as if they had been a pair of gloves. At this sight Jack shed tears of pity, and then, alighting from his horse, he put on his invisible coat, and taking with him his sword of sharpness, at length with a swinging stroke cut off both the giant's legs below the knee, so that his fall made the trees to tremble.

At this the courteous knight and his fair lady, after returning Jack their hearty thanks, invited him home, there to refresh his strength after the frightful encounter, and receive some ample reward for his good services. But Jack vowed he would not rest until he had found out the giant's den. The knight, hearing this, was very sorrowful, and replied, "Noble stranger, it is too much to run a second risk; this monster lived in a den under yonder mountain, with a brother more fierce and fiery than himself. Therefore, if you should go thither, and perish in the attempt, it would be a heartbreaking to me and my lady. Let me persuade you to go with us, and desist from any further pursuit."

"Nay," quoth Jack, "were there twenty, not one should escape my fury. But when I have finished my task, I will come and pay my respects to you."

Jack had not ridden more than a mile and a half; when the cave mentioned by the knight appeared to view, near the entrance of which he beheld the giant sitting upon a block of timber, with a knotted iron club by his side, waiting, as he supposed, for his brother's return with his barbarous prey. His goggle eyes were like flames of fire, his countenance grim and ugly, and his cheeks like a couple of large fitches of bacon, while the bristles of his beard resembled rods of iron wire, and the locks that hung down upon his brawny shoulders were like curled snakes or hissing adders.

Jack alighted from his horse, and, putting on the coat of darkness, approached near the giant, and said softly, "Oh! are you there? It will not be long ere I shall take you fast by the beard."

The giant all this while could not see him, on account of his invisible coat, so that Jack, coming up close to the monster, struck a blow with his sword at his head, but, missing his aim, he cut off the nose instead. At this, the giant roared like claps of thunder, and began to lay about him with his iron club like one stark mad. But Jack, running behind, drove his sword up to the hilt in the giant's back, which caused him to fall down dead. This done, Jack cut off the giant's head, and sent it, with his brother's head also, to King Arthur, by a Waggoner he hired for that purpose.

Jack now resolved to enter the giants' cave in search of his treasure, and, passing along through a great many windings and turnings, he came at length to a large room paved with freestone, at the upper end of which was a boiling

caldron, and on the right hand a large table, at which the giants used to dine. Then he came to a window, barred with iron, through which he looked and beheld a vast of miserable captives, who, seeing him, cried out, "Alas! young man, art thou come to be one amongst us in this miserable den?"

"Ay," quoth Jack, "but pray tell me what is the meaning of your captivity?"

"We are kept here," said one, "till such time as the giants have a wish to feast, and then the fattest among us is slaughtered! And many are the times they have dined upon murdered men!"

"Say you so," quoth Jack, and straightway unlocked the gate and let them free, who all rejoiced like condemned malefactors at sight of a reprieve. Then searching the giants' coffers, he shared the gold and silver equally amongst them.

It was about sunrise the next day when Jack, after seeing the captives on their way to their respective places of abode, mounted his horse to proceed on his journey, and, by the help of his directions, reached the knight's house about noon. He was received here with all demonstrations of joy by the knight and his lady, who in an honorable respect to Jack prepared a feast which lasted many days, all the gentry in the neighborhood being of the company. The worthy knight was likewise pleased to present him with a beautiful ring, on which was engraved a picture of the giant dragging the distressed knight and his lady, with this motto:

We are in sad distress, you see,
Under a giant's fierce command,
But gain our lives and liberty
By valiant Jack's victorious hand.

But in the midst of all this mirth a messenger brought the dismal tidings that one Thunderdell, a giant with two heads, having heard of the death of his two kinsmen, came from the northern dales to be revenged on Jack, and was within a mile of the knight's seat, the country people flying before him like chaff. But Jack was no whit daunted, and said, "Let him come! I have a tool to pick his teeth; and you, ladies and gentlemen, walk but forth into the garden, and you shall witness this giant Thunderdell's death and destruction."

The situation of this knight's house was in the midst of a small island encompassed with a moat thirty feet deep and twenty feet wide, over which lay a drawbridge. Wherefore Jack employed men to cut through this bridge on both sides, nearly to the middle; and then, dressing himself in his invisible coat, he marched against the giant with his sword of sharpness. Although the giant could not see Jack, he smelt his approach, and cried out in these words:

Fee, fi, fo, fum
I smell the blood of an English man
Be he alive or be he dead,
I'll grind his bones to make me bread!

"Say'st thou so," said Jack; "then thou art a monstrous miller indeed."

At which the giant cried out again, "Art thou that villain who killed my kinsmen? Then I will tear thee with my teeth, suck thy blood, and grind thy bones to powder."

"You will catch me first," quoth Jack, and throwing off his invisible coat, so that the giant might see him, and putting on his shoes of swiftness, he ran from the giant, who followed like a walking castle, so that the very foundations of the earth seemed to shake at every step. Jack led him a long dance, in order that the gentlemen and ladies might see; and at last, to end the matter, ran lightly over the drawbridge, the giant, in full speed, pursuing him with his club. Then, coming to the middle of the bridge, the giant's great weight broke it down, and he tumbled headlong into the water, where he rolled and wallowed like a whale. Jack, standing by the moat, laughed at him all the while; but though the giant foamed to hear him scoff; and plunged from place to place in the moat, yet he could not get out to be revenged. Jack at length got a cart-rope and cast it over the two heads of the giant, and drew him ashore by a team of horses, and then cut off both his heads with his sword of sharpness, and sent them to King Arthur.

After some time spent in mirth and pastime, Jack, taking leave of the knights and ladies, set out for new adventures. Through many woods he passed, and came at length to the foot of a high mountain. Here, late at night, he found a lonesome house, and knocked at the door, which was opened by an ancient man with a head as white as snow. "Father," said Jack, "have you entertainment for a benighted traveler that has lost his way?"

"Yes," said the old man; "you are right welcome to my poor cottage." Whereupon Jack entered, and down they sat together, and the old man began to discourse as follows:

"Son, I am sensible you are the great conqueror of giants, and behold, my son, on the top of this mountain is an enchanted castle, maintained by a giant named Galligantus, who, by the help of an old conjurer, betrays many knights and ladies into his castle, where by magic art they are transformed into sundry shapes and forms; but, above all, I lament the misfortune of a duke's daughter, whom they fetched from her father's garden, carrying her through the air in a burning chariot drawn by fiery dragons, when they secured her within the castle, and transformed her into the shape of a white hind. And though many knights have tried to break the enchantment, and work her deliverance, yet no one could accomplish it, on account of two dreadful griffins which are placed at the castle gate, and which destroy every one who comes near. But you, my son, being furnished with an invisible coat, may pass by them undiscovered, where on the gates of the castle you will find engraven in large letters by what means the enchantment may be broken."

The old man having ended, Jack gave him his hand, and promised that in the morning he would venture his life to free the lady.

In the morning Jack arose and put on his invisible coat and magic cap and shoes, and prepared himself for the enterprise. Now, when he had reached the top of the mountain he soon discovered the two fiery griffins, but passed them

without fear, because of his invisible coat. When he had got beyond them, he found upon the gates of the castle a golden trumpet hung by a silver chain, under which these lines were engraved:

Whoever shall this trumpet blow,
Shall soon the giant overthrow,
And break the black enchantment straight;
So all shall be in happy state.

Jack had no sooner read this but he blew the trumpet, at which the castle trembled to its vast foundations, and the giant and conjurer were in horrid confusion, biting their thumbs and tearing their hair, knowing their wicked reign was at an end. Then the giant stooping to take up his club, Jack at one blow cut off his head; whereupon the conjurer, mounting up into the air, was carried away in a whirlwind. Thus was the enchantment broken, and all the lords and ladies who had so long been transformed into birds and beasts returned to their proper shapes, and the castle vanished away in a cloud of smoke.

This being done, the head of Galligantus was likewise, in the accustomed manner, conveyed to the Court of King Arthur, where the very next day, Jack followed, with the knights and ladies who had been so honorably delivered. Whereupon, as a reward for his good services, the king prevailed upon the afore-said duke to bestow his daughter in marriage on honest Jack. So married they were, and the whole kingdom was filled with joy at the wedding. Furthermore, the king bestowed on Jack a noble habitation, with a very beautiful estate thereto belonging, where he and his lady lived in great joy and happiness all the rest of their days.

LADY FEATHERFLIGHT

Tradition Bearer: Elizabeth Hoar

Source: Newell, W. W. "Lady Featherflight." *Journal of American Folklore* 6 (1893): 54–62.

Date: 1891

Original Source: England

National Origin: England

The following narrative is based largely on "The Girl as Helper in the Hero's Flight" (AT 313). An episode in which the helpful giant's daughter is imperiled by the foolishness of a group of villagers is substituted for the more common "Forgotten Fiancée" (*Motif D* 2003). The final brief episode of stealing the giant's treasure is reminiscent of "Jack and the Beanstalk" (AT 328).

A poor woman, living on the edge of a wood, came at last to where she found nothing in the cupboard for the next day's breakfast. She called her boy Jack, and said, "You must now go into the wide world; if you stay here, there will be two of us to starve. I have nothing for you but this piece of black bread. On the other side of the forest lies the world. Find your way to it, and gain your living honestly." With that she bade him good-bye and he started. He knew the way some distance into the thickest of the forest, for he had often been there for fagots. But after walking all day, he saw no farm, path, or tree, and knew that he was lost. Still he traveled on and on, as long as the daylight lasted, and then lay down and slept.

The next morning he ate the black bread, and wandered on all day. At night he saw lights before him, and was guided by them to a large palace, where he knocked for a long time in vain. At last the door was opened, and a lovely lady appeared, who said as she saw him, "Go away as quickly as you can. My father will soon come home, and he will surely eat you."

Jack said, "Can't you hide me, and give me something to eat, or I shall fall down dead at your door?"

At first she refused, but afterwards yielded to Jack's prayers, and told him to come in and hide behind the oven. Then she gave him food, and told him that her father was a giant, who ate men and women. Perhaps she could keep him overnight, as she had already supper prepared.

After a while, the giant came banging at the door, shouting, "Featherflight, let me in; let me in!" As she opened the door he came in, saying, "Where have you stowed the man? I smelt him all the way through that wood."

Featherflight said, "Oh father, he is nothing but a poor, little, thin boy! He would make but half a mouthful, and his bones would stick in your throat; and beside he wants to work for you; perhaps you can make him useful. But sit down to supper now, and after supper I will show him to you."

So she set before him half of a fat heifer, a sheep, and a turkey, which he swallowed so fast that his hair stood on end. When he had finished, Featherflight beckoned to Jack, who came trembling from behind the oven. The giant looked at him scornfully and said, "Indeed, as you say, he is but half a mouthful. But there is room for flesh there, and we must fatten him up for a few days; mean-while he must earn his victuals. See here, my young snip, can you do a day's work in a day?"

And Jack answered bravely, "I can do a day's work in a day as well as another."

So the giant said, "Well, go to bed now. I will tell you in the morning your work." So Jack went to bed, and Lady Featherflight showed him; while the giant lay down on the floor with his head in Featherflight's lap, and she combed his hair and brushed his head till he went fast asleep.

The next morning Jack was called bright and early, and was taken out to the farmyard, where stood a large barn, unroofed by a late tempest. Here the giant stopped and said, "Behind this barn you will find a hill of feathers; thatch

me this barn with them, and earn your supper, and, look you! if it be not done when I come back tonight, you shall be fried in meal, and swallowed whole for supper.” Then he left, laughing to himself as he went down the road.

Jack went bravely to work and found a ladder and basket; he filled the basket, and ran up the ladder, and then tried hard to make a beginning on the thatch. As soon as he placed a handful of feathers, half would fly away as he wove them in. He tried for hours with no success, until at last half of the hill was scattered to the four winds, and he had not finished a hand-breadth of the roof.

Then he sat down at the foot of the ladder and began to cry, when out came Lady Featherflight, with the basket on her arm, which she set down at his feet, saying, “Eat now, and cry after. Meantime I will try to think what I can do to help you.”

Jack felt cheered, and went to work, while Lady Featherflight walked round the barn, singing as she went, “Birds of land and birds of sea, Come and thatch this roof for me.” As she walked round the second time, the sky grew dark, and a heavy cloud hid the sun and came nearer and nearer to the earth, separating at last into hundreds and thousands of birds. Each, as it flew, dropped a feather on the roof, and tucked it neatly in; and when Jack’s meal was finished the roof was finished, too.

Then Featherflight said, “Let us talk and enjoy ourselves till my father the giant comes home.” So they wandered round the grounds and the stables, and Lady Featherflight told of the treasure in the strong room, till Jack wondered why he was born without a sixpence. Soon they went back to the house, and Jack helped, and Lady Featherflight prepared supper, which tonight was fourteen loaves of bread, two sheep, and a jack-pudding, by way of finish, which would almost have filled the little house where Jack was born.

Soon the giant came home, thundered at the door again, and shouted, “Let me in, let me in!” Featherflight served him with the supper already laid, and the giant ate it with great relish. As soon as he had finished, he called to Jack, and asked him about his work. Jack said, “I told you I could do a day’s work in a day as well as another. You’ll have no fault to find.” The giant said nothing, and Jack went to bed. Then, as before, the giant lay down on the floor with his head in Featherflight’s lap. She combed his hair and brushed his head till he fell fast asleep.

The next morning the giant called Jack into the yard, and looked at his day’s work. All he said was, “This is not your doing,” and he proceeded to a heap of seed, nearly as high as the barn, saying, “Here is your day’s work. Separate the seeds, each into its own pile. Let it be done when I come home tonight, or you shall be fried in meal, and I shall swallow you, bones and all.”

Then the giant went off down the road, laughing as he went. Jack seated himself before the heap, took a handful of seeds, put corn in one pile, rye in another, oats in another, and had not begun to find an end of the different kinds when noon had come, and the sun was right over head. The heap was no smaller, and Jack was tired out, so he sat down, hugged his knees, and cried.

Out came Featherflight, with a basket on her arm, which she put down before Jack, saying, "Eat now, and cry after." So Jack ate with a will, and Lady Featherflight walked round and round the heap, singing as she went, "Birds of earth and birds of sea, Come and sort this seed for me."

As she walked round the heap for the second time, still singing, the ground about her looked as if it was moving. From behind each grain of sand, each daisy stem, each blade of grass, there came some little insect, gray, black, brown, or green, and began to work at the seeds. Each chose some one kind, and made a heap by itself. When Jack had finished a hearty meal, the great heap was divided into countless others; and Jack and Lady Featherflight walked and talked to their hearts' content for the rest of the day.

As the sun went down the giant came home, thundered at the door again, and shouted, "Let me in; let me in!"

Featherflight greeted him with his supper, already laid, and he sat down and ate, with a great appetite, four fat pigs, three fat pullets, and an old gander. He finished off with a jack-pudding. Then he was so sleepy he could not keep his head up; all he said was, "Go to bed, youngster; I'll see your work tomorrow." Then, as before, the giant laid his head down on the floor with his head in Featherflight's lap. She combed his hair and brushed his head, and he fell fast asleep.

The next morning the giant called Jack into the farmyard earlier than before. "It is but fair to call you early, for I have work more than a strong man can well do." He showed him a heap of sand, saying, "Make me a rope to tether my herd of cows, that they may not leave the stalls before milking time." Then he turned on his heel, and went down the road laughing.

Jack took some sand in his hands, gave a twist, threw it down, went to the door, and called out, "Featherflight! Featherflight! This is beyond you: I feel myself already rolled in meal, and swallowed, bones and all."

Out came Featherflight, saying with good cheer, "Not so bad as that. Sit down, and we will plan what to do." They talked and planned all the day. Just before the giant came home, they went up to the top of the stairs to Jack's room; then Featherflight pricked Jack's finger and dropped a drop of blood on each of the three stairs. Then she came down and prepared the supper, which tonight was a brace of turkeys, three fat geese, five fat hens, six fat pigeons, seven fat woodcocks, and half a score of quail, with a jack-pudding.

When he had finished, the giant turned to Featherflight with a growl, "Why so sparing of food tonight? Is there no good meal in the larder? This boy whets my appetite. Well for you, young sir, if you have done your work. Is it done?"

"No, sir," said Jack boldly. "I said I could do a day's work in a day as well as another, but no better."

The giant said, "Featherflight, prick him for me with the larding needle, hang him in the chimney corner well wrapped in bacon, and give him to me for my early breakfast."

Featherflight says, "Yes, father." Then, as before, the giant laid his head down on the floor with his head in Featherflight's lap. She combed his hair, and brushed his head, and he fell fast asleep.

Jack goes to bed, his room at the top of the stairs. As soon as the giant is snoring in bed, Featherflight softly calls Jack and says, "I have the keys of the treasure house; come with me." They open the treasure house, take out bags of gold and silver, and loosen the halter of the best horse in the best stall in the best stable. Jack mounts with Featherflight behind, and off they go.

At three o'clock in the morning, not thinking of his order the night before, the giant wakes and calls, "Jack, get up."

"Yes, sir," says the first drop of blood.

At four o'clock the giant wakes, turns over, and says, "Jack, get up."

"Yes, sir," says the second drop of blood.

At five o'clock the giant wakens, turns over, and says, "Jack, get up."

"Yes, sir," says the third drop of blood.

At six o'clock the giant wakens, turns over, and says, "Jack, get up," and there was no answer.

Then with great fury he says, "Featherflight has overslept herself; my breakfast won't be ready." He rushes to Featherflight's room; it is empty. He dashes downstairs to the chimney corner, to see if Jack is hanging there, and finds neither Jack nor Featherflight.

Then he suspects they have run away, and rushes back for his seven-leagued boots, but cannot find the key under his pillow. He rushes down, finds the door wide open, catches up his boots and rushes to the stable. There he finds that the best horse from the best stall from the best stable has gone. Jumping into his boots, he flies after them, swifter than the wind.

The runaways had been galloping for several hours, when Jack hears a sound behind him, and, turning, sees the giant in the distance. "O Featherflight! Featherflight! All is lost!"

But Featherflight says, "Keep steady, Jack, look in the horse's right ear, and throw behind you over your right shoulder what you find."

Jack looks and finds a little stick of wood, throws it over his right shoulder, and then there grows up behind them a forest of hard wood. "We are saved," says Jack.

"Not so certain," says Lady Featherflight, "but prick up the horse, for we have gained some time."

The giant went back for an axe, but soon hacked and hewed his way through the wood, and was on the trail again.

Jack again heard a sound, turned and saw the giant, and said to Lady Featherflight, "All is lost."

"Keep steady, Jack," says Featherflight; "look in the horse's left ear, and throw over your left shoulder what you find." Jack looked, found a drop of water, throws it over his left shoulder, and between them and the giant there arises a

large lake, and the giant stops on the other side, and shouts across, "How did you get over?"

Featherflight calls, "We drank, and our horses drank, and we drank our way through."

The giant shouts scornfully back, "Surely I am good for what you can do," and he threw himself down and drank, and drank, and drank, and then he burst.

Now they go on quietly till they come near to a town. Here they stop, and Jack says, "Climb this tree, and hide in the branches till I come with the parson to marry us. For I must buy me a suit of fine clothes before I am seen with a gay lady like yourself."

So Featherflight climbed the tree with the thickest branches she could find, and waited there, looking between the leaves into a spring below. Now this spring was used by all the wives of the townspeople to draw water for breakfast. No water was so sweet anywhere else; and early in the morning they all came with pitchers and pails for a gossip, and to draw water for the kettle. The first who came was a carpenter's wife, and as she bent over the clear spring she saw, not herself, but Featherflight's lovely face reflected in the water. She looks at it with astonishment and cries, "What! I, a carpenter's wife, and I so handsome? No, that I won't," and down she threw the pitcher, and off she went.

The next who came was the potter's wife, and as she bent over the clear spring she saw, not herself, but Featherflight's lovely face reflected in the water. She looks at it with astonishment and cries, "What! I, a potter's wife, and I so handsome? No, that I won't," and down she threw the pitcher, and off she went.

The next who came was the publican's wife, and as she bent over the clear spring she saw, not herself, but Featherflight's lovely face reflected in the water. She looks at it with astonishment and cries, "What! I, a publican's wife, and I so handsome? No, that I won't," and down she threw the pitcher, and off she went.

The next who came was the scrivener's wife, and as she bent over the clear spring she saw, not herself, but Featherflight's lovely face reflected in the water. She looks at it with astonishment and cries, "What! I, a scrivener's wife, and I so handsome? No, that I won't," and down she threw the pitcher, and off she went.

The next who came was the lacemaker's wife, and as she bent over the clear spring she saw, not herself, but Featherflight's lovely face reflected in the water. She looks at it with astonishment and cries, "What! I, a lacemaker's wife, and I so handsome? No, that I won't," and down she threw the pitcher, and off she went.

All the men in the town began to want their breakfast, and one after another went out into the market-place to ask if any one by chance had seen his wife. Each came with the same question and all received the same answers. All had seen them going, but none had seen them returning. They all began to fear foul play, and all together walked out toward the spring. When they reached it, they found the broken pitchers all about the grass, and the pails bottom upwards floating on the water.

One of them, looking over the edge, saw the face reflected, and, knowing that it was not his own, looked up. Seeing Lady Featherflight, he called to his comrades,

“Here is the witch, here is the enchantress. She has bewitched our wives. Let us kill her.” And they began to drag her out of the tree, in spite of all she could say.

Just at this moment Jack comes up, galloping back on his horse, with the parson up behind. You would not know the gaily dressed cavalier to be the poor, ragged boy who passed over the road so short a time before.

As he came near he saw the crowd and shouted, “What’s the matter? What are you doing to my wife?”

The men shouted, “We are hanging a witch; she has bewitched all our wives, and murdered them, for all we know.” The parson bade them stop, and let the Lady Featherflight tell her own story.

When she told them how their wives had mistaken her face for theirs, they were silent a moment, and then one and all cried, “If we have wedded such fools, they are well sped,” and turning walked back to the town.

The parson married Jack and Lady Featherflight on the spot, and christened them from the water of the spring, and then went home with them to the great house that Jack had bought as he passed through the town. There the newly married pair lived happily for many months, until Jack began to wish for more of the giant’s treasure, and proposed that they should go back for it. But they could not cross the water.

Lady Featherflight said, “Why not build a bridge?” And the bridge was built. They went over with wagons and horses, and brought back so heavy a load that, as the last wagonful passed over the bridge, it broke, and the gold was lost.

Jack lamented and said, “Now we can have nothing more from the giant’s treasure-house.”

But Lady Featherflight said, “Why not mend the bridge?”

So the bridge was mended, And my story’s ended.

THE GREEN LADY

Tradition Bearer: Mary Ann Smith

Source: Gomme, A. B. “The Green Lady: A Folktale from Hertfordshire.” *Folklore* 7 (1896): 411–415.

Date: Unavailable

Original Source: England

National Origin: England

In this **variant** of “The Kind and the Unkind Girls” (AT 480), the usual **motif** of the “Cruel Stepmother” (S31) has been omitted. Instead, a father who is partial to the unkind sister motivates the heroine’s departure and subsequent adventures.

Once upon a time there was an old man who had two daughters. Now one of these girls was a steady decent girl, and the other was a stuck-up, proud, conceited piece; but the father liked her best, and she had the most to eat and the best clothes to wear.

One day the nice girl said to her father, "Father, give me a cake and a bottle of beer, and let me go and seek my fortune." So the father gave her a cake and a bottle of beer, and she went out to seek her fortune. After she had walked a weary while through the wood she sat down by a tree to rest herself, and eat her cake and drink her beer. While she was eating, a little old man came by, and he said, "Little girl, little girl, what are you doing under my tree?"

She said, "I am going to seek my fortune, sir. I am very tired and hungry, and I am eating my dinner."

The old man said, "Little girl, little girl, give me some dinner too."

She said, "I have only some cake and a bottle of beer; if you like to have some of that, you may." The old man said he would; so he sat down, and they ate the cake and drank the beer all up.

Then the little girl was going on further, and the old man said, "I will tell you where to seek your fortune. Go on further and further into the wood, until you come to a little old cottage where the green lady lives. Knock at the door, and when she opens it tell her you've come to seek service. She will take you in; mind you be a good girl and do all she tells you to do, and you'll come to no harm." So the little girl thanked him kindly and went on her way. Presently she came to the little cottage in the wood, and she knocked at the door.

Then the door was opened by a pretty green lady, who said, "Little girl, little girl, what do you want?"

"I've come to seek service, ma'am," said the little girl.

"What can you do?" said the green lady.

"I can bake, and I can brew, and about the house can all things do," said the little girl.

"Then come in," said the green lady; and she took her into the kitchen.

"Now," said she, "you must be a very good girl; sweep the house well, make the dust fly; and mind you don't look through the keyhole, or harm will befall you." The little girl swept the house well and made the dust fly. Then the green lady said, "Now go to the well and bring in a pail of nice clean water to cook the supper in. If the water isn't clear, change it and change it till it is."

Then the little girl took a pail and went to the well. The first pail she drew, the water was so muddy and dirty she threw it away. The next pail full she drew, the water was a little clearer, but there was a silver fish in it.

The fish said, "Little girl, little girl, wash me and comb me and lay me down softly." So she washed it and combed it and laid it down softly. Then she drew another pailful. The water was a little clearer, but there was a gold fish in it.

The fish said, "Little girl, little girl, wash me and comb me and lay me down softly." So she washed it and combed it and laid it down softly.

Then she drew another pailful. This was clean water, but there was still another fish who said the same thing as the others had done; so she washed this one too, combed it and laid it down softly. Then she drew another pailful, and this was quite clear and fresh. Then the three fish raised their heads and said:

They who eat the fairies' food
In the churchyard soon shall dwell.
Drink the water of this well,
And all things for thee shall be good.
Be but honest, bold, and true,
So shall good fortune come to you.

Then the little girl hasted to the house, swept up the kitchen, and made the dust fly quickly; for she thought she would surely be scolded for being away so long, and she was hungry too. The green lady then showed her how to cook the supper and take it into the parlor, and told her she could take some bread and milk for herself afterwards. But the little girl said she would rather have a drink of water and some of her own cake; she had found some crumbs in her pocket, you must know.

Then the green lady went into the parlor, and the little girl sat down by the fire. Then she was thinking about her place and what the fish had said, and she wondered why the green lady had told her not to look through the keyhole. She thought there could not be any harm in doing this, and she looked through the keyhole, when what should she see but the green lady dancing with a bogey! She was so surprised that she called out, "Oh! what can I see, a green lady dancing with a bogey!"

The green lady rushed out of the room and said, "What can you see?"

The little girl replied, "Nothing can I see, nothing can I spy, nothing can I see till the days high die!" [probably, *day I die*].

Then the green lady went into the parlor again to have her supper, and the little girl again looked through the keyhole. Again she sang, "Oh! what can I see, a green lady dancing with a bogey!"

The green lady rushed out, "Little girl, little girl, what can you see?"

The girl said, "Nothing can I see, nothing can I spy, nothing can I see till the days high die!"

This happened a third time, and then the green lady said, "Now you shall see no more"; and she blinded the little girl's eyes.

"But," said the green lady, "because you have been a good girl and made the dust fly, I will give you your wages and you shall go home." So she gave her a bag of money and a bundle of clothes, and sent her away. So the little girl stumbled along the path in the dark, and presently she stumbled against the well. Now there was a fine young man sitting on the brink of the well; and he told her he had been sent by the fish of the well to see her home, and would carry her bag of money and her bundle for her. He told her, too, before starting on their journey to bathe her eyes in the well. This she did; and she found her eyes

came back to her, and she could see as well as ever. So the young man and the little girl went along together until they arrived at her father's cottage; and when the bag was opened there was all sorts of money in it, and when the bundle was opened there was all sorts of fine clothes in it. And the little girl married the young man, and they lived happy ever after.

Now, when the other girl saw all the fine things her sister had got, she came to her father and said, "Father, give me a cake and a bottle of beer, and let me go and seek my fortune." Her father gave her a cake and a bottle of beer, and the same things happened to her as to her sister. But when the old man asked her for some dinner she said, "I haven't enough for myself, so I can't give you any"; and when she was at the green lady's house she didn't make the dust fly, and the green lady was cross with her; and when she went to the well and the fish got into her pails of water, she said the fishes were wet, sloppy things, and she wasn't going to mess her hands and clean frock with them, and she threw them back roughly into the well; and she said she wasn't going to drink nasty cold water for her supper when she could have nice bread and milk; and when the green lady took out her eyes for looking through the keyhole she didn't get a bag of money and a bundle of clothes for her wages, because she hadn't made the dust fly, and she had no one to help her and take her home. So she wandered about all night and all day, and she died; and no one knows where she was buried or what became of her.

THE HISTORY OF TOM THUMB

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Hartland, Edwin Sidney. *English Fairy and Other Folktales*. London: Walter Scott, 1890, 272–285.

Date: Unavailable

Original Source: *The Comical and Merry Tricks of Tom Thumb*. Paisley, ca. 1820 (chapbook).

National Origin: England

In this **variant** of "Tom Thumb" (AT 700), the miraculous birth of the boy no bigger than his father's thumb is arranged by the Arthurian magician Merlin and the queen of the fairies in return for an act of kindness and because Merlin was "amused with the idea of a boy no bigger than a man's thumb." The hero's diminutive stature proves to be both a blessing and a curse during his adventures. Many chapbooks presented their narratives in verse form; therefore, the verse sections of the following tale reflect the variant's chapbook origins.

It is said that in the days of the celebrated Prince Arthur, who was king of Britain in the year 516, there lived a great magician, called Merlin, the most learned and skilful enchanter in the world at that time.

This famous magician, who could assume any form he pleased, was traveling in the disguise of a poor beggar, and being very much fatigued, he stopped at the cottage of an honest ploughman to rest himself and asked for some refreshment.

The countryman gave him a hearty welcome, and his wife, who was a very good-hearted, hospitable woman, soon brought him some milk in a wooden bowl, and some coarse brown bread on a platter.

Merlin was much pleased with this homely repast and the kindness of the ploughman and his wife; but he could not help observing that though everything was neat and comfortable in the cottage, they seemed both to be very dispirited and unhappy. He therefore questioned them on the cause of their melancholy, and learned that they were miserable because they had no children.

The poor woman declared, with tears in her eyes, that she should be the happiest creature in the world if she had a son; and although he was no bigger than her husband's thumb, she would be satisfied.

Merlin was so much amused with the idea of a boy no bigger than a man's thumb, that he determined to pay a visit to the queen of the fairies, and request her to gratify the poor woman's wish. The droll fancy of such a little personage among the human race pleased the fairy queen too, exceedingly, and she promised Merlin that the wish should be granted. Accordingly, in a short time after, the ploughman's wife was safely delivered of a son, who, wonderful to relate! was not a bit bigger than his father's thumb.

The fairy queen, wishing to see the little fellow thus born into the world, came in at the window while the mother was sitting up in the bed admiring him. The queen kissed the child, and, giving it the name of Tom Thumb, sent for some of the fairies, who dressed her little favorite according to the instructions she gave them:

An oak-leaf hat he had for his crown;
His shirt of web by spiders spun;
With jacket wove of thistle's down;
His trousers were of feathers done.
His stockings, of apple-rind, they tie
With eyelash from his mother's eye:
His shoes were made of mouse's skin,
Tann'd with the downy hair within.

It is remarkable that Tom never grew any larger than his father's thumb, which was only of an ordinary size; but as he got older he became very cunning and full of tricks. When he was old enough to play with the boys, and had lost all his own cherry-stones [used much like marbles in children's games], he used

to creep into the bags of his playfellows, fill his pockets, and, getting out unobserved, would again join in the game.

One day, however, as he was coming out of a bag of cherry-stones, where he had been pilfering as usual, the boy to whom it belonged chanced to see him. "Ah, ha! my little Tommy," said the boy, "so I have caught you stealing my cherry-stones at last, and you shall be rewarded for your thievish tricks." On saying this, he drew the string tight round his neck, and gave the bag such a hearty shake, that poor little Tom's legs, thighs, and body were sadly bruised. He roared out with pain, and begged to be let out, promising never to be guilty of such bad practices again.

A short time afterwards his mother was making a batter-pudding, and Tom, being very anxious to see how it was made, climbed up to the edge of the bowl; but unfortunately his foot slipped, and he plumped over head and ears into the batter, unobserved by his mother, who stirred him into the pudding-bag, and put him in the pot to boil.

The batter had filled Tom's mouth, and prevented him from crying; but, on feeling the hot water, he kicked and struggled so much in the pot, that his mother thought that the pudding was bewitched, and, instantly pulling it out of the pot, she threw it to the door. A poor tinker, who was passing by, lifted up the pudding, and, putting it into his budget, he then walked off. As Tom had now got his mouth cleared of the batter, he then began to cry aloud, which so frightened the tinker that he flung down the pudding and ran away. The pudding being broke to pieces by the fall, Tom crept out covered over with the batter, and with difficulty walked home. His mother, who was very sorry to see her darling in such a woeful state, put him into a tea-cup, and soon washed off the batter; after which she kissed him, and laid him in bed.

Soon after the adventure of the pudding, Tom's mother went to milk her cow in the meadow, and she took him along with her. As the wind was very high, for fear of being blown away, she tied him to a thistle with a piece of fine thread. The cow soon observed the oak-leaf hat, and, liking the appearance of it, took poor Tom and the thistle at one mouthful. While the cow was chewing the thistle Tom was afraid of her great teeth, which threatened to crush him in pieces, and he roared out as loud as he could, "Mother, mother!"

"Where are you, Tommy, my dear Tommy?" said his mother.

"Here, mother," replied he, "in the red cow's mouth."

His mother began to cry and wring her hands; but the cow, surprised at the odd noise in her throat, opened her mouth and let Tom drop out. Fortunately his mother caught him in her apron as he was falling to the ground, or he would have been dreadfully hurt. She then put Tom in her bosom and ran home with him.

Tom's father made him a whip of a barley straw to drive the cattle with, and having one day gone into the fields, he slipped a foot and rolled into the furrow. A raven, which was flying over, picked him up, and flew with him to the top of a giant's castle that was near the seaside, and there left him.

Tom was in a dreadful state, and did not know what to do; but he was soon more dreadfully frightened; for old Grumbo the giant came up to walk on the terrace, and observing Tom, he took him up and swallowed him like a pill.

The giant had no sooner swallowed Tom than he began to repent what he had done; for Tom began to kick and jump about so much that he felt very uncomfortable, and at last threw him up again into the sea. A large fish swallowed Tom the moment he fell into the sea, which was soon after caught, and bought for the table of King Arthur. When they opened the fish in order to cook it, every one was astonished at finding such a little boy, and Tom was quite delighted at regaining his liberty. They carried him to the king, who made Tom his dwarf, and he soon grew a great favorite at court; for by his tricks and gambols he not only amused the king and queen, but also all the knights of the Round Table.

It is said that when the king rode out on horseback, he frequently took Tom along with him, and if a shower came on, he used to creep into his majesty's waistcoat pocket, where he slept till the rain was over.

King Arthur one day interrogated Tom about his parents, wishing to know if they were as small as he was, and what circumstances they were in. Tom told the king that his father and mother were as tall as any of the persons about court, but in rather poor circumstances. On hearing this, the king carried Tom to his treasury, the place where he kept all his money, and told him to take as much money as he could carry home to his parents, which made the poor little fellow caper with joy. Tom went immediately to procure a purse, which was made of a water-bubble, and then returned to the treasury, where he received a silver threepenny-piece to put into it.

Our little hero had some difficulty in lifting the burden upon his back; but he at last succeeded in getting it placed to his mind, and set forward on his journey. However, without meeting with any accident, and after resting himself more than a hundred times by the way, in two days and two nights he reached his father's house in safety.

Tom had traveled forty-eight hours with a huge silver-piece on his back, and was almost tired to death, when his mother ran out to meet him, and carried him into the house.

Tom's parents were both happy to see him, and the more so as he had brought such an amazing sum of money with him; but the poor little fellow was excessively wearied, having traveled half a mile in forty-eight hours, with a huge silver threepenny-piece on his back. His mother, in order to recover him from the fatigue he had undergone, placed him in a walnut shell by the fireside, and feasted him for three days on a hazel-nut, which made him very sick; for a whole nut used to serve him a month.

Tom soon recovered; but as there had been a fall of rain, and the ground very wet, he could not travel back to King Arthur's court; therefore his mother, one day when the wind was blowing in that direction, made a little parasol of cambric paper, and tying Tom to it, she gave him a puff into the air with her mouth,

which soon carried him to the king's palace. The king, queen, and all the nobility were happy to see Tom again at court, where he delighted them by his dexterity at tilts and tournaments; but his exertions to please them cost him very dear, and brought on such a severe fit of illness that his life was despaired of.

However, the queen of the fairies, hearing of his indisposition, came to court in a chariot drawn by flying mice, and placing Tom by her side, drove through the air without stopping till they arrived at her palace. After restoring him to health, and permitting him to enjoy all the gay diversion of Fairy-land, the queen commanded a strong current of air to arise, on which she placed Tom, who floated upon it like a cork in the water, and sent him instantly to the royal palace of King Arthur.

Just at the time when Tom came flying across the courtyard of the palace, the cook happened to be passing with the king's great bowl of furmenty [wheat pudding], which was a dish his majesty was very fond of: but unfortunately the poor little fellow fell plump into the middle of it, and splashed the hot furmenty about the cook's face.

The cook, who was an ill-natured fellow, being in a terrible rage at Tom for frightening and scalding him with the furmenty, went straight to the king, and represented that Tom had jumped into the royal furmenty, and thrown it down out of mere mischief. The king was so enraged when he heard this, that he ordered Tom to be seized and tried for high treason; and there being no person who dared to plead for him, he was condemned to be beheaded immediately.

On hearing this dreadful sentence pronounced, poor Tom fell a-trembling with fear, but, seeing no means of escape, and observing a miller close to him gaping with his great mouth, as country boobies do at a fair, he took a leap, and fairly jumped down his throat. This exploit was done with such activity that not one person present saw it, and even the miller did not know the trick which Tom had played upon him. Now, as Tom had disappeared, the court broke up, and the miller went home to his mill.

When Tom heard the mill at work, he knew he was clear of the court, and therefore he began to tumble and roll about, so that the poor miller could get no rest, thinking he was bewitched; so he sent for a doctor. When the doctor came, Tom began to dance and sing; and the doctor, being as much frightened as the miller, sent in haste for five other doctors and twenty learned men.

When they were debating upon the cause of this extraordinary occurrence, the miller happened to yawn, when Tom, embracing the opportunity, made another jump, and alighted safely upon his feet on the middle of the table.

The miller, who was very much provoked at being tormented by such a little pigmy creature, fell into a terrible rage, and, laying hold of Tom, he then opened the window, and threw him into the river. At the moment the miller let Tom drop a large salmon swimming along at the time saw him fall, and snapped him up in a minute. A fisherman caught the salmon, and sold it in the market to the steward of a great lord. The nobleman, on seeing the fish, thought it so

uncommonly fine that he made a present of it to King Arthur, who ordered it to be dressed immediately. When the cook cut open the fish, he found poor Tom, and ran to the king with him; but his majesty, being engaged with state affairs, ordered him to be taken away, and kept in custody till he sent for him.

The cook was determined that Tom should not slip out of his hands this time, so he put him into a mouse-trap, and left him to peep through the wires. Tom had remained in the trap a whole week, when he was sent for by King Arthur, who pardoned him for throwing down the furmenty, and took him again into favor. On account of his wonderful feats of activity, Tom was knighted by the king, and went under the name of the renowned Sir Thomas Thumb. As Tom's clothes had suffered much in the batter-pudding, the furmenty, and the insides of the giant, miller, and fishes, his majesty ordered him a new suit of clothes, and to be mounted as a knight.

Of Butterfly's wings his shirt was made,
His boots of chicken's bide;
And by a nimble fairy blade,
Well learned in the tailoring trade,
His clothing was supplied.
A needle dangled by his side;
A dapper mouse he used to ride,
Thus strutted Tom in stately pride!

It was certainly very diverting to see Tom in this dress, and mounted on the mouse, as he rode out a-hunting with the king and nobility, who were all ready to expire with laughter at Tom and his fine prancing charger.

One day, as they were riding by a farmhouse, a large cat, which was lurking about the door, made a spring, and seized both Tom and his mouse. She then ran up a tree with them, and was beginning to devour the mouse; but Tom boldly drew his sword, and attacked the cat so fiercely that she let them both fall, when one of the nobles caught him in his hat, and laid him on a bed of down, in a little ivory cabinet.

The queen of the fairies came soon after to pay Tom a visit, and carried him back to Fairy-land, where he remained several years. During his residence there, King Arthur, and all the persons who knew Tom, had died; and as he was desirous of being again at court, the fairy queen, after dressing him in a suit of clothes, sent him flying through the air to the palace, in the days of King Thunstone, the successor of Arthur. Every one flocked round to see him, and being carried to the king, he was asked who he was—whence he came—and where he lived? Tom answered:

My name is Tom Thumb,
From the fairies I've come.
When King Arthur shone,
This court was my home.

In me he delighted,
 By him I was knighted;
 Did you never hear of Sir Thomas Thumb?

The king was so charmed with this address that he ordered a little chair to be made, in order that Tom might sit upon his table, and also a palace of gold, a span high, with a door an inch wide, to live in. He also gave him a coach, drawn by six small mice.

The queen was so enraged at the honors conferred on Sir Thomas that she resolved to ruin him, and told the king that the little knight had been saucy to her.

The king sent for Tom in great haste, but being fully aware of the danger of royal anger, he crept into an empty snail-shell, where he lay for a considerable time, until he was almost starved with hunger; but at last he ventured to peep out, and perceiving a fine large butterfly on the ground, near the place of his concealment, he approached very cautiously, and getting himself placed astride on it, was immediately carried up into the air. The butterfly flew with him from tree to tree and from field to field, and at last returned to the court, where the king and nobility all strove to catch him; but at last poor Tom fell from his seat into a watering-pot, in which he was almost drowned.

When the queen saw him she was in a rage, and said he should be beheaded; and he was again put into a mousetrap until the time of his execution.

However, a cat, observing something alive in the trap, patted it about till the wires broke, and set Thomas at liberty.

The king received Tom again into favor, which he did not live to enjoy, for a large spider one day attacked him; and although he drew his sword and fought well, yet the spider's poisonous breath at last overcame him:

He fell dead on the ground where he stood,
 And the spider suck'd every drop of his blood.

King Thunstone and his whole court were so sorry at the loss of their little favorite, that they went into mourning, and raised a fine white marble monument over his grave, with the following epitaph:

Here lyes Tom Thumb, King Arthur's knight,
 Who died by a spider's cruel bite.
 He was well known in Arthur's court,
 Where he afforded gallant sport;
 He rode at tilt and tournament,
 And on a mouse a-hunting went,
 Alive he filled the court with mirth;
 His death to sorrow soon gave birth.
 Wipe, wipe your eyes, and shake your head
 And cry, Alas Tom Thumb is dead!

THE DEMON TREGEAGLE

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Hartland, Edwin Sidney. *English Fairy and Other Folktales*. London: Walter Scott, 1890, 158–167.

Date: Unavailable

Original Source: Hunt, Robert. *Popular Romances of the West of England*. 1st series, 133. London: John Camden Hotten, 1865.

National Origin: England

The **legend** of “The Demon Tregeagle” satisfies a range of functions commonly served by this **genre**. Tregeagle’s fate cautions against not only the depredations that are committed by great sinners, but his punishment warns the community about the consequences of social transgressions in general. The inevitable results of Church corruption are dramatized by the obligation of subsequent, morally responsible, clerics to hold the deathless demon at bay. The chastisement of the religious hierarchy is made explicit in the following passage, “‘To bring him from the grave has been to me so dreadful a task, that I leave him to your care, and that of the Prior’s by whom he was so beloved.’ Having said this, the defendant left the court.” On the other hand, the actions of St. Petroc validate both his power and benevolence, as well as his intimate relationship to his namesake community, Padstow (“Petroc’s stowe [place]”). At a more mundane level, the legend explains local features of the environment such as a bar of sand off the coast of Porthieven. Two final issues concerning the legend should be addressed. The reference to “bell, book, and candle” alludes to an excommunication rite for members of the Roman Catholic Church who have committed a particularly heinous sin. The tasks imposed on Tregeagle have many traditional precedents, for example, “Making a Rope of Sand” (AT 1174).

Thrice he began to tell his doleful tale,
And thrice the sighs did swallow up his voice.

—Thomas Sackville

Who has not heard of the wild spirit Tregeagle? He haunts equally the moor, the rocky coasts, and the blown sand-hills of Cornwall. From north to south, from east to west, this doomed spirit is heard of, and to the day of judgment he is doomed to wander, pursued by avenging fiends. Forever endeavoring to perform some task by which he hopes to secure repose, and being forever defeated. Who has not heard the howling of Tregeagle? When the storms come with all their strength from the Atlantic, and urge themselves

upon the rocks around the Land's End, the howls of the spirit are louder than the roaring of the winds. When calms rest upon the ocean, and the waves can scarcely form upon the resting waters, low wailings creep along the coast. These are the wailings of this wandering soul. When midnight is on the moor, or on the mountains, and the night winds whistle amidst the rugged cairns, the shrieks of Tregagle are distinctly heard. We know then that he is pursued by the demon dogs, and that till daybreak he must fly with all speed before them. The voice of Tregagle is everywhere, and yet he is unseen by human eye. Every reader will at once perceive that Tregagle belongs to the mythologies of the oldest nations, and that the traditions of this wandering spirit in Cornwall, which center upon one tyrannical magistrate, are but the appropriation of stories which belong to every age and country. Tradition thus tells Tregagle's tale.

There are some men who appear to be from their births given over to the will of tormenting demons. Such a man was Tregagle. He is as old as the hills, yet there are many circumstances in the story of his life which *appear* to remove him from this remote antiquity. Modern legends assert him to belong to comparatively modern times, and say that, without doubt, he was one of the Tregagles who once owned Trevorder, near Bodmin. We have not, however, much occasion to trouble ourselves with the man or his life; it is with the death and the subsequent existence of a myth that we are concerned.

Certain it is that the man Tregagle was diabolically wicked. He seems to have been urged on from one crime to another until the cup of sin was overflowing.

Tregagle was wealthy beyond most men of his time, and his wealth purchased for him that immunity which the Church, in her degenerate days, too often accorded to those who could aid the priesthood with their gold or power. As a magistrate he was tyrannical and unjust, and many an innocent man was wantonly sacrificed by him for the purpose of hiding his own dark deeds. As a landlord he was rapacious and unscrupulous, and frequently so involved his tenants in his toils that they could not escape his grasp. The stain of secret murder clings to his memory, and he is said to have sacrificed a sister whose goodness stood between him and his demon passions; his wife and children perished Victims to his cruelties. At length death drew near to relieve the land of a monster whose name was a terror to all who heard it. Devils waited to secure the soul they had won, and Tregagle in terror gave to the priesthood wealth, that they might fight with them and save his soul from eternal fire. Desperate was the struggle, but the powerful exorcisms of the banded brotherhood of a neighboring monastery drove back the evil ones, and Tregagle slept with his fathers, safe in the custody of the churchmen who buried him with high honors in St. Breock Church. They sang chants and read prayers above his grave, to secure the soul which they thought they had saved. But Tregagle was not fated to rest. Satan desired still to gain possession of such a gigantic sinner, and we can only refer what ensued to the influence of the wicked spiritings of his ministers.

A dispute arose between two wealthy families respecting the ownership of extensive lands around Bodmin. The question had been rendered more difficult by the nefarious conduct of Tregeagle, who had acted as steward to one of the claimants, and who had destroyed ancient deeds, forged others, and indeed made it appear that he was the real proprietor of the domain. Large portions of the land Tregeagle had sold, and other parts were leased upon long terms, he having received all the money and appropriated it. His death led to inquiries, and then the transactions were gradually brought to light. Involving, as this did, large sums of money—and indeed it was a question upon which turned the future well-doing or ruin of a family. It was fought by the lawyers with great pertinacity. The legal questions had been argued several times before the judges at the assizes. The trials had been deferred, new trials had been sought for and granted, and every possible plan known to the lawyers for postponing the settlement of a suit had been tried. A day was at length fixed, upon which a final decision must be come to, and a special jury was sworn to administer justice between the contending parties. Witnesses innumerable were examined as to the validity of a certain deed, and the balance of evidence was equally suspended. The judge was about to sum up the case and refer the question to the jury, when the defendant in the case, coming into Court, proclaimed aloud that he had yet another witness to produce. There was a strange silence in the judgment hall. It was felt that something chilling to the soul was amongst them, and there was a simultaneous throb of terror as Tregeagle was led into the witness-box.

When the awe-struck assembly had recovered, the lawyers for the defendant commenced their examination, which was long and terrible. The result, however, was the disclosure of an involved system of fraud, of which the honest defendant had been the victim, and the jury unhesitatingly gave a verdict in his favor.

The trial over, everyone expected to see the specter witness removed. There, however, he stood powerless to fly, although he evidently desired to do so. Spirits of darkness were waiting to bear him away, but some spell of holiness prevented them from touching him. There was a struggle with the good and the evil angels for this sinner's soul, and the assembled court appeared frozen with horror. At length the judge with dignity commanded the defendant to remove his witness.

“To bring him from the grave has been to me so dreadful a task, that I leave him to your care, and that of the Prior's by whom he was so beloved.” Having said this, the defendant left the court.

The churchmen were called in, and long were, the deliberations between them and the lawyers as to the best mode of disposing of Tregeagle.

They could resign him to the devil at once, but by long trial the worst of crimes might be absolved, and as good churchmen they could not sacrifice a human soul. The only thing was to give the spirit some task, difficult beyond the power of human nature, which might be extended far into eternity. Time

might thus gradually soften the obdurate soul, which still retained all the black dyes of the sins done in the flesh, that by infinitely slow degrees repentance might exert its softening power. The spell therefore put upon Tregagle was, that as long as he was employed on some endless assigned task, there should be hope of salvation, and that he should be secure from the assaults of the devil as long as he labored steadily. A moment's rest was fatal; labor unrelaxing, and forever, was his doom.

One of the lawyers remembering that Dosmery Pool was bottomless, and that a thorn bush which had been flung into it, but a few weeks before, had made its appearance in Falmouth harbor, proposed that Tregagle might be employed to empty this profound lake. Then one of the churchmen, to make the task yet more enduring, proposed that it should be performed by the aid of a limpid shell having a hole in it.

This was agreed to, and the required incantations were duly made. Bound by mystical spells, Tregagle was removed to the dark moors, and duly set to work. Year after year passed by, and there day and night, summer and winter, storm and shine, Tregagle was bending over the dark water, working hard with his perforated shell; yet the pool remained at the same level.

His old enemy the devil kept a careful eye on the doomed one, resolving, if possible, to secure so choice an example of evil. Often did he raise tempests sufficiently wild, as he supposed, to drive Tregagle from his work, knowing that if he failed for a season to labor, he could seize and secure him. These were long tried in vain; but at length an auspicious hour presented itself.

Nature was at war with herself; the elements had lost their balance, and there was a terrific struggle to recover it. Lightnings flashed, and coiled like fiery snakes around the rocks of Roughtor. Fire-balls fell on the desert moors and hissed in the accursed lake. Thunders pealed through the heavens, and echoed from hill to hill; an earthquake shook the solid earth, and terror was on all living. The winds arose and raged with a fury which was irresistible, and hail beat so mercilessly on all things that it spread death around. Long did Tregagle stand the "pelting of the pitiless storm," but at length he yielded to its force and fled. The demons in crowds were at his heels. He doubled, however, on his pursuers and returned to the lake; but so rapid were they that he could not rest the required moment to dip his shell in the now seething waters.

Three times he fled round the lake, and the evil ones pursued him. Then, feeling that there was no safety for him near Dosmery Pool, he sprang swifter than the wind across it, shrieking with agony, and thus—since the devils cannot cross water, and were obliged to go round the lake—he gained on them and fled over the moor.

Away, away went Tregagle, faster and faster the dark spirits pursuing, and they had nearly overtaken him, when he saw Roach Rock and its chapel before him. He rushed up the rocks, with giant power clambered to the eastern window, and dashed his head through it, thus securing the shelter of its sanctity.

The defeated demons retired, and long and loud were their wild wailings in the air. The inhabitants of the moors and of the neighboring towns slept not a wink that night.

Tregeagle was safe, his head was within the holy church, though his body was exposed on a bare rock to the storm. Earnest were the prayers of the blessed hermit in his cell on the rock, to be relieved from his nocturnal and sinful visitor.

In vain were the recluse's prayers. Day after day, as he knelt at the altar, the ghastly head of the doomed sinner grinned horribly down upon him. Every holy ejaculation fell upon Tregeagle's ear like molten iron. He writhed and shrieked under the torture; but legions of devils filled the air, ready to seize him, if for a moment he withdrew his head from the sanctuary. Sabbath after Sabbath the little chapel on the rock was rendered a scene of sad confusion by the interruption which Tregeagle caused. Men trembled with fear at his agonizing cries, and women swooned. At length the place was deserted, and even the saint of the rock was wasting to death by the constant perturbation in which he was kept by the unholy spirit, and the demons who, like carrion birds, swarmed around the holy cairn. Things could not go on thus. The monks of Bodmin and the priests from the neighboring churches gathered together, and the result of their long and anxious deliberations was that Tregeagle, guarded by two saints, should be taken to the north coast, near Padstow, and employed in making trusses of sand, and ropes of sand with which to bind them. By powerful spell Tregeagle was removed from Roach, and fixed upon the sandy shores of the Padstow district. Sinners are seldom permitted to enjoy any peace of soul. As the ball of sand grew into form, the tides rose, and the breakers spread out the sands again a level sheet; again was it packed together and again washed away. Toil! Toil! Toil! Day and night unrestingly, sand on sand grew with each hour, and ruthlessly the ball was swept, by one blow of a sea wave, along the shore.

The cries of Tregeagle were dreadful; and as the destruction of the sand heap was constantly recurring, a constantly increasing despair gained the mastery over hope, and the ravings of the baffled soul were louder than the roarings of the winter tempest.

Baffled in making trusses of sand, Tregeagle seized upon the loose particles and began to spin them into a rope. Long and patiently did he pursue his task, and hope once more rose like a star out of the midnight darkness of despair. A rope was forming when a storm came up with all its fury from the Atlantic, and swept the particles of sand away over the hills.

The inhabitants of Padstow had seldom any rest. At every tide the howlings of Tregeagle banished sleep from each eye. But now so fearful were the sounds of the doomed soul, in the madness of the struggle between hope and despair, that, the people fled the town, and clustered upon the neighboring plains, praying, as with one voice, to be relieved from the sad presence of this monster.

St. Petroc, moved by the tears and petitions of the people, resolved to remove the spirit; and by the intense earnestness of his prayers, after long wrestling, he subdued Tregeagle to his will. Having chained him with the bonds

which the saint had forged with his own hands, every link of which had been welded with a prayer, St. Petroc led the spirit away from the north coast, and stealthily placed him on the southern shores.

In those days Ella's Town, now Heiston, was a flourishing port. Ships sailed into the estuary, up to the town, and they brought all sorts of merchandise, and returned with cargoes of tin from the mines of Breage and Wendron.

The wily monk placed his charge at Bareppa, and there condemned him to carry sacks of sand across the estuary of the Loo, and to empty them at Porthi-even, until the beach was clean down to the rocks. The priest was a good observer. He knew that the sweep of the tide was from Trewavas Head round the coast towards the Lizard, and that the sand would be carried back steadily and speedily as fast as the spirit could remove it.

Long did Tregagle labor; and of course in vain. His struggles were giant-like to perform his task, but he saw the sands return as regularly as he removed them. The sufferings of the poor fishermen who inhabited the coast around Porthieven were great. As the howlings of Tregagle disturbed the dwellers in Padstow, so did they now distress those toil-worn men.

When sorrow is highest,
Relief is nighest.

And a mischievous demon-watcher, in pure wantonness, brought that relief to those fishers of the sea.

Tregagle was laden with a sack of sand of enormous size, and was wading across the mouth of the estuary, when one of those wicked devils, who were kept ever near Tregagle, in very idleness tripped up the heavily laden spirit. The sea was raging with the irritation of a passing storm; and as Tregagle fell, the sack was seized by the waves, and its contents poured out across this arm of the sea.

There, to this day, it rests a bar of sand, fatally destroying the harbor of Ella's Town. The rage of the inhabitants of this seaport—now destroyed—was great; and, with all their priests, away they went to the Loo Bar, and assailed their destroyer. Against human anger Tregagle was proof. The shock of tongues fell harmlessly on his ear, and the assault of human weapons was unavailing.

By the aid of the priests, and faith-inspired prayers, the bonds were once more placed upon Tregagle; and he was, by the force of bell, book, and candle, sent to the Land's End. There he would find no harbor to destroy, and but few people to terrify. His task was to sweep the sands from Porthcurnow Cove round the headland called Tol-Peden-Penwith, into Nanjisal Cove. Those who know that rugged headland, with its cubical masses of granite, piled in Titanic grandeur one upon another, will appreciate the task; and when to all the difficulties are added the strong sweep of the Atlantic current—that portion of the Gulf stream which washes our southern shores—it will be evident that the melancholy spirit has indeed a task which must endure until the world shall end.

Even until today is Tregagle laboring at his task. In calms his wailing is heard; and those sounds which some call the “soughing of the wind,” are known to be the moanings of Tregagle; while the coming storms are predicated by the fearful roarings of this condemned mortal.

THE STORY OF MR. FOX

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Hartland, Edwin Sidney. *English Fairy and Other Folktales*. London: Walter Scott, 1890, 25–27.

Date: Unavailable

Original Source: England

National Origin: England

“The Story of Mr. Fox,” commonly referred to as “The Robber Bridegroom” (AT 955 and Grimm 40) is a grisly tale with an international distribution. Joseph Jacobs (1890) ties the tale to Malone’s *Variorum Shakespeare* (1790), as a gloss to *Much Ado About Nothing* (I:i, 146) “Like the old tale, my Lord, It is not so, nor ‘twas not so, but, indeed, God forbid it should be so.” The “old tale” to which the character Benedick refers is “Mr. Fox.” This tale like many **variants** of “The Bluebeard” tale (AT 312)—see page 360 of this volume for a French example of the latter **tale type**—empowers a female protagonist confronted by a victimizing male.

Once upon a time there was a young lady called Lady Mary, who had two brothers. One summer they all three went to a country seat of theirs, which they had not before visited. Among the other gentry in the neighborhood who came to see them was a Mr. Fox, a bachelor, with whom they, particularly the young lady, were much pleased. He used often to dine with them, and frequently invited Lady Mary to come and see his house. One day that her brothers were absent elsewhere, and she had nothing better to do, she determined to go thither, and accordingly set out unattended. When she arrived at the house and knocked at the door, no one answered.

At length she opened it and went in; over the portal of the door was written, “Be bold, be bold, but not too bold.” She advanced; over the staircase was the same inscription. She went up; over the entrance of a gallery, the same again. Still she went on, and over the door of a chamber found written:

Be bold, be bold, but not too bold,
Lest that your heart’s blood should run cold!

She opened it; it was full of skeletons and tubs of blood. She retreated in haste, and, coming downstairs, saw from a window Mr. Fox advancing towards the house with a drawn sword in one hand, while with the other he dragged along a young lady by her hair. Lady Mary had just time to slip down and hide herself under the stairs before Mr. Fox and his victim arrived at the foot of them. As he pulled the young lady upstairs, she caught hold of one of the banisters with her hand, on which was a rich bracelet. Mr. Fox cut it off with his sword. The hand and bracelet fell into Lady Mary's lap, who then contrived to escape unobserved, and got safe home to her brothers' house.

A few days afterwards Mr. Fox came to dine with them as usual. After dinner the guests began to amuse each other with extraordinary anecdotes, and Lady Mary said she would relate to them a remarkable dream she had lately had.

"I dreamt," said she, "that as you, Mr. Fox, had often invited me to your house, I would go there one morning. When I came to the house I knocked at the door, but no one answered. When I opened the door, over the hall I saw written, 'Be bold, be bold, but not too bold.' But," said she, turning to Mr. Fox, and smiling, "It is not so, nor it was not so."

Then she pursued the rest of the story, concluding at every turn with, "It is not so, nor it was not so," until she came to the room full of skeletons, when Mr. Fox took up the burden of the tale, and said:

It is not so, nor it was not so,
And God forbid it should be so!

which he continued to repeat at every subsequent turn of the dreadful story, until she came to the circumstance of his cutting off the young lady's hand, when, upon his saying, as usual:

It is not so, nor it was not so,
And God forbid it should be so!

Lady Mary retorts by saying:

But it is so, and it was so,
And here the hand I have to show!

at the same moment producing the hand and bracelet from her lap, whereupon the guests drew their swords, and instantly cut Mr. Fox into a thousand pieces.

THE MILLER AT THE PROFESSOR'S EXAMINATION

Tradition Bearer:

Source: Wright, Thomas. "The Miller at the Professor's Examination." *Folk-Lore Record* 2 (1879): 173-176.

Date: Unavailable

Original Source: England

National Origin: England

The following joke illustrates the ways in which humor can be used to critique folly. In this instance, the pretensions of academe are exposed by a member of the working class.

There once came to England a famous foreign professor, and before he came he gave notice that he would examine the students of all the colleges in England. After a time he had visited all but Cambridge, and he was on his road thither to examine publicly the whole university. Great was the bustle in Cambridge to prepare for the reception of the professor, and great also were the fears of the students, who dreaded the time when they must prove their acquirements before one so famous for his learning. As the period of his arrival approached their fears increased, and at last they determined to try some expedient which might avert the impending trial, and for this purpose several of the students were disguised in the habits of common laborers, and distributed in groups of two or three at convenient distances from each other along the road by which the professor was expected.

He had in his carriage arrived at the distance of a few miles from Cambridge when he met the first of these groups of laborers, and the coachman drew up his horses to inquire of them the distance. The professor was astonished to hear them answer in Latin. He proceeded on his way, and, after driving about half a mile, met with another group of laborers at work on the road, to whom a similar question was put by the coachman. The professor was still more astonished to hear them give answer in Greek. "Ah!" thought he, "they must be good scholars at Cambridge, when even the common laborers on the roads talk Latin and Greek. It won't do to examine them in the same way as other people." So all the rest of the way he was musing on the mode of examination he should adopt, and, just as he reached the outskirts of the town, he came to the determination that he would examine them *by signs*. As soon, therefore, as he had alighted from his carriage, he lost no time in making known this novel method of examination.

Now the students had never calculated on such a result as this from their stratagem, and they were, as might well be expected, sadly disappointed. There was one student in particular who had been studying very hard, and who was expected by everybody to gain the prize at the examination, and, as the idlest student in the university had the same chance of guessing the signs of the professor as himself, he was in very low spirits about it.

When the day of examination arrived, instead of attending it, he was walking sadly and mournfully by the banks of the river, near the mill, and it happened that the miller, who was a merry fellow and used to talk with this student

as he passed the mill in his walks, saw him, and asked him what was the matter with him. Then the student told him all about it, and how the great professor was going to examine by signs, and how he was afraid that he should not get through the examination.

"Oh! if that's all," said the miller, "don't be low about the matter. Did you never hear that a clown may sometimes teach a scholar wisdom? Only let me put on your clothes, with your cap and gown, and I'll go to the examination instead of you; and if I succeed you shall have the credit of it, and if I fail I will tell them who I am."

"But," said the student, "everybody knows that I have but one eye."

"Never mind that," said the miller; "I can easily put a black patch over one of mine." So they changed clothes, and the miller went to the professor's examination in the student's cap and gown, with a patch on his eye.

Well, just as the miller entered the lecture-room, the professor had tried all the other students, and nobody could guess the meaning of his signs or answer his questions. So the miller stood up, and the professor, putting his hand in his coat pocket, drew out an apple, and held it up towards him. The miller likewise put his hand in his pocket, and drew out a crust of bread, which he in like manner held out towards the professor. Then the professor put the apple in his pocket, and pointed at the miller with one finger: the miller in return pointed at him with two: the professor pointed with three: and the miller held out his clenched fist. "Right!" said the professor; and he adjudged the prize to the miller.

The miller made all haste to communicate these good tidings to his friend the student, who was waiting at the mill; and the student, having resumed his own clothes, hastened back to hear the prize given out to him. When he arrived at the lecture-room, the professor was on his legs explaining to the assembled students the meaning of the signs which himself and the student who had gained the prize made use of.

"First," said he, "I held out an apple, signifying thereby the fall of mankind through Adam's sin, and he very properly held up a piece of bread, which signified that by Christ, the bread of life, mankind was regenerated. Then I held out one finger, which meant that there is one God in the Trinity; he held out two fingers, signifying that there are two; I held out three fingers, meaning that there are three; and he held out his clenched fist, which was as much as to say that the three are one."

Well, the student who got the prize was sadly puzzled to think how the miller knew all this, and as soon as the ceremony of publishing the name of the successful candidate was over he hastened to the mill, and told him all the professor had said.

"Ah!" said the miller, "I'll tell you how it was. When I went in the professor looked mighty fierce, and he put his hand in his pocket, and fumbled about for some time, and at last he pulled out an apple, and he held it out as though he would throw it at me. Then I put my hand in my pocket, and could find

nothing but an old crust of bread, and so I held it out in the same way, meaning that if he threw the apple at me I would throw the crust at him. Then he looked still more fiercely, and held out his one finger, as much as to say he would poke my one eye out, and I held out two fingers, meaning that if he poked out my one eye I would poke out his two, and then he held out three of his fingers, as though he would scratch my face, and I clenched my fist and shook it at him, meaning that if he did I would knock him down. And then he said I deserved the prize.”

IRELAND

DEATH OF CUCHULAIN

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Gregory, Lady Isabella Augusta Perse. *Cuchulain of Muirthemne: The Story of the Men of the Red Branch of Ulster*. London: John Murray, 1902, 334–350.

Date: Unavailable

Original Source: Ireland

National Origin: Ireland

Cuchulain is the central hero of the Ulster **cycle** of Irish **myth**. His name, “Culann’s Hound,” was bestowed on him when as a child he killed a savage dog that attacked him belonging to the smith Culann. In recompense, the boy gave himself in service to the smith as his “watch dog.” Cuchulain was trained by the famous woman warrior Scáthach, and distinguished himself as the foremost of the elite Red Branch Knights, protectors of Ulster’s king Conchobar mac Nessa. The narrative of his final battle and Conall’s campaign of revenge against the victorious forces who had conspired to bring about the hero’s death includes the extraordinarily moving lament of Emer over the death of her husband, Cuchulain.

Cuchulain went on then to the house of his mother, Dechtire, to bid her farewell. And she came out on the lawn to meet him, for she knew well he was going out to face the men of Ireland, and she brought out wine in a vessel to him, as her custom was when he passed that way. But when he took the vessel in his hand, it was red blood that was in it. “My grief!” he said, “my mother Dechtire, it is no wonder others to forsake me, when you yourself offer me a drink of blood.” Then she filled the vessel a second, and a third time, and each time when she gave it to him, there was nothing in it but blood.

Then anger came on Cuchulain, and he dashed the vessel against a rock, and broke it, and he said, "The fault is not in yourself, my mother Dechtire, but my luck is turned against me, and my life is near its end, and I will not come back alive this time from facing the men of Ireland."

Then Dechtire tried hard to persuade him to go back and to wait till he would have the help of Conall. "I will not wait," he said, "for anything you can say; for I would not give up my great name and my courage for all the riches of the world. And from the day I first took arms till this day, I have never drawn back from a fight or a battle. And it is not now I will begin to draw back," he said, "for a great name outlasts life."

Then he went on his way, and Cathbad, that had followed him, went with him. And presently they came to a ford, and there they saw a young girl, thin and white-skinned and having yellow hair, washing and ever washing, and wringing out clothing that was stained crimson red, and she crying and keening all the time. "Little Hound," said Cathbad, "do you see what it is that young girl is doing? It is your red clothes she is washing, and crying as she washes, because she knows you are going to your death against Maeve's great army. And take the warning now and turn back again."

"Dear master," said Cuchulain, "you have followed me far enough; for I will not turn back from my vengeance on the men of Ireland that are come to burn and to destroy my house and my country. And what is it to me, the woman of the Sidhe to be washing red clothing for me? It is not long till there will be clothing enough, and armor and arms, lying soaked in pools of blood, by my own sword and my spear. And if you are sorry and loth to let me go into the fight, I am glad and ready enough myself to go into it, though I know as well as you yourself I must fall in it. Do not be hindering me any more, then," he said, "for, if I stay or if I go, death will meet me all the same. But go now to Emain, to Conchubar and to Emer [Cuchulain's wife], and bring them life and health from me, for I will never go back to meet them again. It is my grief and my wound, I to part from them! And O Laeg [Cuchulain's charioteer!]" he said, "we are going away under trouble and under darkness from Emer now, as it is often we came back to her with gladness out of strange places and far countries."

Then Cathbad left him, and he went on his way. And after a while he saw three hags, and they blind of the left eye, before him in the mud, and they having a venomous hound they were cooking with charms on rods of the rowan tree. And he was going by them, for he knew it was not for his good they were there.

But one of the hags called to him, "Stop a while with us, Cuchulain."

"I will not stop with you," said Cuchulain.

"That is because we have nothing better than a dog to give you," said the hag. "If we had a grand, big cooking-hearth, you would stop and visit us; but because it is only a little we have to offer you, you will not stop. But he that will not show respect for the small, though he is great, he will get no respect himself."

Then he went over to her, and she gave him the shoulder-blade of the hound out of her left hand, and he ate it out of his left hand. And he put it down on his left thigh, and the hand that took it was struck down, and the thigh he put it on was struck through and through, so that the strength that was in them before left them.

Then he went down the road of Meadhon-Luachair, by Slieve Fuad, and his enemy, Erc, son of Cairbre, saw him in the chariot, and his sword shining red in his hand, and the light of his courage plain upon him, and his hair spread out like threads of gold that change their color on the edge of the anvil under the smith's band, and the Crow of Battle in the air over his head.

"Cuchulain is coming at us," said Erc to the men of Ireland, "and let us be ready for him." So they made a fence of shields linked together, and Erc put a couple of the men that were strongest here and there, to let on to be fighting one another, that they might call Cuchulain to them; and he put a Druid with every couple of them, and he bid the Druid to ask Cuchulain's spears of him, for it would be hard for him to refuse a Druid. For it was in the prophecy of the children of Calatin that a king would be killed by each one of those spears in that battle.

And he bid the men of Ireland to give out shouts, and Cuchulain came against them in his chariot, doing his three thunder feats, and he used his spear and his sword in such a way, that their heads, and their hands, and their feet, and their bones, were scattered through the plain of Muirthemne; like the sands on the shore, like the stars in the sky, like the dew in May, like snow-flakes and hailstones, like leaves of the trees, like buttercups in a meadow, like grass under the feet of cattle on a fine summer day. It is red that plain was with the slaughter Cuchulain made when he came crashing over it.

Then he saw one of the men that was put to quarrel with the other, and the Druid called to him to come and hinder them, and Cuchulain leaped towards them. "Your spear to me," cried the Druid.

"I swear by the oath of my people," said Cuchulain, "you are not so much in want of it as I am in want of it myself. The men of Ireland are upon me," he said, "and I am upon them."

"I will put a bad name on you if you refuse it to me," said the Druid.

"There was never a bad name put on me yet, on account of any refusal of mine," said Cuchulain, and with that he threw the spear at him, and it went through his head, and it killed the men that were on the other side of him.

Then Cuchulain drove through the host, and Lugaid, son of Curoi, got the spear. "Who is it will fall by this spear, children of Calatin?" said Lugaid.

"A king will fall by it," said they. Then Lugaid threw the spear at Cuchulain's chariot, and it went through and hit the driver, Laeg, son of Rianganabra, and he fell back, and his bowels came out on the cushions of the chariot.

"My grief!" said Laeg, "it is hard I am wounded."

Then Cuchulain drew the spear out, and Laeg said his farewell to him, and Cuchulain said, "Today I will be a fighter and a chariot-driver as well."

Then he saw the other two men that were put to quarrel with one another, and one of them called out it would be a great shame for him not to give him his help. Then Cuchulain leaped towards them.

“Your spear to me, Cuchulain,” said the Druid. “I swear by the oath my people swear by,” said he, “you are not in such want of the spear as I am myself, for it is by my courage, and by my arms, that I have to drive out the four provinces of Ireland that are sweeping over Muirthemne today.”

“I will put a bad name upon you,” said the Druid. “I am not bound to give more than one gift in the day, and I have paid what is due to my name already,” said Cuchulain. Then the Druid said, “I will put a bad name on the province of Ulster, because of your refusal.”

“Ulster was never dispraised yet for any refusal of mine,” said Cuchulain, “or for anything I did unworthily. Though little of my life should be left to me, Ulster will not be reproached for me today.” With that he threw his spear at him, and it went through his head, and through the heads of the nine men that were behind him, and Cuchulain went through the host as he did before.

Then Erc, son of Cairbre Niafer, took up his spear. “Who will fall by this?” he asked the children of Calatin.

“A king will fall by it,” they said.

“I heard you say the same thing of the spear that Lugaid threw a while ago,” said Erc.

“That is true,” said they, “and the king of the chariot-drivers of Ireland fell by it, Cuchulain’s driver Laeg, son of Riangaabra.”

With that, Erc threw the spear, and it went through the Grey of Macha [Cuchulain’s horse]. Cuchulain drew the spear out, and they said farewell to one another. And then the Grey went away from him, with half his harness hanging from his neck, and he went into Glas-linn, the grey pool in Slieve Fuad.

Then Cuchulain drove through the host, and he saw the third couple disputing together, and he went between them as he did before. And the Druid asked his spear of him, but he refused him. “I will put a bad name on you,” said the Druid.

“I have paid what is due to my name today,” said he; “my honor does not bind me to give more than one request in a day.”

“I will put a bad name upon Ulster because of your refusal.”

“I have paid what is due for the honor of Ulster,” said Cuchulain.

“Then I will put a bad name on your kindred,” said the Druid.

“The news that I have been given a bad name shall never go back to that place I am never to go back to myself; for it is little of my life that is left to me,” said Cuchulain. With that he threw his spear at him, and it went through him, and through the heads of the men that were along with him.

“You do your kindness unkindly, Cuchulain,” said the Druid, as he fell.

Then Cuchulain drove for the last time through the host, and Lugaid took the spear, and he said, “Who will fall by this spear, children of Calatin?”

“A king will fall by it,” said they. “I heard you saying that a king would fall by the spear Erc threw a while ago.”

“That is true,” they said, “and the Grey of Macha fell by it, that was the king of the horses of Ireland.”

Then Lugaid threw the spear, and it went through and through Cuchulain’s body, and he knew he had got his deadly wound; and his bowels came out on the cushions of the chariot, and his only horse went away from him, the Black Sainglain, with half the harness hanging from his neck, and left his master, the king of the heroes of Ireland, to die upon the plain of Muirthemne.

Then Cuchulain said, “There is great desire on me to go to that lake beyond, and to get a drink from it.”

“We will give you leave to do that,” they said, “if you will come back to us after.”

“I will bid you come for me if I am not able to come back myself,” said Cuchulain.

Then he gathered up his bowels into his body, and he went down to the lake. He drank a drink and he washed himself, and he returned back again to his death, and he called to his enemies to come and meet him.

There was a pillar-stone west of the lake, and his eye lit on it, and he went to the pillar-stone, and he tied himself to it with his breast-belt, the way he would not meet his death lying down, but would meet it standing up. Then his enemies came round about him, but they were in dread of going close to him, for they were not sure but he might be still alive.

“It is a great shame for you,” said Erc, son of Cairbre, “not to strike the head off that man, in revenge for his striking the head off my father.”

Then the Grey of Macha came back to defend Cuchulain as long as there was life in him, and the hero-light was shining above him. And the Grey of Macha made three attacks against them, and he killed fifty men with his teeth, and thirty with each of his hoofs. So there is a saying, “It is not sharper work than this was done by the Grey of Macha, the time of Cuchulain’s death.”

Then a bird came and settled on his shoulder. “It is not on that pillar birds were used to settle,” said Erc.

Then Lugaid came and lifted up Cuchulain’s hair from his shoulders, and struck his head off, and the men of Ireland gave three heavy shouts, and the sword fell from Cuchulain’s hand, and as it fell, it struck off Lugaid’s right hand, so that it fell to the ground. Then they cut off Cuchulain’s hand, in satisfaction for it, and then the light faded away from about Cuchulain’s head, and left it as pale as the snow of a single night. Then all the men of Ireland said that as it was Maeve had gathered the army, it would be right for her to bring away the head to Cruachan.

“I will not bring it with me; it is for Lugaid that struck it off to bring it with him,” said Maeve. And then Lugaid and his men went away, and they brought away Cuchulain’s head and his right hand with them, and they went south, towards the Lifé river.

At that time the army of Ulster was gathering to attack its enemies, and Conall was out before them, and he met the Grey of Macha, and his share of blood dripping from him. And then he knew that Cuchulain was dead, and himself and the Grey of Macha went looking for Cuchulain's body. And when they saw his body at the pillar-stone, the Grey of Macha went and laid his head in Cuchulain's breast.

"That body is a heavy care to the Grey of Macha," said Conall.

Then Conall went after the army, thinking in his own mind what way he could get satisfaction for Cuchulain's death. For it was a promise between himself and Cuchulain that whichever of them would be killed the first, the other would get satisfaction for his death.

"And if I am the first that is killed," said Cuchulain at that time, "how long will it be before you get satisfaction for me?"

"Before the evening of the same day," said Conall, "I will have got satisfaction for you. And if it is I that will die before you," he said, "how long will it be before you get satisfaction for me?"

"Your share of blood will not be cold on the ground," said Cuchulain, "when I will have got satisfaction for you."

So Conall followed after Lugaid to the river Lifé.

Lugaid was going down to bathe in the water, but he said to his chariot-driver, "Look out there over the plain, for fear would any one come at us unknown."

The chariot-driver looked around him. "There is a man coming on us," he said, "and it is in a great hurry he is coming; and you would think he has all the ravens in Ireland flying over his head, and there are flakes of snow speckling the ground before him."

"It is not in friendship the man comes that is coming like that," said Lugaid. "It is Conall Cearnach it is, with Dub-dearg, and the birds that you see after him, they are the sods the horse has scattered in the air from his hoofs, and the flakes of snow that are speckling the ground before him, they are the froth that he scatters from his mouth and from the bit of his bridle. Look again," said Lugaid, "and see what way is he coming."

"It is to the ford he is coming, the same way the army passed over," said the chariot-driver.

"Let him pass by us," said Lugaid, "for I have no mind to fight with him."

But when Conall came to the middle of the ford, he saw Lugaid and his chariot-driver, and he went over to them. "Welcome is the sight of a debtor's face," said Conall. "The man you owe a debt to is asking payment of you now, and I myself am that man," he said, "for the sake of my comrade, Cuchulain, that you killed. And I am standing here now, to get that debt paid."

They agreed then to fight it out on the plain of Magh Argetnas, and in the fight Conall wounded Lugaid with his spear. From that they went to a place called Ferta Lugdac. "I would like that you would give me fair play," said Lugaid.

“What fair play?” said Conall Cearnach.

“That you and I should fight with one hand,” said he, “for I have the use of but one hand.”

“I will do that,” said Conall. Then Conall’s hand was bound to his side with a cord, and then they fought for a long time, and one did not get the better of the other. And when Conall was not gaining on him, his horse, Dub-dearg, that was near by, came up to Lugaid, and took a bite out of his side.

“Misfortune on me,” said Lugaid, “it is not right or fair that is of you, Conall.”

“It was for myself to do what is right and fair,” said Conall.

“I made no promise for a beast, that is without training and without sense.”

“It is well I know you will not leave me till you take my head, as I took Cuchulain’s head from him,” said Lugaid. “Take it, then, along with your own head. Put my kingdom with your kingdom, and my courage with your courage; for I would like that you would be the best champion in Ireland.”

Then Conall made an end of him, and he went back, bringing Cuchulain’s head along with him to the pillar stone where his body was.

And by that time Emer had got word of all that had happened, and that her husband had got his death by the men of Ireland, and by the powers of the children of Calatin. And it was Levarcham brought her the story, for Conall Cearnach had met her on his way, and had bade her go and bring the news to Emain Macha; and there she found Emer, and she sitting in her upper room, looking over the plain for some word from the battle.

And all the women came out to meet Levarcham, and when they heard her story, they made an outcry of grief and sharp cries, with loud weeping and burning tears; and there were long dismal sounds going through Emain, and the whole country round was filled with crying. And Emer and her women went to the place where Cuchulain’s body was, and they gathered round it there, and gave themselves to crying and keening.

And when Conall came back to the place, he laid the head with the body of Cuchulain, and he began to lament along with them, and it is what he said, “It is Cuchulain had prosperity on him, a root of valor from the time he was but a soft child; there never fell a better hero than the hero that fell by Lugaid of the Lands. And there are many are in want of you,” he said, “and until all the chief men of Ireland have fallen by me, it is not fitting there should ever be peace.

“It is grief to me, he to have gone into the battle without Conall being at his side; it was a pity for him to go there without my body beside his body. Och! It is he was my foster-son, and now the ravens are drinking his blood; there will not be either laughter or mirth, since the Hound has gone astray from us.”

“Let us bury Cuchulain now,” said Emer.

“It is not right to do that,” said Conall, “until I have avenged him on the men of Ireland. And it is a great shouting I hear about the plain of Muirthemne, and it is full the country is of crying after Cuchulain; and it is good at keeping

the country and watching the boundaries the man was that is here before me, a cross-hacked body in a pool of blood. And it is well it pleased Lugaid, son of Curoi, to be at the killing of Cuchulain, for it was Cuchulain killed the chiefs and the children of Deaguid round Fain, son of Foraoi, and round Curoi, son of Daire himself. And this shouting has taken away my wits and my memory from me," he said, "and it is hard for me, Cuchulain not to answer these cries, and I to be without him now; for there is not a champion in Ireland that was not in dread of the sword in his hand. And it is broken in halves my heart is for my brother, and I will bring my revenge through Ireland now, and I will not leave a tribe without wounding, or true blood without spilling, and the whole world will be told of my rout to the end of life and time, until the men of Munster and Connaught and Leinster will be crying for the rising they made against him. And without the spells of the children of Calatin, the whole of them would not have been able to do him to death."

After that complaint, rage and madness came on Conall, and he went forward in his chariot to follow after the rest of the men of Ireland, the same way as he had followed after Lugaid.

And Emer took the head of Cuchulain in her hands, and she washed it clean, and put a silk cloth about it, and she held it to her breast; and she began to cry heavily over it, and it is what she said:

"Ochone!" said she, "it is good the beauty of this head was, though it is low this day, and it is many of the kings and princes of the world would be keening it if they knew the way it is now, and the poets and the Druids of Ireland and of Alban; and many were the goods and the jewels and the rents and the tributes that you brought home to me from the countries of the world, with the courage and the strength of your hands!"

And she made this complaint:

"Och, head! Ochone, O head! you gave death to great heroes, to many hundreds; my head will lie in the same grave, the one Stone will be made for both of us.

"Och, hand! Ochone, hand that was once gentle. It is often it was put under my head; it is dear that hand was to me!

"Dear mouth! Ochone, kind mouth that was sweet-voiced telling stories; since the time love first came on your face, you never refused either weak or strong!

"Dear the man, dear the man, that would kill the whole of a great host; dear his cold bright hair, and dear his bright cheeks!

"Dear the king, dear the king, that never gave a refusal to any; thirty days it is tonight since my body lay beside your body.

"Och, two spears! Ochone, two spears, Och, shield! Och, deadly sword! Let them be given to Conall of the battles; there was never any wage given like that.

"I am glad, I am glad, Cuchulain of Muirthemne, I never brought red shame on your face, for any unfaithfulness against you.

“Happy are they, happy are they, who will never hear the cuckoo again forever, now that the Hound has died from us.

“I am carried away like a branch on the stream; I will not bind up my hair today. From this day I have nothing to say that is better than Ochone!”

And then she said, “It is long that it was showed to me in a vision of the night, that Cuchulain would fall by the men of Ireland, and it appeared to me Dundéalgan to be falling to the ground, and his shield to be split from lip to border, and his sword and his spears broken in the middle, and I saw Conall doing deeds of death before me, and myself and yourself in the one death. And oh! my love,” she said, “we were often in one another’s company, and it was happy for us; for if the world had been searched from the rising of the sun to sunset, the like would never have been found in one place, of the Black Sainglain and the Grey of Macha, and Laeg the chariot-driver, and myself and Cuchulain. And it is breaking my heart is in my body, to be listening to the pity and the sorrowing of women and men, and the harsh crying of the young men of Ulster keening Cuchulain, and Ulster to be in its weakness, and without strength to revenge itself upon the men of Ireland.”

And after she made that complaint, she brought Cuchulain’s body to Dundéalgan; and they all cried and keened about him until such time as Conall Cearnach came back from making his red rout through the army of the men of Ireland.

For he was not satisfied to make a slaughter of the men of Munster and Connaught, without reddening his hand in the blood of Leinster as well.

And when he had done that, he came to Dundéalgan, and his men along with him, but they made no rejoicing when they went back that time. And he brought the heads of the men of Ireland along with him in a gad, and he laid them out on the green lawn, and the people of the house gave three great shouts when they saw the heads.

And Emer came out, and when she saw Conall Cearnach, she said, “My great esteem and my welcome before you, king of heroes, and may your many wounds not be your death; for you have avenged the treachery done on Ulster, and now what you have to do is to make our grave, and to lay us together in the grave, for I will not live after Cuchulain.

“And tell me, Conall,” she said, “whose are those heads all around on the lawn, and which of the great men of Ireland did they belong to?”

And she was asking, and Conall was answering, and it is what she said, “Tell me, Conall, whose are those heads, for surely you have reddened your arms with them. Tell me the names of the men whose heads are there upon the ground.”

And Conall said, “Daughter of Forgall of the Horses, young Emer of the sweet words, it is in revenge for the Hound of Feats I brought these heads here from the south.”

“Whose is the great black head, with the smooth cheek redder than a rose; it is at the far end, on the left side, the head that has not changed its color?”

“It is the head of the king of Meath, Erc, son of Cairbre of Swift Horses; I brought his head with me from far off, in revenge for my own foster-son.”

“Whose is that head there before me, with soft hair, with smooth eyebrows, its eyes like ice, its teeth like blossoms; that head is more beautiful in shape than the others?”

“A son of Maeve; a destroyer of harbors, yellow-haired Maine, man of horses; I left his body without a head; all his people fell by my hand.”

“O great Conall, who did not fail us, whose head is this you hold in your hand? Since the Hound of Feats is not living, what do you bring in satisfaction for his head?”

“The head of the son of Fergus of the Horses, a destroyer in every battle-field, my sister’s son of the narrow tower; I have struck his head from his body.”

“Whose is that head to the west, with fair hair, the head that is spoiled with grief? I used to know his voice; I was for a while his friend.”

“That is he that struck down the Hound, Lugaid, son of Curoi of the Rhymes. His body was laid out straight and fair, I struck his head off afterwards.”

“Whose are those two heads farther out, great Conall of good judgment? For the sake of your friendship, do not hide the names of the men put down by your arms.”

“The heads of Laigaire and Clar Cuilt, two men that fell by my wounds. It was they wounded faithful Cuchulain; I made my weapons red in their blood.”

“Whose are those heads farther to the east, great Conall of bright deeds? The hair of the two is of the one color; their cheeks are redder than a calf’s blood.”

“Brave Cullain and hardy Cunlaid, two that were used to overcome in their anger. There to the east, Emer, are their heads; I left their bodies in a red pool.”

“Whose are those three heads with evil looks I see before me to the north? Their faces blue, their hair black; even hard Conall’s eye turns from them.”

“Three of the enemies of the Hound, daughters of Calatin, wise in enchantments; they are the three witches killed by me, their weapons in their hands.”

“O great Conall, father of kings, whose is that head that would overcome in the battle? His bushy hair is gold-yellow; his headdress is smooth and white like silver.”

“It is the head of the son of Red-Haired Ross, son of Necht Min, that died by my strength. This, Emer, is his head; the high king of Leinster of Speckled Swords.”

“O great Conall, change the story. How many of the men that harmed him fell by your hand that does not fail, in satisfaction for the head of Cuchulain?”

“It is what I say, ten and seven scores of hundreds is the number that fell, back to back, by the anger of my hard sword and of my people.”

“O Conall, what way are they, the women of Ireland, after the Hound? Are they mourning the son of Sualtim? Are they showing respect through their grief?”

“O Emer, what shall I do without my Cuchulain, my fine nursling, going in and out from me, tonight?”

“O Conall, lift me to the grave. Raise my stone over the grave of the Hound; since it is through grief for him I go to death, lay my mouth to the mouth of Cuchulain.

“I am Emer of the Fair Form; there is no more vengeance for me to find; I have no love for any man. It is sorrowful my stay is after the Hound.”

And after that Emer bade Conall to make a wide, very deep grave for Cuchulain; and she laid herself down beside her gentle comrade, and she put her mouth to his mouth, and she said, “Love of my life, my friend, my sweetheart, my one choice of the men of the earth, many is the woman, wed or unwed, envied me till today: and now I will not stay living after you.”

And her life went out from her, and she herself and Cuchulain were laid in the one grave by Conall. And he raised the one stone over them, and he wrote their names in Ogham, and he himself and all the men of Ulster keened them.

But the three times fifty queens that loved Cuchulain saw him appear in his Druid chariot, going through Emain Macha; and they could hear him singing the music of the Sidhe [fairies].

THREE MEN OF GALWAY

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Michaelis, Kate Woodbridge. “An Irish Folk-Tale.” *Journal of American Folklore* 23 (1910): 425–428.

Date: 1910

Original Source: Ireland

National Origin: Ireland

In a narrative built on **motifs** commonly found in both “The Robber Brothers” (AT 1525R) and “The Rich and the Poor Peasant” (AT 1535), a **trickster** gets the better of two older and exploitive cousins; **variants** of the same tales usually pit brothers against one another. The concluding sentence of the tale may be intended as social commentary on America and the waves of immigrants who left Ireland during this period.

Over beyant [beyond], on the road to Galway, there were three cabins that stood side by side, each the same as all the rest; and in them lived three cousins, with their three mothers and their three cows. Times was hard then in Ireland, and has been since, and the cousins had to work hard to put bread in their stomachs and breath in their bodies; so one day the eldest cousin says to the others, “Let us drive our cows to market and sell them for a good price, and be rich then!” and the others agreed.

Now, it chanced that the youngest cousin's cow was very lean entirely, the smallest and poorest of all the cows in the land; and as the three walked together, the other two said teasing words to him, because it was little his cow would bring in the market.

At last the youngest cousin got vexed indeed, and says he to his cousins, "Go you to the market with your large and fine cows, me and my cow will bide here. I will kill her and sell the hide and tallow." So he bided, and the others went on. Well, after he was tired of being vexed, he up and killed his little cow, and began to strip the hide off her carcass. While he worked, and mind you, it was not the nicest of work, who should come hopping along but a big magpie, head on one side, looking wise indeed.

"Peck-peck!" says he, like any human, for he caught a smell of the blood; so up he hopped on the hide to see what it was all about; and immediate the youngest cousin whipped over the hide, master Magpie inside, and started for the nearest tavern, hide and bird under his arm.

When he got to the tavern, in he marched, bold as you please, calling out for a nip of whiskey to stay his stomach, for it was near to starving the poor boy was. So the barmaid—she was the daughter of the host—she looked him over, and, seeing that he was dressed the poorest and had nought with him but a bundle of bloody hide, just served him with the worst but one of the whiskeys of the world. As soon as the cousin got the taste of it on his tongue, he put his foot on the bundle of hide, and the magpie within screeched out loud.

"And what's that?" says the girl.

"'Tis my magpie, warning me," says the cousin.

"And what is he after warning you?" says the girl.

"He's warning me of the poorness of the whiskey," says he. So the girl, not believing him at all, nodded her head to herself, and put before him the one other whiskey that could be worse. Now, the minute he smelled of it, down came the cousin's foot as hard as might be, and loud screeched out the poor craythur below.

"And this is poorer still, he tells me," says the youngest cousin.

"Faix, and it's right he is," says the girl. So she ran and called her father, who came, all in a hurry, to see the bird that was telling tales on his whiskeys. When he had talked with the cousin, and the bird had cocked the bright eye at it, nothing would suit him but he must own it; so he offered money for it, till at last the youngest cousin went off with his pockets full of gold, and the bird biding behind at the tavern.

When the two older cousins came back from the market, it was long faces they had, for never a one had asked to buy their cows, and they were foot-sore and weary. When they saw the youngest cousin sitting by his door and counting over his gold, they were dumb-struck. When they could get breath to question him, he boasted that he had killed and stripped his cow, rolled a magpie in its hide, and taken it to the public-house, where he had sold it to the landlord for all that gold.

“And is it buying bloody magpies he is?” asked the cousins.

“Faix, and it is,” says he.

As soon as morning comes, up gets the two cousins, kills their fine fat cows, strips them, catches two magpies, wraps them in the skins, and hurries off with them to the nearest inn. Then, of course, the landlord just laughs in their faces, and when they talk back, drives them out with hard words. Home they came, pocket-empty, and vexed indeed with the youngest cousin. Now, it chanced that he, hiding safe from them, heard the threats they made. So when the night came, he coaxed his old mother to sleep in his bed, and himself got well into the chimney. In came the two cousins, creeping easy, fell upon the poor mother, who was the aunt of the two of them, heaven rest her soul! and left her cold and dead. Up came the youngest cousin out of the chimney, fixed up his mother in her best clothes all fine, and carried her on his back to the house of a farmer who had the best well in all the country round. As it was early, he propped his old mother against the well, her back to the house, and when it was light, went to the door and asked to buy wine for himself and for her.

“It’s bashful she is,” says he to the daughter of the farmer, “and never a step will she come into the house. Go you out with the wine and give it to her. It’s hard of hearing she is,” says he, “so you must pinch her and shake her well if she does not turn round.”

Out went the girl with the wine, called loud, bellowed, then, at the last, up and shook her good, when into the well, head and heels, went she. At that the girl she ran away screaming out; and when she did not come back, the youngest cousin went out and found his mother deep in the well. And the storming of the man! Crying out and stomping his feet, and saying that it was all the mother he had in the world! At this came out the farmer and gave him all the gold he had in the house to stop his noise, lest the people going by should hear it. And the farmer took the old woman out of the well that very day, for fear she should spoil the water; for it was a very good well, that was.

When the two cousins got up next morning, who should they see but the youngest cousin with a great bag of gold.

“And how come you alive?” said they, well vexed.

“Faix,” says he, “it was my mother you killed, and I’ve been to the village beyant and sold her for all this gold. It’s a great price they are paying for old hags for gunpowder,” says he.

So the two of them lost no time in killing their mothers, put them in bags, and hurried off to the village, calling out, loud, “Old hags for gunpowder! Old hags for gunpowder!” and then the people were quite mad with them. They fell upon them and beat them, and shut them up in the jail, for killing of their mothers, nice tidy old dames that they were!

Well, after they got out again, they came home; and there they found the youngest cousin living on the best to be had, and they didn’t like it at all, at all. It was a great deal they said to him about the lot of trouble he had given them;

and they were so vexed at him, that he saw he had best beware. So he kept far away from them. But one day he was searching after rabbits, which he well liked for his supper, and had just caught two, when he saw the two cousins after him; and before he could hide from them, they were upon him, had him tied, and in a bag, ready to put an end to him. But just as they were tying the bag, he managed slyly to break the foot of each rabbit he had caught, one the left, and the other the right, and let them go free; and off they scudded, one to the right and the other to the left. Now, the two cousins also liked well, rabbits for supper; and, having the youngest cousin fast tied, they left him there in the bag, and off they ran, chasing the rabbits.

Now, it chanced well for the youngest cousin that while they were pursuing of the woods in search of the rabbits, along came a jobber, driving a herd of cattle to the fair; and he heard the youngest cousin in the bag singing out gay that he was going to heaven, for he had heard the jobber going by. The jobber, he was having a hard time, poor man, and he had heard that heaven was a fine place.

“And how do you get there?” says he to the cousin in the bag.

“Get you into this bag, and I will show you,” says the youngest cousin. So the jobber cut the strings of the bag, and out leapt the cousin and put the jobber in the bag in his place, tied fast the strings, and bid him wait for the angels to carry him straight to heaven. Then home went the youngest cousin by the shortest road, driving of the herd of cattle before him.

After a bit, came back the two cousins, with no rabbits and bad in their tempers, picked up the bag, and threw it, man and all, into a hole without a bottom, and went home. And, behold! when they turned the corner, there was the youngest cousin, large as life, and a great deal more natural, smoking his pipe after the milking of his new cows. And beside his stool was the bag of gold the jobber had left behind him on the ground.

“And is it out of the hole you are?” says they, hardly trusting to their eyesight.

“It is, indeed,” says he, “and it’s much obliged to you I am for putting me in. Mind that gold now!”

“And where did you get it?” said they.

“In the bottom of the hole,” says he, “and it’s many a bag I had to leave behind me when I climbed out. There was but two I had time for; and one I gave to a jobber passing by, for a fine herd of cattle that was just after eating its supper in the field beyant.”

Then the two cousins, they just fell on his neck, and they said they would forgive him everything, and never kill him again, if he would but tell them how to get to that hole, for the way had gone clean out of their minds.

So off the three went, side by side, as pleasant as you please; and when they came to the hole, “One at a time!” says the youngest cousin; so he tied the eldest cousin well into a bag, and pitched him into the hole. But when he could find no bottom to it, he began to cry out and to curse.

“Faix, and what may that noise be?” says the middle cousin.

“It’s our cousin crying out for joy at the bags of gold,” says the youngest cousin; then the middle cousin ran quick to the bag and got in without help, he was so feared that the eldest cousin would get the biggest share of the gold. Then the youngest cousin tied him up well and pitched him down into the well. And there the two of them are to this very day.

But the youngest cousin took his pick of the three cabins, and he married a fine wife and had plenty of children, and money to spare for every one of them; and when he died, he left a cabin apiece to three of them, but the rest of his family went over to America, and very likely they are dead by now.

SCOTLAND

THE BAKER OF BEAULY

Tradition Bearer: Dr. Corbet

Source: MacBain, Alexander, and W. A. Clouston. "The Baker of Beauly': A Highland Version of the Tale of 'The Three Precepts'." *Folklore* 3 (1892): 183–192.

Date: 1887

Original Source: Scotland

National Origin: Scotland

The following **variant** of "The Three Precepts" (AT 150 as "Advice of the Fox") stresses the value of good counsel over money. By choosing wisdom over wages, the protagonist acquires both. Currently, Scotland (along with England, Northern Ireland, and Wales) is one of the four constituent countries of the United Kingdom. Lying immediately to the north of England on the island of Great Britain, political conflicts with that nation marked long periods of Scottish history. The Battle of Culloden (1746) was the final clash between the Jacobites who supported the claims of Charles Edward Stuart to the British throne and the British troops of King George II. The battle resulted in a decisive defeat of the Jacobites, and, since the majority of Prince Charles' forces were Highland Scots, a brutal suppression of that culture.

At the time of the Battle of Culloden there lived in Beauly a widow who had an only son, whose name was Donald Fraser. He went along with the rest of the Clan Fraser to the battle. The rebels were defeated, and Donald fled to Beauly as fast as his legs could carry him. His poor mother was glad to see him back again unslain, unslain, sound and healthy, poor,

hungry, and tired as he was. He, however, knew that his life would be endangered if he stayed in his mother's bothy [simple shelter] for one night, as the red-coats were in pursuit of those that helped the Prince, though it was by the press-gang the most of the Frasers were compelled to join Lord Lovat, who was afterwards beheaded. He was thus a wanderer for three years, taking shelter in the hills, hollows, rocks, woods, and caves that lie between the Bannock Loch and Birds' Loch in the heights of Beaully. On a certain day at the end of three years, he says to his mother, "Woman, I feel tired of my life; we are now reduced to poverty, and destitute of both meat and clothes. I will go and try if I can get work, come what may."

"You will not go," says she, "till first you get your mother's bannock [griddle baked cake made of oatmeal] and blessing."

She made a Beltane bannock ready for him in the morning, and thus with the bannock and his mother's blessing he set out for Inverness. There he got no work to do. From Inverness he proceeded to Nairn, where he got work. He took up his lodgings in the house of an old man who had an only daughter. By-and-by Donald began to court the girl and married her. On the night of the wedding whatever came into Donald's head, he got up, put on his clothes, went away and left her there. On he traveled till he arrived at Keith, where he tried to get work, but failed. Thence he proceeded to Huntly, but could find no work there. At last he was on the verge of starvation, for bread or drink he had not tasted since he had left Nairn. There was no alternative for him but to go and beg. He went into a baker's shop and said, "In the name of God, give me something to eat, for I am dying of hunger."

"Bread or drink you will not get from me, you nasty beast," says the baker. "If I were giving to every one of your class that comes the way, I would not have much left to myself."

"Oh," says poor Donald, "don't allow me to die of hunger; give me food, and I will do anything you ask me."

"What could you do?" says the baker.

"I can work," says Donald.

"But," says the baker, "I don't want a workman just now, and I am sure you cannot bake."

"But could I not learn?" says Donald.

"Undoubtedly you could learn," says the baker, "but it would take you seven years to do so."

"Give me food," says Donald, "and tomorrow morning I'm your man."

He served the baker for seven years, and at the end of the seven years, says the baker to Donald, "I am well pleased with you. You served your time honestly, and today I do not know where there is a better tradesman than you. I do not know how I will get on without you, but if you will stay with me for another seven years, I will give you this (mentioning the wages) for the past seven years and the seven to come."

“Tomorrow morning,” says Donald, “I’m your man.”

He served the baker for the second seven years, and at the end of the seven years the same agreement was made between them as at the end of the first seven years, with this difference, however, that at the end of the seven years Donald was to receive double the wages he had got for the fourteen years he had already served. They agreed as usual, and honest Donald served the baker for twenty-one years. At the expiry of the twenty-one years, the baker says to Donald, “You are now at the end of three seven years, and if you will serve me for another period of seven years, I will give you as much pay for the seven as you have to get for the twenty-one that are past.”

“No, I will not stay for one year more,” says Donald. “I will go home and see my wife.”

“Your wife,” says the baker; “have you a wife? You’re a strange man; you have been here for twenty-one years, and no one ever heard you say you had a wife. But now,” says the baker, “which would you rather: your three wages or three advices?”

“Oh,” says Donald, “I cannot answer that question till I get the advice of a wiser man than myself; but I will tell you in the morning.”

Donald came down early in the morning as he had promised.

“What now?” asked the baker. “Which are you going to take—the three wages or the three advices?”

“The three advices,” says Donald.

“Well, the first advice is,” says the baker. “Keep the proper roundabout road; the second advice is: Do not stay in a house where there is a young, beautiful wife, with an old surly husband; and the third advice is: Think thrice before you ever lift your hand to strike anyone. And here is money for you to take you home, and also three loaves of bread; but remember that you will neither look at them nor take them asunder till you do so at your wife’s knee, so that they may be the means of making peace between you, for you are so long away from her that it is hard to say whether she is alive or dead, or how will she welcome you.”

Donald at once set off for Nairn. His intention was to stay the first night at Keith, and next night he would be at home. On the road between Huntly and Keith he overtook a peddler, who greeted him kindly, and asked him where he was going. Donald told him he was going to Keith. The peddler said he was very glad, as he was going there too; and the conversation they would have on the road would make them feel the journey shorter.

Thus they went along till they came to a wood, when the peddler said, “There is a short cut through this wood which will shorten our journey to Keith by three miles, besides taking the road.”

“Take it, then,” says Donald. “Dear have I paid for the advice. I’ll take the road.”

The peddler took the short cut through the wood, but did not proceed far when Donald heard cries of “Murder! Murder!”

Off he set through the wood to help the peddler, who was after being robbed by two robbers.

“You now see the force of my advice,” Donald says. “You are robbed, and you may be thankful you were not murdered, let alone the time we have lost. We will not reach Keith tonight.”

They came to a farmer’s house at the roadside, and as it was late, and they were still a good way from Keith, they went in and asked if they could get lodgings for the night. This they got from the inmates, who were sitting round a good fire, in a frank and pleasant manner. They also got a good warming and plenty to eat.

Donald saw the farmer’s wife, a young and charming woman. An old, grey, blear-eyed, unkempt man came in after her. But when he had come in, Donald says to the peddler, “I will not stay here any longer. Dear have I paid for the advice.”

“Surely you are not going to take the road at this time of night,” says the peddler; “and if you won’t stay in the house, you can sleep in the barn.”

Donald agreed to this proposal, and he went to sleep in the barn with his clothes on. He had a wisp of straw for a pillow, a wisp of straw for a bolster, a wisp of straw on both sides of him, and a wisp above him. He was so buried in straw that he had barely room to breathe.

He had scarcely slept, when two persons came in, and sat on the straw right on the top of him. Uncomfortable as he was, he dared not complain or open his mouth, but with a scissors he had in his pocket he cut off a small piece of the coat of the man that was sitting near his head, which was going into his mouth and eyes, and he put the piece he had cut off into his waistcoat-pocket. The man and woman, for such they happened to be, now began courting at the hardest. At last the woman said, “What a pity that old and nasty *bodach* (earl) wasn’t dead. If you would place the razor on his neck, I would send it through his throat myself.”

This was what happened. When Donald came out of the barn in the morning, the poor peddler was in the hands of the officers of the law. He was handcuffed, and was being taken away to Aberdeen on the charge of having murdered the farmer. In the morning the farmer was found dead with his throat cut.

Donald followed them to Aberdeen; the peddler was taken before the Lords; he was condemned, and the judge put on the black cap to pronounce the sentence of death. At this moment Donald gets up in court, and says, “My Lord, if you please, can a man that has not been summoned to court as a witness speak?”

“What have you to say?” asked his Lordship.

Donald then related the circumstances of the barn, and requested that the young widow’s sweetheart be brought into court in the clothes he wore on the night of the murder, and that he (Donald) could give proof that the young man was guilty and the peddler innocent.

The young man was taken into court, and when he was placed at the bar, Donald asked if there was a tailor in the court-house.

“Yes,” says a man, rising opposite him.

“Try,” says Donald to the tailor, “if there is a piece cut off from the skirt of his coat.”

“Yes,” says the tailor.

Thereupon Donald produced from his waistcoat-pocket the piece he had cut off from the man’s coat, and giving it to the tailor, asked him if it suited the piece wanting in the coat.

“Yes,” says the tailor, “it is the very piece that was cut off from the skirt of the coat.”

Donald then related the circumstances of the case a second time. The man and woman were both executed in Aberdeen for this murder, and the peddler was free.

Donald now set out for Nairn to visit his wife, but, before leaving the town, he bought a pistol, powder, and shot. “Who knows,” says he, “what may happen to me before I reach my journey’s end?”

At last the good man arrived at Nairn at night, but well did he find out the house of his loving wife. He opened the door, and upon going in, he at once knew his wife’s voice as she and another man were quarreling. He charged his pistol to shoot the man; but here he remembered his third advice the baker gave him, “Think thrice before you lift your hand to strike any man.”

When the man stopped quarreling, the woman began and said, “You young rascal, I have only yourself, and little pleasure have I ever got from you or your father before you. He left me the night we were married, and it is not known whether he is dead or alive; but he left you behind him to be a burden on me.”

When Donald heard this, he was thankful he did not shoot his son; so he marched in where the pair were, took the loaves of white bread off his back, and broke them on his wife’s knee. Out of the first loaf tumbled the wages of the first seven years; out of the second, the wages of the second seven years, and out of the third the wages of the third seven years. Afterwards they lived together as happy as people could wish for.

THE RED CALF

Tradition Bearer: Mrs. Moir

Source: “Three Folktales from Old Meldrum, Aberdeenshire.” *Folk-Lore Journal* 2 (1884): 72–74.

Date: Unavailable

Original Source: Scotland

National Origin: Scotland

The following **variant** of the “Cinderella” plot (AT 510A) adds elements of the closely related **tale type** “The Little Red Ox” (AT 511A).

Specifically, the heroine's benefactor is a red calf, her abusive family attempts to cause the slaughter of the helpful animal, and the girl escapes with the calf's help. Compare "The Red Calf" to the Italian "Cinderella" (page 270).

Once, a long time ago, there was a gentleman had two lassies. The oldest was ugly and ill natured, but the youngest was a bonnie lassie and good; but the ugly one was the favorite with her father and mother. So they ill used the youngest in every way, and they sent her into the woods to herd cattle, and all the food she got was a little porridge and whey.

Well, amongst the cattle was a red calf, and one day it said to the lassie, "Gee [give] that porridge and whey to the doggie, and come wi' me."

So the lassie followed the calf through the wood, and they came to a bonnie hoosie [house], where there was a nice dinner ready for them; and after they had feasted on everything nice they went back to the herding.

Every day the calf took the lassie away, and feasted her on dainties; and every day she grew bonnier. This disappointed the father and mother and the ugly sister. They expected that the rough usage she was getting would take away her beauty; and they watched and watched until they saw the calf take the lassie away to the feast. So they resolved to kill the calf; and not only that, but the lassie was to be compelled to kill him with an axe. Her ugly sister was to hold his head, and the lassie who loved him had to give the blow and kill him.

She could do nothing but greet [weep]; but the calf told her not to greet, but to do as he bade her; and his plan was that instead of coming down on his head she was to come down on the lassie's head who was holding him, and then she was to jump on his back and they would run off. Well, the day came for the calf to be killed, and everything was ready—the ugly lassie holding his head, and the bonnie lassie armed with the axe. So she raised the axe, and came down on the ugly sister's head; and in the confusion that took place she got on the calf's back and they ran away.

And they ran and better nor ran till they came to a meadow where grew a great lot of rashes [rushes]; and, as the lassie had not on many clothes, they pu'ed rashes, and made a coatie for her. And they set off again and traveled, and traveled, till they came to the king's house. They went in, and asked if they wanted a servant. The mistress said she wanted a kitchen lassie, and she would take Rashin-Coatie.

So Rashin-Coatie said she would stop, if they keepit the calf too. They were willing to do that. So the lassie and the calf stoppit in the king's house, and everybody was well pleased with her; and when Yule came, they said she was to stop at home and make the dinner, while all the rest went to the kirk [church]. After they were away the calf asked if she would like to go. She said she would, but she had no clothes, and she could not leave the dinner. The calf said he

would give her clothes, and make the dinner too. He went out, and came back with a grand dress, all silk and satin, and such a nice pair of slippers. The lassie put on the dress, and before she left she said:

Ilka peat gar anither burn,
An' ilka spit gar anither turn,
An' ilka pot gar anither play,
Till I come frae the kirk on gude Yule day.

So she went to the kirk, and nobody kent [knew] it was Rashin-Coatie. They wondered who the bonnie lady could be; and, as soon as the young prince saw her, he fell in love with her, and resolved he would find out who she was, before she got home; but Rashin-Coatie left before the rest, so that she might get home in time to take off her dress, and look after the dinner. When the prince saw her leaving, he made for the door to stop her; but she jumped past him, and in the hurry lost one of her shoes. The prince kept the shoe, and Rashin-Coatie got home all right, and the folk said the dinner was very nice.

Now the prince was resolved to find out who the bonnie lady was, and he sent a servant through all the land with the shoe. Every lady was to try it on, and the prince promised to marry the one it would fit. That servant went to a great many houses, but could not find a lady that the shoe would go on, it was so little and neat.

At last he came to a henwife's house, and her daughter had little feet. At first the shoe would not go on, but she paret [pared] her feet, and clippit [clipped] her toes, until the shoes went on. Now the prince was very angry. He knew it was not the lady that he wanted; but, because he had promised to marry whoever the shoe fitted, he had to keep his promise.

The marriage day came, and, as they were all riding to the kirk, a little bird flew through the air, and it sang:

Clippit feet an' paret taes is on the saidle set;
But bonnie feet an' braw feet sits in the kitchen neuk.

"What's that ye say?" said the prince.

"Oh," says the henwife, "would ye mind what a feel bird says?"

But the prince said, "Sing that again, bonnie birdie."

So the bird sings:

Clippit feet an' paret taes is on the saidle set;
But bonnie feet an' braw feet sits in the kitchen neuk.

The prince turned his horse and rode home, and went straight to his father's kitchen, and there sat Rashin-Coatie. He kent her at once, she was so bonnie; and when she tried on the shoe it fitted her, and so the prince married Rashin-Coatie, and they lived happy, and built a house for the red calf, who had been so kind to her.

WALES

THE LEGEND OF SAVADDAN LAKE

Tradition Bearer: Isaac C. Hughes

Source: “The Legend of Savaddan Lake.” *Folklore* 19 (1908): 459–463.

Date: Unavailable

Original Source: Wales

National Origin: Wales

Wales, one the four constituent countries of the United Kingdom, occupies the southwest portion of the island of Great Britain. The following Welsh **legend** accounts both for the origin of Savaddan Lake and for the “Church of St. Gastayn.” An important theme of the narrative is the inevitable and all-encompassing destruction that is wrought by impiety. Extraordinary acts of devotion are required to atone for such transgressions.

Not far from the foot of the Black Mountains of Brecon, in a low lovely fertile valley, under the shadow of Mount Troedd, lies Savaddan Lake (the Llangorse Lake of our maps). The following tradition is told regarding it.

Many years ago, when all the surrounding country was under Prince Tewdryg, the bed of the lake was occupied by Savaddan, a town identified with the Roman Loventium. It was, at the time of our story, ruled by a maiden, the beautiful and high-spirited Gwenonwy, who was under Tewdryg’s suzerainty. From far and wide came suitors for her hand and throne, but none found such favor as the noble Gruffydd, youngest son of a neighboring prince named Meigyr. He was all that her heart could desire, yet the maiden Princess dared not wed him, for her father on his deathbed had demanded, and received her promise, never to become the bride of one who was not her equal both in birth and fortune.

She was a rich and powerful Princess, while he, though of good birth, was poor. After long delays Gruffydd determined to bring matters to a crisis, and went one night to the Princess's bower and urged her to forget her oath and wed him, regardless of her promise.

"Never," replied the Princess, "shall it be said that the daughter of the noble Ieuan broke her word. I love you, Gruffydd; but my honor is dearer to me than even your love. You, too, are a Prince, and of a noble family. Use your good arm and sword as your fathers have done, and gain wealth as they did, and come to me a year hence my equal as well in fortune as in rank. For a year and a day I will wait and pray for you; return to me within that time a bridegroom worthy of Gwenonwy's hand, or return no more."

The Prince then left Savaddan and his love, and went to the court of Tewdryg, and for ten months fought under his banner against Madoc, the rebel lord of Skenpeth, gaining much honor but little wealth. At last the war ended, and Gruffydd resolved to make a final appeal to the love of Gwenonwy. Leaving Tewdryg's capital, he arrived on the third day of his journey at Bryn-yr-Allt, a monastery on the mountain side overlooking Savaddan. Here he asked and obtained shelter for the night. He had not slept long when he was awakened by the sound of voices in the refectory, which was separated from his room only by a thin wooden partition.

He overheard a conversation between Owen the Sub-Prior and another monk, Father Aeddan, from which he learnt that the Prior was expected to return next day, bringing with him mules laden with precious stones and jeweled robes, bequeathed to the monastery by Howell, Prince of Cwmdru, whom he had attended on his deathbed. Gruffydd determined, on hearing this, to waylay and rob the Prior. He went to a spring, named Codvan's Well, by which the Prior must pass, attacked him and left him for dead, and carried off his mules with their loads to Savaddan.

He told Gwenonwy his story, and was received by her with favor. Meanwhile the monks who had gone out to meet the Prior found him lying insensible, but he recovered sufficiently to tell them who the murderer was before he died. That night an order arrived from Princess Gwenonwy that a monk from the monastery should attend that night at the Palace to unite her to Gruffydd, Prince of Bronllys. In the evening a vast assembly thronged the royal chapel to witness the marriage.

Father Owen performed the ceremony, and as the young pair knelt before him for the final benediction, the priest stepped forward, and in a loud authoritative tone exclaimed, "Rise, Gruffydd of Bronllys, thou murderer; and thou, too, lady accomplice in his crime, inasmuch as thou hast not avenged it. Wedded, yet unblest, hear God's decree. Thou, Prince, hast shed sacred blood, and thou, Princess, rejoicest in the unholy deed. Therefore God shall visit you with a great and terrible punishment. In His mercy He will bear with you for a time, but in the fourth generation the blow will fall not only on yourselves, but on all your unblest seed. It shall be; God hath spoken it."

Without the blessing of the Church upon her union, the kneeling Princess rose in a rage, and, turning to her guards, she said, "This presumptuous man has dared to offer an insult to a Princess of Savaddan within her own palace walls. Hence with him to the guard tower. Let him there await the fulfillment of his prophecy. Should he still live at the fourth generation, and his words prove vain, he shall die. It shall be; I have spoken it."

Many long and weary years the good father spent in a lonely cell at Savaddan, while the town and Court were given up to debauchery and vice.

Meanwhile Gruffydd and Gwenonwy, now growing old, saw springing up around them a goodly family of children and grandchildren. Soon Myvig, their eldest grandson, married, and in due course a child was born. This was the long-dreaded advent of the fourth generation; still there was no evidence of the predicted punishment.

On the fortieth day from the birth of Myvig's son, the Princess, persuading herself that Owen's curse was merely an idle threat, summoned all her family and friends to a great banquet in honor of the young prince's birth. On the appointed day the great hall of the palace was full. The feast was at its height, and wine was flowing freely, when four guards entered, leading the venerable Sub-Prior.

The Prince taunted him with the non-fulfillment of his prophecy, but he only repeated that vengeance was at hand unless the guilty ones repented. The Prince ordered that he be shut up in the topmost room of the watch-tower, which should then be burnt to the ground. And this was done.

Father Aeddán, now Prior, heard of what had happened, and from the monastery above watched the town and flames of the burning tower shoot up towards the sky. After the tower had fallen, a mist came down upon the valley and hid the town. While the Prior prayed the mist gradually rose, and the valley was seen entirely filled with a vast lake. No trace of the lost town ever appeared save a cradle containing a sleeping child, the infant son of Myvig, the last of the princes of Savaddan.

Lifting the child from its cradle, Father Aeddán bore it to the monastery. Naming it Gastayn, he taught it all that the good monks could teach. Gastayn afterwards expressed a desire to embrace the ascetic life, and built a hut on the lake's edge in a sheltered spot. There he spent a life of great piety and rigor, in continual prayer for the souls of his wicked progenitors. His holiness and learning was so famed that one of the royal princes of South Wales entrusted his sons to Gastayn's care. Following in the footsteps of their pious tutor, they became renowned for the purity and sanctity of their lives, some of them, indeed, even obtaining the glorious crown of martyrdom. Gastayn, at his death, was buried in his hermitage, where in after years a church was built which to this day bears the name of the "Church of St. Gastayn."

Such is the legend told by the country folk in the neighborhood, who still gravely tell you that on a calm summer's day it is possible to see the church tower through the waters of the lake, and even to hear the bells ring!

Central Europe

GERMANY

HANSEL AND GRETTEL

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Lang, Andrew. *The Blue Fairy Book*. London: Longmans, Green and Company, 1889, 251–258.

Date: ca. 1812–1814

Original Source: Grimm, Jacob and Wilhelm. *Kinder- und Hausmärchen (Children's and Household Tales)*.

National Origin: Germany

Germany's location in west central Europe and on the Baltic and North Seas made for a rich repertoire of folktales. The scholarship of the Brothers Grimm, Jacob (1785–1863) and Wilhelm (1786–1859), rather than the geographic location of their homeland, led to certain tales as becoming virtual archetypes of their types. “Hansel and Grettel” (AT 327A, Grimm Tale 15) is one such tale. **Variants** of the narrative are distributed cross-culturally; this version illustrates well the contrasts and parallelism that is typical of the **ordinary folktale** (or **märchen**). The innocent children are contrasted to the cruel and cynical stepmother and witch (who may, in fact, be one in the same). Birds lead them into disaster, but a bird also saves them. Many other examples of this pattern become apparent on reading the tale.

Once upon a time there dwelt on the outskirts of a large forest a poor woodcutter with his wife and two children; the boy was called Hansel and the girl Grettel. He had always little enough to live on, and once, when there was a great famine in the land, he couldn't even provide them with

daily bread. One night, as he was tossing about in bed, full of cares and worry, he sighed and said to his wife, "What's to become of us? how are we to support our poor children, now that we have nothing more for ourselves?"

"I'll tell you what, husband," answered the woman; "early tomorrow morning we'll take the children out into the thickest part of the wood; there we shall light a fire for them and give them each a piece of bread; then we'll go on to our work and leave them alone. They won't be able to find their way home, and we shall thus be rid of them."

"No, wife," said her husband, "that I won't do; how could I find it in my heart to leave my children alone in the wood? The wild beasts would soon come and tear them to pieces."

"Oh! you fool," said she, "then we must all four die of hunger, and you may just as well go and plane the boards for our coffins"; and she left him no peace till he consented.

"But I can't help feeling sorry for the poor children," added the husband.

The children, too, had not been able to sleep for hunger, and had heard what their stepmother had said to their father. Grettel wept bitterly and spoke to Hansel, "Now it's all up with us."

"No, no, Grettel," said Hansel, "don't fret yourself; I'll be able to find a way to escape, no fear." And when the old people had fallen asleep he got up, slipped on his little coat, opened the back door and stole out. The moon was shining clearly, and the white pebbles which lay in front of the house glittered like bits of silver. Hansel bent down and filled his pocket with as many of them as he could cram in. Then he went back and said to Grettel, "Be comforted, my dear little sister, and go to sleep: God will not desert us"; and he lay down in bed again.

At daybreak, even before the sun was up, the woman came and woke the two children, "Get up, you lie-abeds, we're all going to the forest to fetch wood." She gave them each a bit of bread and said, "There's something for your luncheon, but don't you eat it up before, for it's all you'll get." Grettel took the bread under her apron, as Hansel had the stones in his pocket. Then they all set out together on the way to the forest. After they had walked for a little, Hansel stood still and looked back at the house, and this maneuver he repeated again and again.

His father observed him, and said, "Hansel, what are you gazing at there, and why do you always remain behind? Take care, and don't lose your footing."

"Oh! father," said Hansel, "I am looking back at my white kitten, which is sitting on the roof, waving me a farewell."

The woman exclaimed, "What a donkey you are! That isn't your kitten, that's the morning sun shining on the chimney." But Hansel had not looked back at his kitten, but had always dropped one of the white pebbles out of his pocket on to the path.

When they had reached the middle of the forest the father said, "Now, children, go and fetch a lot of wood, and I'll light a fire that you may not feel cold."

Hansel and Grettel heaped up brushwood till they had made a pile nearly the size of a small hill.

The brushwood was set fire to, and when the flames leaped high the woman said, "Now lie down at the fire, children, and rest yourselves: we are going into the forest to cut down wood; when we've finished we'll come back and fetch you."

Hansel and Grettel sat down beside the fire, and at midday ate their little bits of bread. They heard the strokes of the axe, so they thought their father was quite near. But it was no axe they heard, but a bough he had tied on a dead tree, and that was blown about by the wind. And when they had sat for a long time their eyes closed with fatigue, and they fell fast asleep.

When they awoke at last it was pitch dark. Grettel began to cry, and said, "How are we ever to get out of the wood?"

But Hansel comforted her. "Wait a bit," he said, "till the moon is up, and then we'll find our way sure enough." And when the full moon had risen he took his sister by the hand and followed the pebbles, which shone like new three penny bits, and showed them the path. They walked on through the night, and at daybreak reached their father's house again.

They knocked at the door, and when the woman opened it she exclaimed, "You naughty children, what a time you've slept in the wood! We thought you were never going to come back." But the father rejoiced, for his conscience had reproached him for leaving his children behind by themselves.

Not long afterward there was again great dearth in the land, and the children heard their mother address their father thus in bed one night, "Everything is eaten up once more; we have only half a loaf in the house, and when that's done it's all up with us. The children must be got rid of; we'll lead them deeper into the wood this time, so that they won't be able to find their way out again. There is no other way of saving ourselves."

The man's heart smote him heavily, and he thought, "Surely it would be better to share the last bite with one's children!" But his wife wouldn't listen to his arguments, and did nothing but scold and reproach him. If a man yields once he's done for, and so, because he had given in the first time, he was forced to do so the second.

But the children were awake, and had heard the conversation. When the old people were asleep Hansel got up, and wanted to go out and pick up pebbles again, as he had done the first time; but the woman had barred the door, and Hansel couldn't get out. But he consoled his little sister, and said, "Don't cry, Grettel, and sleep peacefully, for God is sure to help us."

At early dawn the woman came and made the children get up. They received their bit of bread, but it was even smaller than the time before. On the way to the wood Hansel crumbled it in his pocket, and every few minutes he stood still and dropped a crumb on the ground. "Hansel, what are you stopping and looking about you for?" said the father. "I'm looking back at my little pigeon, which is sitting on the roof waving me a farewell," answered Hansel.

“Fool!” said the wife; “that isn’t your pigeon, it’s the morning sun glittering on the chimney.” But Hansel gradually threw all his crumbs on the path. The woman led the children still deeper into the forest farther than they had ever been in their lives before. Then a big fire was lit again, and the mother said, “Just sit down there, children, and if you’re tired you can sleep a bit; we’re going into the forest to cut down wood, and in the evening when we’re finished we’ll come back to fetch you.”

At midday Grettel divided her bread with Hansel, for he had strewn his all along their path. Then they fell asleep, and evening passed away, but nobody came to the poor children. They didn’t awake till it was pitch dark, and Hansel comforted his sister, saying, “Only wait, Grettel, till the moon rises, then we shall see the bread-crumbs I scattered along the path; they will show us the way back to the house.” When the moon appeared they got up, but they found no crumbs, for the thousands of birds that fly about the woods and fields had picked them all up.

“Never mind,” said Hansel to Grettel; “you’ll see we’ll find a way out”; but all the same they did not. They wandered about the whole night, and the next day, from morning till evening, but they could not find a path out of the wood. They were very hungry, too, for they had nothing to eat but a few berries they found growing on the ground. And at last they were so tired that their legs refused to carry them any longer, so they lay down under a tree and fell fast asleep.

On the third morning after they had left their father’s house they set about their wandering again, but only got deeper and deeper into the wood, and now they felt that if help did not come to them soon they must perish. At midday they saw a beautiful little snow-white bird sitting on a branch, which sang so sweetly that they stopped still and listened to it. And when its song was finished it flapped its wings and flew on in front of them. They followed it and came to a little house, on the roof of which it perched; and when they came quite near they saw that the cottage was made of bread and roofed with cakes, while the window was made of transparent sugar.

“Now we’ll set to,” said Hansel, “and have a regular blow-out. I’ll eat a bit of the roof, and you, Grettel, can eat some of the window, which you’ll find a sweet morsel.” Hansel stretched up his hand and broke off a little bit of the roof to see what it was like, and Grettel went to the casement and began to nibble at it.

Thereupon a shrill voice called out from the room inside, “Nibble, nibble, little mouse, Who’s nibbling my house?”

The children answered, “Tis Heaven’s own child, The tempest wild,” and went on eating, without putting themselves about. Hansel, who thoroughly appreciated the roof, tore down a big bit of it, while Grettel pushed out a whole round window-pane, and sat down the better to enjoy it.

Suddenly the door opened, and an ancient dame leaning on a staff hobbled out. Hansel and Grettel were so terrified that they let what they had in their hands fall. But the old woman shook her head and said, “Oh, ho! you dear children, who led you here? Just come in and stay with me, no ill shall befall you.”

She took them both by the hand and let them into the house, and laid a most sumptuous dinner before them—milk and sugared pancakes, with apples and nuts. After they had finished, two beautiful little white beds were prepared for them, and when Hansel and Grettel lay down in them they felt as if they had got into heaven.

The old woman had appeared to be most friendly, but she was really an old witch who had waylaid the children, and had only built the little bread house in order to lure them in. When anyone came into her power she killed, cooked, and ate him, and held a regular feast-day for the occasion. Now witches have red eyes, and cannot see far, but, like beasts, they have a keen sense of smell, and know when human beings pass by. When Hansel and Grettel fell into her hands she laughed maliciously, and said jeeringly, “I’ve got them now; they sha’n’t escape me.”

Early in the morning, before the children were awake, she rose up, and when she saw them both sleeping so peacefully, with their round rosy cheeks, she muttered to herself, “That’ll be a dainty bite.” Then she seized Hansel with her bony hand and carried him into a little stable, and barred the door on him; he might scream as much as he liked, it did him no good. Then she went to Grettel, shook her till she awoke, and cried, “Get up, you lazy-bones, fetch water and cook something for your brother. When he’s fat I’ll eat him up.” Grettel began to cry bitterly, but it was of no use; she had to do what the wicked witch bade her.

So the best food was cooked for poor Hansel, but Grettel got nothing but crab-shells. Every morning the old woman hobbled out to the stable and cried, “Hansel, put out your finger, that I may feel if you are getting fat.” But Hansel always stretched out a bone, and the old dame, whose eyes were dim, couldn’t see it, and thinking always it was Hansel’s finger, wondered why he fattened so slowly. When four weeks had passed and Hansel still remained thin, she lost patience and determined to wait no longer. “Hi, Grettel,” she called to the girl, “be quick and get some water. Hansel may be fat or thin, I’m going to kill him tomorrow and cook him.”

Oh! how the poor little sister sobbed as she carried the water, and how the tears rolled down her cheeks! “Kind heaven help us now!” she cried; “if only the wild beasts in the wood had eaten us, then at least we should have died together.”

“Just hold your peace,” said the old hag; “it won’t help you.”

Early in the morning Grettel had to go out and hang up the kettle full of water, and light the fire. “First we’ll bake,” said the old dame; “I’ve heated the oven already and kneaded the dough.” She pushed Grettel out to the oven, from which fiery flames were already issuing. “Creep in,” said the witch, “and see if it’s properly heated, so that we can shove in the bread.” For when she had got Grettel in she meant to close the oven and let the girl bake, that she might eat her up too. But Grettel perceived her intention, and said, “I don’t know how I’m to do it; how do I get in?”

“You silly goose!” said the hag, “the opening is big enough; see, I could get in myself,” and she crawled toward it, and poked her head into the oven. Then Grettel gave her a shove that sent her right in, shut the iron door, and drew the bolt. Gracious! How she yelled, it was quite horrible; but Grettel fled, and the wretched old woman was left to perish miserably.

Grettel flew straight to Hansel, opened the little stable door, and cried, “Hansel, we are free; the old witch is dead.” Then Hansel sprang like a bird out of a cage when the door is opened. How they rejoiced, and fell on each other’s necks, and jumped for joy, and kissed one another! And as they had no longer any cause for fear, they went in the old hag’s house, and here they found, in every corner of the room, boxes with pearls and precious stones.

“These are even better than pebbles,” said Hansel, and crammed his pockets full of them; and Grettel said, “I too will bring something home,” and she filled her apron full.

“But now,” said Hansel, “let’s go and get well away from the witch’s wood.” When they had wandered about for some hours they came to a big lake. “We can’t get over,” said Hansel; “I see no bridge of any sort or kind.”

“Yes, and there’s no ferry-boat either,” answered Grettel; “but look, there swims a white duck; if I ask her she’ll help us over,” and she called out, “Here are two children, mournful very, Seeing neither bridge nor ferry; Take us upon your white back, And row us over, quack, quack!”

The duck swam toward them, and Hansel got on her back and bade his little sister sit beside him. “No,” answered Grettel, “we should be too heavy a load for the duck: she shall carry us across separately.”

The good bird did this, and when they were landed safely on the other side, and had gone for a while, the wood became more and more familiar to them, and at length they saw their father’s house in the distance. Then they set off to run, and bounding into the room fell on their father’s neck. The man had not passed a happy hour since he left them in the wood, but the woman had died. Grettel shook out her apron so that the pearls and precious stones rolled about the room, and Hansel threw down one handful after the other out of his pocket. Thus all their troubles were ended, and they lived happily ever afterward.

My story is done. See! There runs a little mouse; anyone who catches it may make himself a large fur cap out of it.

THE CRYSTAL COFFIN

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Lang, Andrew. *The Green Fairy Book*. London: Longmans, Green and Company, 1892, 290–295.

Date: ca. 1812

Original Source: Grimm, Jacob and Wilhelm. *Kinder- und Hausmärchen (Children's and Household Tales)*.

National Origin: Germany

The following narrative is a **variant** of the **ordinary folktale** most widely known in English as “Sleeping Beauty” (AT 410). In the following variant, the protagonist is of humble rather than noble birth. His ultimate good fortune is more the work of fate, curiosity, and circumstance than of any conscious quest. The elevation of the tailor in social status as the conclusion of the tale is typical of this **genre** in European tradition. “The Glass Coffin” is Tale 163 in the Grimm’s corpus.

Now let no one say that a poor tailor can’t get on in the world, and, indeed, even attain to very high honor. Nothing is required but to set the right way to work, but of course the really important thing is to succeed.

A very bright active young tailor once set off on his travels, which led him into a wood, and as he did not know the way he soon lost himself. Night came on, and there seemed to be nothing for it but to seek out the best resting-place he could find. He could have made himself quite comfortable with a bed of soft moss, but the fear of wild beasts disturbed his mind, and at last he determined to spend the night in a tree.

He sought out a tall oak tree, climbed up to the top, and felt devoutly thankful that his big smoothing-iron was in his pocket, for the wind in the tree-tops was so high that he might easily have been blown away altogether.

After passing some hours of the night, not without considerable fear and trembling, he noticed a light shining at a little distance, and hoping it might proceed from some house where he could find a better shelter than in the top of the tree, he cautiously descended and went towards the light. It led him to a little hut all woven together of reeds and rushes. He knocked bravely at the door, which opened, and by the light which shone from within he saw an old gray-haired man dressed in a coat made of bright-colored patches. “Who are you, and what do you want?” asked the old man roughly.

“I am a poor tailor,” replied the youth. “I have been benighted in the forest, and I entreat you to let me take shelter in your hut till morning.”

“Go your way,” said the old man in a sulky tone, “I’ll have nothing to do with tramps. You must just go elsewhere.”

With these words he tried to slip back into his house, but the tailor laid hold of his coat-tails, and begged so hard to be allowed to stay that the old fellow, who was by no means as cross as he appeared, was at length touched by his entreaties, let him come in, and after giving him some food, showed him quite a nice bed in one corner of the room. The weary tailor required no rocking to rest,

but slept sound till early morning, when he was roused from his slumbers by a tremendous noise. Loud screams and shouts pierced the thin walls of the little hut. The tailor, with new-born courage, sprang up, threw on his clothes with all speed and hurried out. There he saw a huge black bull engaged in a terrible fight with a fine large stag. They rushed at each other with such fury that the ground seemed to tremble under them and the whole air to be filled with their cries. For some time it appeared quite uncertain which would be the victor, but at length the stag drove his antlers with such force into his opponent's body that the bull fell to the ground with a terrific roar, and a few more strokes finished him.

The tailor, who had been watching the fight with amazement, was still standing motionless when the stag bounded up to him, and before he had time to escape forked him up with its great antlers, and set off at full gallop over hedges and ditches, hill and dale, through wood and water. The tailor could do nothing but hold on tight with both hands to the stag's horns and resign himself to his fate. He felt as if he were flying along. At length the stag paused before a steep rock and gently let the tailor down to the ground.

Feeling more dead than alive, he paused for a while to collect his scattered senses, but when he seemed somewhat restored the stag struck such a blow on a door in the rock that it flew open. Flames of fire rushed forth, and such clouds of steam followed that the stag had to avert its eyes. The tailor could not think what to do or which way to turn to get away from this awful wilderness, and to find his way back amongst human beings once more.

As he stood hesitating, a voice from the rock cried to him, "Step in without fear, no harm shall befall you."

He still lingered, but some mysterious power seemed to impel him, and passing through the door he found himself in a spacious hall, whose ceiling, walls, and floor were covered with polished tiles carved all over with unknown figures. He gazed about, full of wonder, and was just preparing to walk out again when the same voice bade him, "Tread on the stone in the middle of the hall, and good luck will attend you."

By this time he had grown so courageous that he did not hesitate to obey the order, and hardly had he stepped on the stone than it began to sink gently with him into the depths below. On reaching firm ground he found himself in a hall of much the same size as the upper one, but with much more in it to wonder at and admire. Round the walls were several niches, in each of which stood glass vessels filled with some bright-colored spirit or bluish smoke. On the floor stood two large crystal boxes opposite each other, and these attracted his curiosity at once. Stepping up to one of them, he saw within it what looked like a model in miniature of a fine castle surrounded by farms, barns, stables, and a number of other buildings. Everything was quite tiny, but so beautifully and carefully finished that it might have been the work of an accomplished artist. He would have continued gazing much longer

at this remarkable curiosity had not the voice desired him to turn round and look at the crystal coffin which stood opposite. What was his amazement at seeing a girl of surpassing loveliness lying in it! She lay as though sleeping, and her long, fair hair seemed to wrap her round like some costly mantle. Her eyes were closed, but the bright color in her face, and the movement of a ribbon, which rose and fell with her breath, left no doubt as to her being alive.

As the tailor stood gazing at her with a beating heart, the maiden suddenly opened her eyes, and started with delighted surprise.

“Great heavens!” she cried, “my deliverance approaches! Quick, quick, help me out of my prison; only push back the bolt of this coffin and I am free.”

The tailor promptly obeyed, when she quickly pushed back the crystal lid, stepped out of the coffin and hurried to a corner of the hall, when she proceeded to wrap herself in a large cloak. Then she sat down on a stone, desired the young man to come near, and, giving him an affectionate kiss, she said, “My long-hoped-for deliverer, kind heaven has led you to me, and has at length put an end to all my sufferings. You are my destined husband, and, beloved by me, and endowed with every kind of riches and power, you shall spend the remainder of your life in peace and happiness. Now sit down and hear my story. I am the daughter of a wealthy nobleman. My parents died when I was very young, and they left me to the care of my eldest brother, by whom I was carefully educated. We loved each other so tenderly, and our tastes and interests were so much alike that we determined never to marry, but to spend our entire lives together. There was no lack of society at our home. Friends and neighbors paid us frequent visits, and we kept open house for all. Thus it happened that one evening a stranger rode up to the castle and asked for hospitality, as he could not reach the nearest town that night. We granted his request with ready courtesy, and during supper he entertained us with most agreeable conversation, mingled with amusing anecdotes. My brother took such a fancy to him that he pressed him to spend a couple of days with us, which, after a little hesitation, the stranger consented to do. We rose late from table, and whilst my brother was showing our guest to his room I hurried to mine, for I was very tired and longed to get to bed. I had hardly dropped off to sleep when I was roused by the sound of some soft and charming music. Wondering whence it could come, I was about to call to my maid who slept in the room next mine, when, to my surprise, I felt as if some heavy weight on my chest had taken all power from me, and I lay there unable to utter the slightest sound. Meantime, by the light of the night lamp, I saw the stranger enter my room, though the double doors had been securely locked. He drew near and told me that through the power of his magic arts he had caused the soft music to waken me, and had made his way through bolts and bars to offer me his hand and heart. My repugnance to his magic was so great that I would not condescend to give any answer. He waited motionless

for some time, hoping no doubt for a favorable reply, but as I continued silent he angrily declared that he would find means to punish my pride, and therewith he left the room in a rage.

“I spent the night in the greatest agitation, and only fell into a doze towards morning. As soon as I awoke I jumped up, and hurried to tell my brother all that had happened, but he had left his room, and his servant told me that he had gone out at daybreak to hunt with the stranger.

“My mind misgave me. I dressed in all haste, had my palfrey saddled, and rode off at full gallop towards the forest, attended by one servant only. I pushed on without pausing, and ere long I saw the stranger coming towards me, and leading a fine stag. I asked him where he had left my brother, and how he had got the stag, whose great eyes were overflowing with tears. Instead of answering he began to laugh, and I flew into such a rage that I drew a pistol and fired at him; but the bullet rebounded from his breast and struck my horse in the forehead. I fell to the ground, and the stranger muttered some words, which robbed me of my senses.

“When I came to myself I was lying in a crystal coffin in this subterranean vault. The Magician appeared again, and told me that he had transformed my brother into a stag, had reduced our castle and all its defenses to miniature and locked them up in a glass box, and after turning all our household into different vapors had banished them into glass phials. If I would only yield to his wishes he could easily open these vessels, and all would then resume their former shapes.

“I would not say a word more than I had done previously, and he vanished, leaving me in my prison, where a deep sleep soon fell on me. Amongst the many dreams which floated through my brain was a cheering one of a young man who was to come and release me, and today, when I opened my eyes, I recognized you and saw that my dream was fulfilled. Now help me to carry out the rest of my vision. The first thing is to place the glass box which contains my castle on this large stone.”

As soon as this was done the stone gently rose through the air and transported them into the upper hall, whence they easily carried the box into the outer air. The lady then removed the lid, and it was marvelous to watch the castle, houses, and farmyards begin to grow and spread themselves till they had regained their proper size. Then the young couple returned by means of the movable stone, and brought up all the glass vessels filled with smoke. No sooner were they uncorked than the blue vapors poured out and became transformed to living people, in whom the lady joyfully recognized her many servants and attendants.

Her delight was complete when her brother (who had killed the Magician under the form of a bull) was seen coming from the forest in his proper shape, and that very day, according to her promise, she gave her hand in marriage to the happy young tailor.

PRINCE FICKLE AND FAIR HELENA

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Lang, Andrew. *The Green Fairy Book*. London: Longmans, Green and Company, 1894, 216–221.

Date: ca. 1812

Original Source: Grimm, Jacob and Wilhelm. *Kinder- und Hausmärchen (Children's and Household Tales)*.

National Origin: Germany

This tale (Grimm Tale 186, “The True Sweetheart”) combines a plot that is best known in English as “Cinderella” (AT 510A) with elements of “The Forsaken Fiancée: Service as a Menial” (AT 884). The theme of both **tale types**, the rewards of perseverance and virtue, is intensified by combining the two related plots.

There was once upon a time a beautiful girl called Helena. Her own mother had died when she was quite a child, and her stepmother was as cruel and unkind to her as she could be. Helena did all she could to gain her love, and performed the heavy work given her to do cheerfully and well; but her stepmother’s heart wasn’t in the least touched, and the more the poor girl did the more she asked her to do.

One day she gave Helena twelve pounds of mixed feathers and bade her separate them all before evening, threatening her with heavy punishment if she failed to do so.

The poor child sat down to her task with her eyes so full of tears that she could hardly see to begin. And when she had made one little heap of feathers, she sighed so deeply that they all blew apart again. And so it went on, and the poor girl grew more and more miserable. She bowed her head in her hands and cried, “Is there no one under heaven who will take pity on me?”

Suddenly a soft voice replied, “Be comforted, my child: I have come to help you.” Terrified to death, Helena looked up and saw a Fairy standing in front of her, who asked in the kindest way possible, “Why are you crying, my dear?”

Helena, who for long had heard no friendly voice, confided her sad tale of woe to the Fairy, and told her what the new task she had been given to do was, and how she despaired of ever accomplishing it.

“Don’t worry yourself about it any more,” said the kind Fairy; “lie down and go to sleep, and I’ll see that your work is done all right.” So Helena lay down, and when she awoke all the feathers were sorted into little bundles; but when she turned to thank the good Fairy she had vanished.

In the evening her stepmother returned and was much amazed to find Helena sitting quietly with her work all finished before her.

She praised her diligence, but at the same time racked her brain as to what harder task she could set her to do.

The next day she told Helena to empty a pond near the house with a spoon which was full of holes. Helena set to work at once, but she very soon found that what her stepmother had told her to do was an impossibility. Full of despair and misery, she was in the act of throwing the spoon away, when suddenly the kind Fairy stood before her again, and asked her why she was so unhappy?

When Helena told her of her stepmother's new demand she said, "Trust to me and I will do your task for you. Lie down and have a sleep in the meantime."

Helena was comforted and lay down, and before you would have believed it possible the Fairy roused her gently and told her the pond was empty. Full of joy and gratitude, Helena hurried to her stepmother, hoping that now at last her heart would be softened towards her. But the wicked woman was furious at the frustration of her own evil designs, and only thought of what harder thing she could set the girl to do.

Next morning she ordered her to build before evening a beautiful castle, and to furnish it all from garret to basement. Helena sat down on the rocks which had been pointed out to her as the site of the castle, feeling very depressed, but at the same time with the lurking hope that the kind Fairy would come once more to her aid.

And so it turned out. The Fairy appeared, promised to build the castle, and told Helena to lie down and go to sleep in the meantime. At the word of the Fairy the rocks and stones rose and built themselves into a beautiful castle, and before sunset it was all furnished inside, and left nothing to be desired. You may think how grateful Helena was when she awoke and found her task all finished.

But her stepmother was anything but pleased, and went through the whole castle from top to bottom, to see if she couldn't find some fault for which she could punish Helena. At last she went down into one of the cellars, but it was so dark that she fell down the steep stairs and was killed on the spot.

So Helena was now mistress of the beautiful castle, and lived there in peace and happiness. And soon the noise of her beauty spread abroad, and many wooers came to try and gain her hand.

Among them came one Prince Fickle by name, who very quickly won the love of fair Helena. One day, as they were sitting happily together under a lime tree in front of the castle, Prince Fickle broke the sad news to Helena that he must return to his parents to get their consent to his marriage. He promised faithfully to come back to her as soon as he could and begged her to await his return under the lime tree where they had spent so many happy hours.

Helena kissed him tenderly at parting on his left cheek, and begged him not to let anyone else kiss him there while they were parted, and she promised to sit and wait for him under the lime tree, for she never doubted that the Prince would be faithful to her and would return as quickly as he could.

And so she sat for three days and three nights under the tree without moving. But when her lover never returned, she grew very unhappy, and determined to set out to look for him. She took as many of her jewels as she could carry, and three of her most beautiful dresses, one embroidered with stars, one with moons, and the third with suns, all of pure gold. Far and wide she wandered through the world, but nowhere did she find any trace of her bridegroom. At last she gave up the search in despair. She could not bear to return to her own castle where she had been so happy with her lover, but determined rather to endure her loneliness and desolation in a strange land. She took a place as herd-girl with a peasant, and buried her jewels and beautiful dresses in a safe and hidden spot.

Every day she drove the cattle to pasture, and all the time she thought of nothing but her faithless bridegroom. She was very devoted to a certain little calf in the herd, and made a great pet of it, feeding it out of her own hands. She taught it to kneel before her, and then she whispered in its ear:

Kneel, little calf, kneel;
Be faithful and leal [loyal],
Not like Prince Fickle,
Who once on a time
Left his fair Helena Under the lime.

After some years passed in this way, she heard that the daughter of the king of the country she was living in was going to marry a Prince called "Fickle." Everybody rejoiced at the news except poor Helena, to whom it was a fearful blow, for at the bottom of her heart she had always believed her lover to be true.

Now it chanced that the way to the capital led right past the village where Helena was, and often when she was leading her cattle forth to the meadows Prince Fickle rode past her, without ever noticing the poor herd-girl, so engrossed was he in thoughts of his new bride. Then it occurred to Helena to put his heart to the test and to see if it weren't possible to recall herself to him. So one day as Prince Fickle rode by she said to her little calf:

Kneel, little calf, kneel;
Be faithful and leal,
Not like Prince Fickle,
Who once on a time
Left his poor Helena Under the lime.

When Prince Fickle heard her voice it seemed to him to remind him of something, but of what he couldn't remember, for he hadn't heard the words distinctly, as Helena had only spoken them very low and with a shaky voice. Helena herself had been far too moved to let her see what impression her words had made on the Prince, and when she looked round he was already far away. But she noticed how slowly he was riding, and how deeply sunk he was in thought, so she didn't quite give herself up as lost.

In honor of the approaching wedding a feast lasting many nights was to be given in the capital. Helena placed all her hopes on this, and determined to go to the feast and there to seek out her bridegroom.

When evening drew near she stole out of the peasant's cottage secretly, and, going to her hiding-place, she put on her dress embroidered with the gold suns, and all her jewels, and loosed her beautiful golden hair, which up to now she had always worn under a kerchief, and, adorned thus, she set out for the town.

When she entered the ballroom all eyes were turned on her, and everyone marveled at her beauty, but no one knew who she was. Prince Fickle, too, was quite dazzled by the charms of the beautiful maiden, and never guessed that she had once been his own ladylove. He never left her side all night, and it was with great difficulty that Helena escaped from him in the crowd when it was time to return home. Prince Fickle searched for her everywhere, and longed eagerly for the next night, when the beautiful lady had promised to come again.

The following evening the fair Helena started early for the feast.

This time she wore her dress embroidered with silver moons, and in her hair she placed a silver crescent. Prince Fickle was enchanted to see her again, and she seemed to him even more beautiful than she had been the night before. He never left her side, and refused to dance with anyone else. He begged her to tell him who she was, but this she refused to do. Then he implored her to return again next evening, and this she promised him she would.

On the third evening Prince Fickle was so impatient to see his fair enchantress again, that he arrived at the feast hours before it began, and never took his eyes from the door. At last Helena arrived in a dress all covered with gold and silver stars, and with a girdle of stars round her waist, and a band of stars in her hair. Prince Fickle was more in love with her than ever, and begged her once again to tell him her name.

Then Helena kissed him silently on the left cheek, and in one moment Prince Fickle recognized his old love. Full of remorse and sorrow, he begged for her forgiveness, and Helena, only too pleased to have got him back again, did not, you may be sure, keep him waiting very long for her pardon, and so they were married and returned to Helena's castle, where they are no doubt still sitting happily together under the lime tree.

SNOW-WHITE AND ROSE-RED

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Lang, Andrew. *The Blue Fairy Book*. London: Longmans, Green and Company, 1894, 259–265.

Date: ca. 1812

Original Source: Grimm, Jacob and Wilhelm. *Kinder- und Hausmärchen (Children's and Household Tales)*.

National Origin: Germany

In this **variant** of “Two Girls, the Bear and the Dwarf” (AT 426), attributes of the dwarf are consistent with those found in Germanic folklore. That is, dwarves are said to hoard treasure and sport long, full beards. The malice of this particular dwarf is revealed not only by his behavior toward his benefactors, but in the general antipathy shown toward him by the animals that, before his appearance had been docile and protective toward the human characters in the tale.

A poor widow once lived in a little cottage with a garden in front of it, in which grew two rose trees, one bearing white roses and the other red. She had two children, who were just like the two rose trees; one was called Snow-white and the other Rose-red, and they were the sweetest and best children in the world, always diligent and always cheerful; but Snow-white was quieter and more gentle than Rose-red. Rose-red loved to run about the fields and meadows, and to pick flowers and catch butterflies; but Snow-white sat at home with her mother and helped her in the household, or read aloud to her when there was no work to do. The two children loved each other so dearly that they always walked about hand in hand whenever they went out together, and when Snow-white said, “We will never desert each other,” Rose-red answered, “No, not as long as we live”; and the mother added, “Whatever one gets she shall share with the other.”

They often roamed about in the woods gathering berries and no beast offered to hurt them; on the contrary, they came up to them in the most confident manner; the little hare would eat a cabbage leaf from their hands, the deer grazed beside them, the stag would bound past them merrily, and the birds remained on the branches and sang to them with all their might.

No evil ever befell them; if they tarried late in the wood and night overtook them, they lay down together on the moss and slept till morning, and their mother knew they were quite safe, and never felt anxious about them. Once, when they had slept all night in the wood and had been wakened by the

morning sun, they perceived a beautiful child in a shining white robe sitting close to their resting-place. The figure got up, looked at them kindly, but said nothing, and vanished into the wood. And when they looked round about them they became aware that they had slept quite close to a precipice, over which they would certainly have fallen had they gone on a few steps further in the darkness. And when they told their mother of their adventure, she said what they had seen must have been the angel that guards good children.

Snow-white and Rose-red kept their mother's cottage so beautifully clean and neat that it was a pleasure to go into it. In summer Rose-red looked after the house, and every morning before her mother awoke she placed a bunch of flowers before the bed, from each tree a rose. In winter Snow-white lit the fire and put on the kettle, which was made of brass, but so beautifully polished that it shone like gold. In the evening when the snowflakes fell their mother said, "Snow-white, go and close the shutters," and they drew round the fire, while the mother put on her spectacles and read aloud from a big book and the two girls listened and sat and span. Beside them on the ground lay a little lamb, and behind them perched a little white dove with its head tucked under its wings.

One evening as they sat thus cozily together someone knocked at the door as though he desired admittance. The mother said, "Rose-red, open the door quickly; it must be some traveler seeking shelter." Rose-red hastened to unbar the door, and thought she saw a poor man standing in the darkness outside; but it was no such thing, only a bear, who poked his thick black head through the door. Rose-red screamed aloud and sprang back in terror, the lamb began to bleat, the dove flapped its wings, and Snow-white ran and hid behind her mother's bed.

But the bear began to speak, and said, "Don't be afraid: I won't hurt you. I am half frozen, and only wish to warm myself a little."

"My poor bear," said the mother, "lie down by the fire, only take care you don't burn your fur." Then she called out, "Snow-white and Rose-red, come out; the bear will do you no harm; he is a good, honest creature." So they both came out of their hiding-places, and gradually the lamb and dove drew near too, and they all forgot their fear. The bear asked the children to beat the snow a little out of his fur, and they fetched a brush and scrubbed him till he was dry. Then the beast stretched himself in front of the fire, and growled quite happily and comfortably.

The children soon grew quite at their ease with him, and led their helpless guest a fearful life. They tugged his fur with their hands, put their small feet on his back, and rolled him about here and there, or took a hazel wand and beat him with it; and if he growled they only laughed. The bear submitted to everything with the best possible good nature, only when they went too far he cried, "Oh! children, spare my life!"

"Snow-white and Rose-red, Don't beat your lover dead."

When it was time to retire for the night, and the others went to bed, the mother said to the bear, "You can lie there on the hearth, in heaven's name; it

will be shelter for you from the cold and wet.” As soon as day dawned the children led him out, and he trotted over the snow into the wood. From this time on the bear came every evening at the same hour, and lay down by the hearth and let the children play what pranks they liked with him; and they got so accustomed to him that the door was never shut till their black friend had made his appearance.

When spring came, and all outside was green, the bear said one morning to Snow-white, “Now I must go away, and not return again the whole summer.”

“Where are you going to, dear bear?” asked Snow-white.

“I must go to the wood and protect my treasure from the wicked dwarfs. In winter, when the earth is frozen hard, they are obliged to remain underground, for they can’t work their way through; but now, when the sun has thawed and warmed the ground, they break through and come up above to spy the land and steal what they can; what once falls into their hands and into their caves is not easily brought back to light.”

Snow-white was quite sad over their friend’s departure, and when she unbarred the door for him, the bear, stepping out, caught a piece of his fur in the door-knocker, and Snow-white thought she caught sight of glittering gold beneath it, but she couldn’t be certain of it; and the bear ran hastily away, and soon disappeared behind the trees.

A short time after this the mother sent the children into the wood to collect fagots. They came in their wanderings upon a big tree which lay felled on the ground, and on the trunk among the long grass they noticed something jumping up and down, but what it was they couldn’t distinguish. When they approached nearer they perceived a dwarf with a wizened face and a beard a yard long. The end of the beard was jammed into a cleft of the tree, and the little man sprang about like a dog on a chain, and didn’t seem to know what he was to do.

He glared at the girls with his fiery red eyes, and screamed out, “What are you standing there for? Can’t you come and help me?”

“What were you doing, little man?” asked Rose-red.

“You stupid, inquisitive goose!” replied the dwarf; “I wanted to split the tree, in order to get little chips of wood for our kitchen fire; those thick logs that serve to make fires for coarse, greedy people like yourselves quite burn up all the little food we need. I had successfully driven in the wedge, and all was going well, but the cursed wood was so slippery that it suddenly sprang out, and the tree closed up so rapidly that I had no time to take my beautiful white beard out, so here I am stuck fast, and I can’t get away; and you silly, smooth-faced, milk-and-water girls just stand and laugh! Ugh! what wretches you are!”

The children did all in their power, but they couldn’t get the beard out; it was wedged in far too firmly. “I will run and fetch somebody,” said Rose-red.

“Crazy blockheads!” snapped the dwarf; “what’s the good of calling anyone else? You’re already two too many for me. Does nothing better occur to you than that?”

“Don’t be so impatient,” said Snow-white, “I’ll see you get help,” and taking her scissors out of her pocket she cut off the end of his beard.

As soon as the dwarf felt himself free he seized a bag full of gold which was hidden among the roots of the tree, lifted it up, and muttered aloud, “Curse these rude wretches, cutting off a piece of my splendid beard!” With these words he swung the bag over his back, and disappeared without as much as looking at the children again.

Shortly after this Snow-white and Rose-red went out to get a dish of fish. As they approached the stream they saw something which looked like an enormous grasshopper springing toward the water as if it were going to jump in. They ran forward and recognized their old friend the dwarf. “Where are you going to?” asked Rose-red; “you’re surely not going to jump into the water?”

“I’m not such a fool,” screamed the dwarf. “Don’t you see that cursed fish is trying to drag me in?” The little man had been sitting on the bank fishing, when unfortunately the wind had entangled his beard in the line; and when immediately afterward a big fish bit, the feeble little creature had no strength to pull it out; the fish had the upper fin, and dragged the dwarf toward him. He clung on with all his might to every rush and blade of grass, but it didn’t help him much; he had to follow every movement of the fish, and was in great danger of being drawn into the water. The girls came up just at the right moment, held him firm, and did all they could to disentangle his beard from the line; but in vain, beard and line were in a hopeless muddle. Nothing remained but to produce the scissors and cut the beard, by which a small part of it was sacrificed.

When the dwarf perceived what they were about he yelled to them, “Do you call that manners, you toad-stools! to disfigure a fellow’s face? It wasn’t enough that you shortened my beard before, but you must now needs cut off the best bit of it. I can’t appear like this before my own people. I wish you’d been in Jericho first.” Then he fetched a sack of pearls that lay among the rushes, and without saying another word he dragged it away and disappeared behind a stone.

It happened that soon after this the mother sent the two girls to the town to buy needles, thread, laces, and ribbons. Their road led over a heath where huge boulders of rock lay scattered here and there. While trudging along they saw a big bird hovering in the air, circling slowly above them, but always descending lower, till at last it settled on a rock not far from them. Immediately afterward they heard a sharp, piercing cry. They ran forward, and saw with horror that the eagle had pounced on their old friend the dwarf, and was about to carry him off. The tender-hearted children seized hold of the little man, and struggled so long with the bird that at last he let go his prey.

When the dwarf had recovered from the first shock he screamed in his screeching voice, “Couldn’t you have treated me more carefully? You have torn

my thin little coat all to shreds, useless, awkward hussies that you are!” Then he took a bag of precious stones and vanished under the rocks into his cave.

The girls were accustomed to his ingratitude, and went on their way and did their business in town. On their way home, as they were again passing the heath, they surprised the dwarf pouring out his precious stones on an open space, for he had thought no one would pass by at so late an hour. The evening sun shone on the glittering stones, and they glanced and gleamed so beautifully that the children stood still and gazed on them. “What are you standing there gaping for?” screamed the dwarf, and his ashen-gray face became scarlet with rage. He was about to go off with these angry words when a sudden growl was heard, and a black bear trotted out of the wood. The dwarf jumped up in great fright, but he hadn’t time to reach his place of retreat, for the bear was already close to him.

Then he cried in terror, “Dear Mr. Bear, spare me! I’ll give you all my treasure. Look at those beautiful precious stones lying there. Spare my life! what pleasure would you get from a poor feeble little fellow like me? You won’t feel me between your teeth. There, lay hold of these two wicked girls, they will be a tender morsel for you, as fat as young quails; eat them up, for heaven’s sake.” But the bear, paying no attention to his words, gave the evil little creature one blow with his paw, and he never moved again.

The girls had run away, but the bear called after them, “Snow-white and Rose-red, don’t be afraid; wait, and I’ll come with you.” Then they recognized his voice and stood still, and when the bear was quite close to them his skin suddenly fell off, and a beautiful man stood beside them, all dressed in gold. “I am a king’s son,” he said, “and have been doomed by that unholy little dwarf, who had stolen my treasure, to roam about the woods as a wild bear till his death should set me free. Now he has got his well-merited punishment.”

Snow-white married him, and Rose-red his brother, and they divided the great treasure the dwarf had collected in his cave between them. The old mother lived for many years peacefully with her children; and she carried the two rose trees with her, and they stood in front of her window, and every year they bore the finest red and white roses.

JACK MY HEDGE HOG

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Lang, Andrew. *The Green Fairy Book*. London: Longmans, Green and Company, 1892, 290–295.

Date: ca. 1812–1814

Original Source: Grimm, Jacob and Wilhelm. *Kinder- und Hausmärchen (Children’s and Household Tales)*.

National Origin: Germany

Originally “Hans My Hedgehog” in the Grimms’ corpus (Tale 108), Lang renames the tale “Jack My Hedgehog” with the inclusion of this **variant** of AT 441 in his anthology. The theme of the animal husband who is associated with the forest is common in the world’s folktales. In some cases, the spouse or suitor is menacing. In the present narrative, however, the protagonist is depicted as a recluse who rewards virtue and punishes dishonorable behavior.

There was once a farmer who lived in great comfort. He had both lands and money, but, though he was so well off, one thing was wanting to complete his happiness; he had no children. Many and many a time, when he met other farmers at the nearest market town, they would tease him, asking how it came about that he was childless. At length he grew so angry that he exclaimed, “I must and will have a child of some sort or kind, even should it only be a hedgehog!”

Not long after this his wife gave birth to a child, but though the lower half of the little creature was a fine boy, from the waist upwards it was a hedgehog, so that when his mother first saw him she was quite frightened, and said to her husband, “There now, you have cursed the child yourself.”

The farmer said, “What’s the use of making a fuss? I suppose the creature must be christened, but I don’t see how we are to ask anyone to be sponsor to him, and what are we to call him?”

“There is nothing we can possibly call him but Jack my Hedgehog,” replied the wife.

So they took him to be christened, and the parson said, “You’ll never be able to put that child in a decent bed on account of his prickles.” Which was true, but they shook down some straw for him behind the stove, and there he lay for eight years. His father grew very tired of him and often wished him dead, but he did not die, but lay on there year after year.

Now one day there was a big fair at the market town to which the farmer meant to go, so he asked his wife what he should bring her from it. “Some meat and a couple of big loaves for the house,” said she.

Then he asked the maid what she wanted, and she said a pair of slippers and some stockings.

Lastly he said, “Well, Jack my Hedgehog, and what shall I bring you?”

“Daddy,” said he, “do bring me a bagpipe.” When the farmer came home he gave his wife and the maid the things they had asked for, and then he went behind the stove and gave Jack my Hedgehog the bagpipes.

When Jack had got his bagpipes he said, “Daddy, do go to the smithy and have the house cock shod for me; then I’ll ride off and trouble you no more.” His father, who was delighted at the prospect of getting rid of him, had the cock

shod, and when it was ready Jack my Hedgehog mounted on its back and rode off to the forest, followed by all the pigs and asses which he had promised to look after.

Having reached the forest he made the cock fly up to the top of a very tall tree with him, and there he sat looking after his pigs and donkeys, and he sat on and on for several years till he had quite a big herd; but all this time his father knew nothing about him.

As he sat up in his tree he played away on his pipes and drew the loveliest music from them. As he was playing one day a King, who had lost his way, happened to pass close by, and hearing the music he was much surprised, and sent one of his servants to find out where it came from. The man peered about, but he could see nothing but a little creature which looked like a cock with a hedgehog sitting on it, perched up in a tree. The King desired the servant to ask the strange creature why it sat there, and if it knew the shortest way to his kingdom.

On this Jack my Hedgehog stepped down from his tree and said he would undertake to show the King his way home if the King on his part would give him his written promise to let him have whatever first met him on his return.

The King thought to himself, "That's easy enough to promise. The creature won't understand a word about it, so I can just write what I choose."

So he took pen and ink and wrote something, and when he had done Jack my Hedgehog pointed out the way and the King got safely home.

Now when the King's daughter saw her father returning in the distance she was so delighted that she ran to meet him and threw herself into his arms. Then the King remembered Jack my Hedgehog, and he told his daughter how he had been obliged to give a written promise to bestow whatever he first met when he got home on an extraordinary creature which had shown him the way. The creature, said he, rode on a cock as though it had been a horse, and it made lovely music, but as it certainly could not read he had just written that he would not give it anything at all. At this the Princess was quite pleased, and said how cleverly her father had managed, for that of course nothing would induce her to have gone off with Jack my Hedgehog.

Meantime Jack minded his asses and pigs, sat aloft in his tree, played his bagpipes, and was always merry and cheery. After a time it so happened that another King, having lost his way, passed by with his servants and escort, wondering how he could find his way home, for the forest was very vast. He too heard the music, and told one of his men to find out whence it came. The man came under the tree, and looking up to the top there he saw Jack my Hedgehog astride on the cock.

The servant asked Jack what he was doing up there. "I'm minding my pigs and donkeys; but what do you want?" was the reply. Then the servant told him they had lost their way, and wanted some one to show it them. Down came Jack my Hedgehog with his cock, and told the old King he would show him the right

way if he would solemnly promise to give him the first thing he met in front of his royal castle.

The King said, "Yes," and gave Jack a written promise to that effect.

Then Jack rode on in front pointing out the way, and the King reached his own country in safety.

Now he had an only daughter who was extremely beautiful, and who, delighted at her father's return, ran to meet him, threw her arms round his neck and kissed him heartily. Then she asked where he had been wandering so long, and he told her how he had lost his way and might never have reached home at all but for a strange creature, half-man, half-hedgehog, which rode a cock and sat up in a tree making lovely music, and which had shown him the right way. He also told her how he had been obliged to pledge his word to give the creature the first thing which met him outside his castle gate, and he felt very sad at the thought that she had been the first thing to meet him.

But the Princess comforted him, and said she should be quite willing to go with Jack my Hedgehog whenever he came to fetch her, because of the great love she bore to her dear old father.

Jack my Hedgehog continued to herd his pigs, and they increased in number till there were so many that the forest seemed full of them. So he made up his mind to live there no longer, and sent a message to his father telling him to have all the stables and outhouses in the village cleared, as he was going to bring such an enormous herd that all who would might kill what they chose. His father was much vexed at this news, for he thought Jack had died long ago. Jack my Hedgehog mounted his cock, and driving his pigs before him into the village, he let every one kill as many as they chose, and such a hacking and hewing of pork went on as you might have heard for miles off.

Then said Jack, "Daddy, let the blacksmith shoe my cock once more; then I'll ride off, and I promise you I'll never come back again as long as I live." So the father had the cock shod, and rejoiced at the idea of getting rid of his son.

Then Jack my Hedgehog set off for the first kingdom, and there the King had given strict orders that if anyone should be seen riding a cock and carrying a bagpipe he was to be chased away and shot at, and on no account to be allowed to enter the palace. So when Jack my Hedgehog rode up the guards charged him with their bayonets, but he put spurs to his cock, flew up over the gate right to the King's windows, let himself down on the sill, and called out that if he was not given what had been promised him, both the King and his daughter should pay for it with their lives. Then the King coaxed and entreated his daughter to go with Jack and so save both their lives.

The Princess dressed herself all in white, and her father gave her a coach with six horses and servants in gorgeous liveries and quantities of money. She stepped into the coach, and Jack my Hedgehog with his cock and pipes took his place beside her. They both took leave, and the King fully expected never to set eyes on them again. But matters turned out very differently from what he had

expected, for when they had got a certain distance from the town Jack tore all the Princess's smart clothes off her, and pricked her all over with his bristles, saying, "That's what you get for treachery. Now go back, I'll have no more to say to you." And with that he hunted [chased] her home, and she felt she had been disgraced and put to shame till her life's end.

Then Jack my Hedgehog rode on with his cock and bagpipes to the country of the second King to whom he had shown the way. Now this King had given orders that, in the event of Jack's coming the guards were to present arms, the people to cheer, and he was to be conducted in triumph to the royal palace.

When the King's daughter saw Jack my Hedgehog, she was a good deal startled, for he certainly was very peculiar looking; but after all she considered that she had given her word and it couldn't be helped. So she made Jack welcome and they were betrothed to each other, and at dinner he sat next her at the royal table, and they ate and drank together.

When they retired to rest the Princess feared lest Jack should kiss her because of his prickles, but he told her not to be alarmed as no harm should befall her. Then he begged the old King to place a watch of four men just outside his bedroom door, and to desire them to make a big fire. When he was about to lie down in bed he would creep out of his hedgehog skin, and leave it lying at the bedside; then the men must rush in, throw the skin into the fire, and stand by till it was entirely burnt up.

And so it was, for when it struck eleven, Jack my Hedgehog went to his room, took off his skin and left it at the foot of the bed. The men rushed in, quickly seized the skin and threw it on the fire, and directly it was all burnt Jack was released from his enchantment and lay in his bed a man from head to foot, but quite black as though he had been severely scorched.

The King sent off for his physician in ordinary, who washed Jack all over with various essences and salves, so that he became white and was a remarkably handsome young man. When the King's daughter saw him she was greatly pleased, and next day the marriage ceremony was performed, and the old King bestowed his kingdom on Jack my Hedgehog.

After some years Jack and his wife went to visit his father, but the farmer did not recognize him, and declared he had no son; he had had one, but that one was born with bristles like a hedgehog, and had gone off into the wide world. Then Jack told his story, and his old father rejoiced and returned to live with him in his kingdom.

MOTHER HOLLE

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Lang, Andrew. *The Red Fairy Book*. London: Longmans, Green and Company, 1890, 303–306.

Date: ca. 1812–1814

Original Source: Grimm, Jacob and Wilhelm. *Kinder- und Hausmärchen (Children's and Household Tales)*.

National Origin: Germany

“Mother Holle,” titled “Frau Hölle” (literally, “Mrs. Hell”) in the Grimms’ collection (Grimm 24) is a **variant** of the “The Kind and the Unkind Girls” (AT 480). The punishment meted out to the unkind sister is in keeping with the name of the old woman in the tale’s title. The fact that she also dispenses rewards should discourage taking the name “Mrs. Hell” too literally, however.

Once upon a time there was a widow who had two daughters; one of them was pretty and clever, and the other ugly and lazy. But as the ugly one was her own daughter, she liked her far the best of the two, and the pretty one had to do all the work of the house, and was in fact the regular maid of all work. Every day she had to sit by a well on the high road, and spin till her fingers were so sore that they often bled. One day some drops of blood fell on her spindle, so she dipped it into the well meaning to wash it, but, as luck would have it, it dropped from her hand and fell right in. She ran weeping to her stepmother, and told her what had happened, but she scolded her harshly, and was so merciless in her anger that she said, “Well, since you’ve dropped the spindle down, you must just go after it yourself, and don’t let me see your face again until you bring it with you.”

Then the poor girl returned to the well, and not knowing what she was about, in the despair and misery of her heart she sprang into the well and sank to the bottom. For a time she lost all consciousness, and when she came to herself again she was lying in a lovely meadow, with the sun shining brightly overhead, and a thousand flowers blooming at her feet. She rose up and wandered through this enchanted place, till she came to a baker’s oven full of bread, and the bread called out to her as she passed, “Oh! take me out, take me out, or I shall be burnt to a cinder. I am quite done enough.”

So she stepped up quickly to the oven and took out all the loaves one after the other.

Then she went on a little farther and came to a tree laden with beautiful rosy-cheeked apples, and as she passed by it called out, “Oh I shake me, shake me, my apples are all quite ripe.”

She did as she was asked, and shook the tree till the apples fell like rain and none were left hanging. When she had gathered them all up into a heap she went on her way again, and came at length to a little house, at the door of which sat an old woman.

The old dame had such large teeth that the girl felt frightened and wanted to run away, but the old woman called after her, “What are you afraid of, dear

child? Stay with me and be my little maid, and if you do your work well I will reward you handsomely; but you must be very careful how you make my bed—you must shake it well till the feathers fly; then people in the world below say it snows, for I am Mother Holle.”

She spoke so kindly that the girl took heart and agreed readily to enter her service. She did her best to please the old woman, and shook her bed with such a will that the feathers flew about like snow-flakes; so she led a very easy life, was never scolded, and lived on the fat of the land. But after she had been some time with Mother Holle she grew sad and depressed, and at first she hardly knew herself what was the matter. At last she discovered that she was homesick, so she went to Mother Holle and said, “I know I am a thousand times better off here than I ever was in my life before, but notwithstanding, I have a great longing to go home, in spite of all your kindness to me. I can remain with you no longer, but must return to my own people.”

“Your desire to go home pleases me,” said Mother Holle, “and because you have served me so faithfully, I will show you the way back into the world myself.”

So she took her by the hand and led her to an open door, and as the girl passed through it there fell a heavy shower of gold all over her, till she was covered with it from top to toe.

“That’s a reward for being such a good little maid,” said Mother Holle, and she gave her the spindle too that had fallen into the well.

Then she shut the door, and the girl found herself back in the world again, not far from her own house; and when she came to the courtyard the old hen, who sat on the top of the wall, called out, “Click, clock, clack, Our golden maid’s come back.”

Then she went in to her stepmother, and as she had returned covered with gold she was welcomed home.

She proceeded to tell all that had happened to her, and when the mother heard how she had come by her riches, she was most anxious to secure the same luck for her own idle, ugly daughter; so she told her to sit at the well and spin. In order to make her spindle bloody, she stuck her hand into a hedge of thorns and pricked her finger. Then she threw the spindle into the well, and jumped in herself after it. Like her sister she came to the beautiful meadow, and followed the same path. When she reached the baker’s oven the bread called out as before, “Oh! take me out, take me out, or I shall be burnt to a cinder. I am quite done enough.”

But the good-for-nothing girl answered, “A pretty joke, indeed; just as if I should dirty my hands for you!”

And on she went. Soon she came to the apple tree, which cried, “Oh! Shake me, shake me, my apples are all quite ripe.”

“I’ll see myself farther,” she replied, “one of them might fall on my head.”

And so she pursued her way. When she came to Mother Holle's house she wasn't the least afraid, for she had been warned about her big teeth, and she readily agreed to become her maid.

The first day she worked very hard, and did all her mistress told her, for she thought of the gold she would give her; but on the second day she began to be lazy, and on the third she wouldn't even get up in the morning. She didn't make Mother Holle's bed as she ought to have done, and never shook it enough to make the feathers fly. So her mistress soon grew weary of her, and dismissed her, much to the lazy creature's delight.

"For now," she thought, "the shower of golden rain will come."

Mother Holle led her to the same door as she had done her sister, but when she passed through it, instead of the gold rain a kettle full of pitch came showering over her.

"That's a reward for your service," said Mother Holle, and she closed the door behind her.

So the lazy girl came home all covered with pitch, and when the old hen on the top of the wall saw her, it called out, "Click, clock, clack, Our dirty slut's come back."

But the pitch remained sticking to her, and never as long as she lived could it be got off.

THE NIXY

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Lang, Andrew. *The Yellow Fairy Book*. London: Longmans, Green and Company, 1894, 108–113.

Date: ca. 1843

Original Source: Grimm, Jacob and Wilhelm. *Kinder- und Hausmärchen (Children's and Household Tales)*.

National Origin: Germany

Nixies are water spirits from Germanic tradition. Although they are shape-shifters, they usually appear in tales in human form. The belief in these beings is likely to serve a cautionary function regarding the dangers of drowning posed by isolated bodies of water. Lang's folktale is listed as Tale 181 in the Grimms' collection. The plot is the same as "The Nix of the Mill Pond" (AT 316).

There was once upon a time a miller who was very well off, and had as much money and as many goods as he knew what to do with. But sorrow comes in the night, and the miller all of a sudden became so poor that

at last he could hardly call the mill in which he sat his own. He wandered about all day full of despair and misery, and when he lay down at night he could get no rest, but lay awake all night sunk in sorrowful thoughts.

One morning he rose up before dawn and went outside, for he thought his heart would be lighter in the open air. As he wandered up and down on the banks of the mill-pond he heard a rustling in the water, and when he looked near he saw a white woman rising up from the waves. He realized at once that this could be none other than the nixy of the mill-pond, and in his terror he didn't know if he should fly away or remain where he was. While he hesitated the nixy spoke, called him by his name, and asked him why he was so sad.

When the miller heard how friendly her tone was, he plucked up heart and told her how rich and prosperous he had been all his life up till now, when he didn't know what he was to do for want and misery.

Then the nixy spoke comforting words to him, and promised that she would make him richer and more prosperous than he had ever been in his life before, if he would give her in return the youngest thing in his house.

The miller thought she must mean one of his puppies or kittens, so promised the nixy at once what she asked, and returned to his mill full of hope. On the threshold he was greeted by a servant with the news that his wife had just given birth to a boy.

The poor miller was much horrified by these tidings, and went in to his wife with a heavy heart to tell her and his relations of the fatal bargain he had just struck with the nixy. "I would gladly give up all the good fortune she promised me," he said, "if I could only save my child." But no one could think of any advice to give him, beyond taking care that the child never went near the mill-pond.

So the boy thrived and grew big, and in the meantime all prospered with the miller, and in a few years he was richer than he had ever been before. But all the same he did not enjoy his good fortune, for he could not forget his compact with the nixy, and he knew that sooner or later she would demand his fulfillment of it. But year after year went by, and the boy grew up and became a great hunter, and the lord of the land took him into his service, for he was as smart and bold a hunter as you would wish to see. In a short time he married a pretty young wife, and lived with her in great peace and happiness.

One day when he was out hunting a hare sprang up at his feet, and ran for some way in front of him in the open field. The hunter pursued it hotly for some time, and at last shot it dead. Then he proceeded to skin it, never noticing that he was close to the mill-pond, which from childhood up he had been taught to avoid. He soon finished the skinning, and went to the water to wash the blood off his hands. He had hardly dipped them in the pond when the nixy rose up in the water, and seizing him in her wet arms she dragged him down with her under the waves. When the hunter did not come home in the evening his wife grew very anxious, and when his game bag was found close to the mill-pond she

guessed at once what had befallen him. She was nearly beside herself with grief, and roamed round and round the pond calling on her husband without ceasing. At last, worn out with sorrow and fatigue, she fell asleep and dreamt that she was wandering along a flowery meadow, when she came to a hut where she found an old witch, who promised to restore her husband to her.

When she awoke next morning she determined to set out and find the witch; so she wandered on for many a day, and at last she reached the flowery meadow and found the hut where the old witch lived. The poor wife told her all that had happened and how she had been told in a dream of the witch's power to help her.

The witch counseled her to go to the pond the first time there was a full moon, and to comb her black hair with a golden comb, and then to place the comb on the bank. The hunter's wife gave the witch a handsome present, thanked her heartily, and returned home.

Time dragged heavily till the time of the full moon, but it passed at last, and as soon as it rose the young wife went to the pond, combed her black hair with a golden comb, and when she had finished, placed the comb on the bank; then she watched the water impatiently. Soon she heard a rushing sound, and a big wave rose suddenly and swept the comb off the bank, and a minute after the head of her husband rose from the pond and gazed sadly at her. But immediately another wave came, and the head sank back into the water without having said a word. The pond lay still and motionless, glittering in the moonshine, and the hunter's wife was not a bit better off than she had been before.

In despair she wandered about for days and nights, and at last, worn out by fatigue, she sank once more into a deep sleep, and dreamt exactly the same dream about the old witch. So next morning she went again to the flowery meadow and sought the witch in her hut, and told her of her grief. The old woman counseled her to go to the mill-pond the next full moon and play upon a golden flute, and then to lay the flute on the bank.

As soon as the next moon was full the hunter's wife went to the mill-pond, played on a golden flute, and when she had finished placed it on the bank. Then a rushing sound was heard, and a wave swept the flute off the bank, and soon the head of the hunter appeared and rose up higher and higher till he was half out of the water. Then he gazed sadly at his wife and stretched out his arms towards her. But another rushing wave arose and dragged him under once more. The hunter's wife, who had stood on the bank full of joy and hope, sank into despair when she saw her husband snatched away again before her eyes.

But for her comfort she dreamt the same dream a third time, and betook herself once more to the old witch's hut in the flowery meadow. This time the old woman told her to go the next full moon to the mill-pond, and to spin there with a golden spinning-wheel, and then to leave the spinning-wheel on the bank.

The hunter's wife did as she was advised, and the first night the moon was full she sat and spun with a golden spinning-wheel, and then left the wheel on

the bank. In a few minutes a rushing sound was heard in the waters, and a wave swept the spinning-wheel from the bank. Immediately the head of the hunter rose up from the pond, getting higher and higher each moment, till at length he stepped on to the bank and fell on his wife's neck.

But the waters of the pond rose up suddenly, overflowed the bank where the couple stood, and dragged them under the flood. In her despair the young wife called on the old witch to help her, and in a moment the hunter was turned into a frog and his wife into a toad. But they were not able to remain together, for the water tore them apart, and when the flood was over they both resumed their own shapes again, but the hunter and the hunter's wife found themselves each in a strange country, and neither knew what had become of the other.

The hunter determined to become a shepherd, and his wife too became a shepherdess. So they herded their sheep for many years in solitude and sadness.

Now it happened once that the shepherd came to the country where the shepherdess lived. The neighborhood pleased him, and he saw that the pasture was rich and suitable for his flocks. So he brought his sheep there, and herded them as before. The shepherd and shepherdess became great friends, but they did not recognize each other in the least.

But one evening when the moon was full they sat together watching their flocks, and the shepherd played upon his flute. Then the shepherdess thought of that evening when she had sat at the full moon by the mill-pond and had played on the golden flute; the recollection was too much for her, and she burst into tears. The shepherd asked her why she was crying, and left her no peace till she told him all her story. Then the scales fell from the shepherd's eyes, and he recognized his wife, and she him. So they returned joyfully to their own home, and lived in peace and happiness ever after.

HUNGARY

THE BOY WHO COULD KEEP A SECRET

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Lang, Andrew. *The Crimson Fairy Book*. London: Longmans, Green and Company, 1903, 37–46.

Date: Unavailable

Original Source: Jones, W. Henry, and L. Kropf. *The Folktales of the Magyars*. London: E. Stock, 1889.

National Origin: Hungary

The Magyars came to the mountainous area of Central Europe that constitutes contemporary Hungary from Central Asia, eventually becoming the nation's principal ethnic group. References to the Sultan in the tale locate events in the period during which the Turkish Ottoman Empire expanded into Hungary and other areas of Central Europe in the early decades of the sixteenth century. The drawing of a sword as the test of leadership and the sword's rattling in its scabbard to warn the bearer are central to the plot of this narrative. The **motif** of the magic sword is cross-culturally distributed.

Once upon a time there lived a poor widow who had one little boy. At first sight you would not have thought that he was different from a thousand other little boys; but then you noticed that by his side hung the scabbard of a sword, and as the boy grew bigger the scabbard grew bigger too. The sword which belonged to the scabbard was found by the little boy sticking out of the ground in the garden, and every day he pulled it up to see if it would go into the scabbard. But though it was plainly becoming longer and longer, it was some time before the two would fit.

However, there came a day at last when it slipped in quite easily. The child was so delighted that he could hardly believe his eyes, so he tried it seven times, and each time it slipped in more easily than before. But pleased though the boy was, he determined not to tell anyone about it, particularly not his mother, who never could keep anything from her neighbors.

Still, in spite of his resolutions, he could not hide altogether that something had happened, and when he went in to breakfast his mother asked him what was the matter.

“Oh, mother, I had such a nice dream last night,” said he; “but I can’t tell it to anybody.”

“You can tell it to me,” she answered. “It must have been a nice dream, or you wouldn’t look so happy.”

“No, mother; I can’t tell it to anybody,” returned the boy, “till it comes true.”

“I want to know what it was, and know it I will,” cried she, “and I will beat you till you tell me.”

But it was no use, neither words nor blows would get the secret out of the boy; and when her arm was quite tired and she had to leave off, the child, sore and aching, ran into the garden and knelt weeping beside his little sword. It was working round and round in its hole all by itself, and if anyone except the boy had tried to catch hold of it, he would have been badly cut. But the moment he stretched out his hand it stopped and slid quietly into the scabbard.

For a long time the child sat sobbing, and the noise was heard by the king as he was driving by. “Go and see who it is that is crying so,” said he to one of his servants, and the man went.

In a few minutes he returned saying, “Your Majesty, it is a little boy who is kneeling there sobbing because his mother has beaten him.”

“Bring him to me at once,” commanded the monarch, “and tell him that it is the king who sends for him, and that he has never cried in all his life and cannot bear anyone else to do so.” On receiving this message the boy dried his tears and went with the servant to the royal carriage. “Will you be my son?” asked the king.

“Yes, if my mother will let me,” answered the boy. And the king bade the servant go back to the mother and say that if she would give her boy to him, he should live in the palace and marry his prettiest daughter as soon as he was a man.

The widow’s anger now turned into joy, and she came running to the splendid coach and kissed the king’s hand. “I hope you will be more obedient to his Majesty than you were to me,” she said; and the boy shrank away half-frightened. But when she had gone back to her cottage, he asked the king if he might fetch something that he had left in the garden, and when he was given permission, he pulled up his little sword, which he slid into the scabbard.

Then he climbed into the coach and was driven away.

After they had gone some distance the king said, "Why were you crying so bitterly in the garden just now?"

"Because my mother had been beating me," replied the boy.

"And what did she do that for?" asked the king again.

"Because I would not tell her my dream."

"And why wouldn't you tell it to her?"

"Because I will never tell it to anyone till it comes true," answered the boy.

"And won't you tell it to me either?" asked the king in surprise.

"No, not even to you, your Majesty," replied he.

"Oh, I am sure you will when we get home," said the king smiling, and he talked to him about other things till they came to the palace.

"I have brought you such a nice present," he said to his daughters, and as the boy was very pretty they were delighted to have him and gave him all their best toys.

"You must not spoil him," observed the king one day, when he had been watching them playing together. "He has a secret which he won't tell to anyone."

"He will tell me," answered the eldest princess; but the boy only shook his head.

"He will tell me," said the second girl.

"Not I," replied the boy.

"He will tell me," cried the youngest, who was the prettiest too.

"I will tell nobody till it comes true," said the boy, as he had said before; "and I will beat anybody who asks me."

The king was very sorry when he heard this, for he loved the boy dearly; but he thought it would never do to keep anyone near him who would not do as he was bid. So he commanded his servants to take him away and not to let him enter the palace again until he had come to his right senses.

The sword clanked loudly as the boy was led away, but the child said nothing, though he was very unhappy at being treated so badly when he had done nothing. However, the servants were very kind to him, and their children brought him fruit and all sorts of nice things, and he soon grew merry again, and lived amongst them for many years till his seventeenth birthday. Meanwhile the two eldest princesses had become women, and had married two powerful kings who ruled over great countries across the sea. The youngest one was old enough to be married too, but she was very particular, and turned up her nose at all the young princes who had sought her hand.

One day she was sitting in the palace feeling rather dull and lonely, and suddenly she began to wonder what the servants were doing, and whether it was not more amusing down in their quarters. The king was at his council and the queen was ill in bed, so there was no one to stop the princess, and she hastily ran across the gardens to the houses where the servants lived. Outside she noticed a youth who was handsomer than any prince she had ever seen, and in a moment she knew him to be the little boy she had once played with.

“Tell me your secret and I will marry you,” she said to him; but the boy only gave her the beating he had promised her long ago, when she asked him the same question. The girl was very angry, besides being hurt, and ran home to complain to her father.

“If he had a thousand souls, I would kill them all,” swore the king.

That very day a gallows was built outside the town, and all the people crowded round to see the execution of the young man who had dared to beat the king’s daughter. The prisoner, with his hands tied behind his back, was brought out by the hangman, and amidst dead silence his sentence was being read by the judge when suddenly the sword clanked against his side. Instantly a great noise was heard and a golden coach rumbled over the stones, with a white flag waving out of the window. It stopped underneath the gallows, and from it stepped the king of the Magyars, who begged that the life of the boy might be spared.

“Sir, he has beaten my daughter, who only asked him to tell her his secret. I cannot pardon that,” answered the princess’s father.

“Give him to me, I’m sure he will tell me the secret; or, if not, I have a daughter who is like the Morning Star, and he is sure to tell it to her.”

The sword clanked for the third time, and the king said angrily, “Well, if you want him so much you can have him; only never let me see his face again.” And he made a sign to the hangman. The bandage was removed from the young man’s eyes, and the cords from his wrists, and he took his seat in the golden coach beside the king of the Magyars. Then the coachman whipped up his horses, and they set out for Buda [western portion of the city that became Budapest in the nineteenth century].

The king talked very pleasantly for a few miles, and when he thought that his new companion was quite at ease with him, he asked him what was the secret which had brought him into such trouble. “That I cannot tell you,” answered the youth, “until it comes true.”

“You will tell my daughter,” said the king, smiling.

“I will tell nobody,” replied the youth, and as he spoke the sword clanked loudly. The king said no more, but trusted to his daughter’s beauty to get the secret from him.

The journey to Buda was long, and it was several days before they arrived there. The beautiful princess happened to be picking roses in the garden, when her father’s coach drove up. “Oh, what a handsome youth! Have you brought him from fairyland?” cried she, when they all stood upon the marble steps in front of the castle.

“I have brought him from the gallows,” answered the king; rather vexed at his daughter’s words, as never before had she consented to speak to any man.

“I don’t care where you brought him from,” said the spoiled girl. “I will marry him and nobody else, and we will live together till we die.”

“You will tell another tale,” replied the king, “when you ask him his secret. After all he is no better than a servant.”

“That is nothing to me,” said the princess, “for I love him. He will tell his secret to me, and will find a place in the middle of my heart.”

But the king shook his head, and gave orders that the lad was to be lodged in the summer-house.

One day, about a week later, the princess put on her finest dress, and went to pay him a visit. She looked so beautiful that, at the sight of her, the book dropped from his hand, and he stood up speechless. “Tell me,” she said, coaxingly, “what is this wonderful secret? Just whisper it in my ear, and I will give you a kiss.”

“My angel,” he answered, “be wise, and ask no questions, if you wish to get safely back to your father’s palace; I have kept my secret all these years, and do not mean to tell it now.”

However, the girl would not listen, and went on pressing him, till at last he slapped her face so hard that her nose bled. She shrieked with pain and rage, and ran screaming back to the palace, where her father was waiting to hear if she had succeeded. “I will starve you to death, you son of a dragon,” cried he, when he saw her dress streaming with blood; and he ordered all the masons and bricklayers in the town to come before him.

“Build me a tower as fast as you can,” he said, “and see that there is room for a stool and a small table, and for nothing else. The men set to work, and in two hours the tower was built, and they proceeded to the palace to inform the king that his commands were fulfilled. On the way they met the princess, who began to talk to one of the masons, and when the rest were out of hearing she asked if he could manage to make a hole in the tower, which nobody could see, large enough for a bottle of wine and some food to pass through.

“To be sure I can,” said the mason, turning back, and in a few minutes the hole was bored.

At sunset a large crowd assembled to watch the youth being led to the tower, and after his misdeeds had been proclaimed he was solemnly walled up. But every morning the princess passed him in food through the hole, and every third day the king sent his secretary to climb up a ladder and look down through a little window to see if he was dead. But the secretary always brought back the report that he was fat and rosy.

“There is some magic about this,” said the king.

This state of affairs lasted some time, till one day a messenger arrived from the Sultan bearing a letter for the king, and also three canes. “My master bids me say,” said the messenger, bowing low, “that if you cannot tell him which of these three canes grows nearest the root, which in the middle, and which at the top, he will declare war against you.”

The king was very much frightened when he heard this, and though he took the canes and examined them closely, he could see no difference between them. He looked so sad that his daughter noticed it, and inquired the reason.

“Alas! my daughter,” he answered, “how can I help being sad? The Sultan has sent me three canes, and says that if I cannot tell him which of them grows

near the root, which in the middle, and which at the top, he will make war upon me. And you know that his army is far greater than mine.”

“Oh, do not despair, my father,” said she. “We shall be sure to find out the answer”; and she ran away to the tower, and told the young man what had occurred.

“Go to bed as usual,” replied he, “and when you wake, tell your father that you have dreamed that the canes must be placed in warm water. After a little while one will sink to the bottom; that is the one that grows nearest the root. The one which neither sinks nor comes to the surface is the cane that is cut from the middle; and the one that floats is from the top.”

So, the next morning, the princess told her father of her dream, and by her advice he cut notches in each of the canes when he took them out of the water, so that he might make no mistake when he handed them back to the messenger. The Sultan could not imagine how he had found out, but he did not declare war.

The following year the Sultan again wanted to pick a quarrel with the king of the Magyars, so he sent another messenger to him with three foals, begging him to say which of the animals was born in the morning, which at noon, and which in the evening. If an answer was not ready in three days, war would be declared at once. The king’s heart sank when he read the letter. He could not expect his daughter to be lucky enough to dream rightly a second time, and as a plague had been raging through the country, and had carried off many of his soldiers, his army was even weaker than before. At this thought his face became so gloomy that his daughter noticed it, and inquired what was the matter.

“I have had another letter from the Sultan,” replied the king, “and he says that if I cannot tell him which of three foals was born in the morning, which at noon, and which in the evening, he will declare war at once.”

“Oh, don’t be cast down,” said she, “something is sure to happen”; and she ran down to the tower to consult the youth.

“Go home, idol of my heart, and when night comes, pretend to scream out in your sleep, so that your father hears you. Then tell him that you have dreamt that he was just being carried off by the Turks because he could not answer the question about the foals, when the lad whom he had shut up in the tower ran up and told them which was foaled in the morning, which at noon, and which in the evening.”

So the princess did exactly as the youth had bidden her; and no sooner had she spoken than the king ordered the tower to be pulled down, and the prisoner brought before him. “I did not think that you could have lived so long without food,” said he, “and as you have had plenty of time to repent your wicked conduct, I will grant you pardon, on condition that you help me in a sore strait. Read this letter from the Sultan; you will see that if I fail to answer his question about the foals, a dreadful war will be the result.”

The youth took the letter and read it through. "Yes, I can help you," replied he; "but first you must bring me three troughs, all exactly alike. Into one you must put oats, into another wheat, and into the third barley. The foal which eats the oats is that which was foaled in the morning; the foal which eats the wheat is that which was foaled at noon; and the foal which eats the barley is that which was foaled at night." The king followed the youth's directions, and, marking the foals, sent them back to Turkey, and there was no war that year.

Now the Sultan was very angry that both his plots to get possession of Hungary had been such total failures, and he sent for his aunt, who was a witch, to consult her as to what he should do next.

"It is not the king who has answered your questions," observed the aunt, when he had told his story. "He is far too stupid ever to have done that! The person who has found out the puzzle is the son of a poor woman, who, if he lives, will become King of Hungary. Therefore, if you want the crown yourself, you must get him here and kill him."

After this conversation another letter was written to the Court of Hungary, saying that if the youth, now in the palace, was not sent to Turkey within three days, a large army would cross the border. The king's heart was sorrowful as he read, for he was grateful to the lad for what he had done to help him; but the boy only laughed, and bade the king fear nothing, but to search the town instantly for two youths just like each other, and he would paint himself a mask that was just like them. And the sword at his side clanked loudly.

After a long search twin brothers were found, so exactly resembling each other that even their own mother could not tell the difference. The youth painted a mask that was the precise copy of them, and when he had put it on, no one would have known one boy from the other. They set out at once for the Sultan's palace, and when they reached it, they were taken straight into his presence. He made a sign for them to come near; they all bowed low in greeting. He asked them about their journey; they answered his questions all together, and in the same words. If one sat down to supper, the others sat down at the same instant. When one got up, the others got up too, as if there had been only one body between them. The Sultan could not detect any difference between them, and he told his aunt that he would not be so cruel as to kill all three.

"Well, you will see a difference tomorrow," replied the witch, "for one will have a cut on his sleeve. That is the youth you must kill." And one hour before midnight, when witches are invisible, she glided into the room where all three lads were sleeping in the same bed. She took out a pair of scissors and cut a small piece out of the boy's coat-sleeve which was hanging on the wall, and then crept silently from the room. But in the morning the youth saw the slit, and he marked the sleeves of his two companions in the same way, and all three went down to breakfast with the Sultan. The old witch was standing in the window and pretended not to see them; but all witches have eyes in the backs of

their heads, and she knew at once that not one sleeve but three were cut, and they were all as alike as before. After breakfast, the Sultan, who was getting tired of the whole affair and wanted to be alone to invent some other plan, told them they might return home. So, bowing low with one accord, they went.

The princess welcomed the boy back joyfully, but the poor youth was not allowed to rest long in peace, for one day a fresh letter arrived from the Sultan, saying that he had discovered that the young man was a very dangerous person, and that he must be sent to Turkey at once, and alone. The girl burst into tears when the boy told her what was in the letter which her father had bade her to carry to him. "Do not weep, love of my heart," said the boy, "all will be well. I will start at sunrise tomorrow."

So next morning at sunrise the youth set forth, and in a few days he reached the Sultan's palace. The old witch was waiting for him at the gate, and whispered as he passed, "This is the last time you will ever enter it." But the sword clanked, and the lad did not even look at her. As he crossed the threshold fifteen armed Turks barred his way, with the Sultan at their head.

Instantly the sword darted forth and cut off the heads of everyone but the Sultan, and then went quietly back to its scabbard. The witch, who was looking on, saw that as long as the youth had possession of the sword, all her schemes would be in vain, and tried to steal the sword in the night, but it only jumped out of its scabbard and sliced off her nose, which was of iron. And in the morning, when the Sultan brought a great army to capture the lad and deprive him of his sword, they were all cut to pieces, while he remained without a scratch.

Meanwhile the princess was in despair because the days slipped by, and the young man did not return, and she never rested until her father let her lead some troops against the Sultan. She rode proudly before them, dressed in uniform; but they had not left the town more than a mile behind them, when they met the lad and his little sword. When he told them what he had done they shouted for joy, and carried him back in triumph to the palace; and the king declared that as the youth had shown himself worthy to become his son-in-law, he should marry the princess and succeed to the throne at once, as he himself was getting old, and the cares of government were too much for him. But the young man said he must first go and see his mother, and the king sent him in state, with a troop of soldiers as his bodyguard.

The old woman was quite frightened at seeing such an array draw up before her little house, and still more surprised when a handsome young man, whom she did not know, dismounted and kissed her hand, saying, "Now, dear mother, you shall hear my secret at last! I dreamed that I should become King of Hungary, and my dream has come true. When I was a child, and you begged me to tell you, I had to keep silence, or the Magyar king would have killed me. And if you had not beaten me nothing would have happened that has happened, and I should not now be King of Hungary."

THE GENIUS

Tradition Bearer: Benedek Elek

Source: Gaster, M. "Székeley Tales." *Folklore* 4 (1893): 331–339.

Date: ca. 1893

Original Source: Hungarian Székeley

National Origin: Hungarian

The Székeley (or Székellers) are among the three most historically prominent ethnic groups of Hungary—along with the Magyars and Saxons. Currently, the largest population of Székellers lives in Transylvania (Romania). Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, in fact, explicitly claims a Székeley ancestry. "The Genius" is a **variant** of "The Magic Ring" (AT 560).

There was once a king. This king had but one only son; but, the good God alone knows why, he was so furiously angry with him one day that he drove him out of the house to go where he liked—up or down! In vain the queen took his part, in vain she made the whole village weep for the dear child torn from her heart; there was no pardon; the little prince must go away. The prince set out then very sadly; he went strolling on over hill and dale. As he goes, he hears someone, very much out of breath, running behind him, and calling out his name. He turns back, and sees a servant from the court. He has brought him a watch, sent after him by his dear mother. The prince took the watch, put it in his pocket, and then went on.

As he goes along he takes the watch out and opens the case, and then some invisible being, or something, speaks, and says, "What are your commands, my soul, my dear good master?"

The prince was astonished at this, very much so; his astonishment was so great that he did not say a single word, but put the watch back in his pocket.

All at once the road branched off in two directions; the one leading to a huge great wood, the other to a large city. He considered which he should take. It would be well to go into the town and pass the night there, but he had not a single stray kreuzer. He therefore went towards the wood, thinking that he can at least make a fire there, perhaps, too, he will be able to catch a bird, then he will gather strawberries and mushrooms, and have such a supper that the king himself can't do better.

He went into the wood, therefore, and there chose out a great tree, under which he sat down. He takes out his watch to see what o'clock it is, then that invisible being, or something, speaks again, and asks him, "What are your commands, my soul, my dear good master?"

Thus answered the prince, "Well, if you want me to give commands, then make me something to eat, and out of the ground too."

Scarcely had the prince looked round when there before him stood a table spread with all sorts of good dainty dishes. The little prince fell to manfully; then he lay down in the soft grass, and did not get up till the sun shone on his stomach.

He started off again and went strolling on until he came to such a great high mountain that it was impossible to see either the end, or the length, or the top of it. He looked right, he looked left, he looked up, he went round about, this way and that, but he could not find any means of getting over it in any way, it was so lofty and so steep. But he looked and looked about until he found a hole which led into the mountain. He entered this hole, but he had hardly gone the distance of a good gun-shot when he got into such intense darkness that he could not move either backwards or forwards. He puts his hand in his pocket to get a match, and while he was feeling for a match the watch touched his hand, and he took it out.

"What are your commands, my soul, my dear good master?" asked the genius again.

"I command you," said the prince, "to get me some light from somewhere."

As he gave the command, a lighted wax-taper was already in his hand, and by its light he strolled further on. He went deeper and deeper in, until all at once the passage began to widen out. There he found a house. He pushed the door open, and there finds an old dwarf. He greets him in a becoming manner.

"God give you good day, my dear Mr. Father; pray how are you, how does your precious health serve you?"

"Good day," answered the dwarf; "I am well; but who are you, and what sort of business are you upon that you come here, where not even a mouse comes?"

The prince told the story of his sad fate with very bitter lamentations, so that the dwarf's heart was sad for him. He encouraged and comforted him, telling him not to grieve at all, for he will procure him just such a place as the one he has left. Then he told him that beyond the mountain there was a powerful but good-hearted king; he, too, had had an only son, but he had been lost in the wars. Now, if he will go to this king, who will soon be killed by grief, and will say that he is his lost son, the king would grieve no more, and he would not be a world-wanderer. The prince resolved upon this, and the dwarf carefully instructed him what he was to say to the king. "Say that you are called Paul, that you left home seven years ago, and did not write because you were taken prisoner, and kept in such grievous captivity that you were unable either to write a letter or send a message. Then ask this, too, whether the three little sisters whom you left alive at the time of your departure are still living."

The prince thanked him much for his good advice, took leave of the dwarf, and with that set off out of the mountain. When he got out he took out his

watch and gave this command to the genius, "Take me to the other side of this mountain, to the king whose only son was lost while soldiering."

"Good, my soul, my dear good master," said the genius, "only shut your eyes."

The prince shut his eyes, and felt that his feet did not touch the ground, and that he was flying as quick as thought. But this did not last long; again his feet touched the ground, and then the genius said, "Now open your eyes!"

The prince opened them and looked round; and then—behold a wonder! He was standing before the gateway of a palace, which was even more splendid than his father's. When he had taken a good look round at the palace and its environs, he pushed the gate open and went at once to the king. He did not trouble himself much, to be sure, but fell upon the king's neck at once, embraced him and kissed him, saying, "My precious dear good father, my illustrious father, my lord, I have not seen you for just seven years, and I began to think I should never see you again in this life!"

The king was amazed and astounded, looked at the boy from the crown of his head to the sole of his foot, before, behind, and every way, but still he could not exactly recognize him as his own dear son. However, he answered all questions in such a way that the king distrusted him no longer, and in his great joy he made such a feast that even the Wallachian parson had wine instead of brandy with his puliszka [porridge and curds], and even the lame began to dance.

All three princesses were living, and the prince thought it would be a good thing to present his "sisters" with some handsome gift. He took out his watch and ordered the genius to bring the three girls three bouquets of golden flowers, such as human eye had never seen. Not an hour had passed, when all three golden bouquets were there. He sent them to the rooms of the three young ladies as secretly as possible, so that one knew nothing about the other.

Well, time waxes and wanes. One evening there was a great ball at the royal palace, and the youngest princess placed the beautiful golden bouquet in her bosom. Then, all at once, there was such a brilliant light that they might just as well have put out the wax candles. The elder princesses did not bring their bouquets, and each thought that their sister had stolen hers. They set upon her to make her give back their flowers.

"I shall certainly not give them up!" said the little princess. "If you have any too, fetch them out; they are sure to be where you put them."

At this both the girls run away, and come back each with a golden bouquet. And then there was such a flood of light that not even the sun could have shone more brightly.

News of this went through the whole land; everyone talked of nothing but the wonderful golden bouquets. The king could not praise his son enough for having thought of his sisters even in his captivity, and for having managed to be so economical as to be able to buy three golden bouquets. But the major-domo

shook his head, and said to the king, "Now, my illustrious king, don't be angry, but there is some diablerie in this, and I wager that if your Majesty commands that a golden bridge shall be built from your Majesty's palace to my palace by tomorrow morning, the duke will do this, too."

The king laughed the major-domo to scorn, but the latter persisted, until at last he promised to put his son to the test.

The king had his son up, and told him of his desire. He was an old man, but he liked what was fine, and he thought that, as a person who had seen the world, he would perhaps know some possible way of building a golden bridge.

The prince told him just to wait till the morning, as he could not say anything until then. Then, when they had separated, the prince took out his watch, and told the genius of the king's wish.

"It is no matter, my soul, my dear good master," said the spirit; "the bridge will be there by morning."

And so it was! But it was so beautiful, so glittering, that when the king got up and looked out of window he almost fell backwards in his great astonishment. He had his son called at once, and said to him, "Well, you have done this well, my son; but if you can do so much, then you can do more also. If you don't build a palace of pure, fine gold, seven stories high, by tomorrow morning, and if this palace does not stand upon a slender diamond foot, I will have your head cut off!"

The king thought, however, that his son would not be able to do this, and he was already rejoicing that he would be able to put him to death; for he was afraid that he would send him to hell with his diablerie. The prince himself did not believe that the genius would be able to build such a palace; nevertheless, he told him what the king wanted. Thereupon he went to bed, and in the morning he got up. And pray, was not the seven-storied palace standing before his window! He was almost killed with astonishment; and the king still more. They were obliged to sprinkle him with cold water, he was so faint with intense amazement.

But the king had still not had wonders enough. The next day a courtyard was wanted for the golden palace. When he had this, he wished for a garden, in which all, even to the smallest blade of grass, should be of gold and diamonds. For this he allowed three days.

"Good," thought the prince, "I will do this, too; but if he is not satisfied with this, I will leave him, as St. Paul did the Wallachians."

For he had only stayed till now for the sake of the little princess. But the major-domo proposed to the king that they should go out hunting until the turn came for the garden, and take the duke with them; for he remembered that before the war he was very fond of hunting. They at once determined that they would go hunting. But before they set out, the major-domo told the prince that it would be well for him to leave that beautiful watch of his at home, for it might easily be spoilt in the forest, and then there was no master-workman to mend it here, as there was abroad. The prince took his advice, and left the watch in his room.

But they had scarcely reached the forest when the major-domo, who had watched the prince when he was talking to his watch one night, ran home, climbed up into the prince's room by the window, took the watch out, and opened it. The genius sprang out as usual, but he asked a different question. This is what he asked, "What are your commands, you thief, my robber-master?"

"I command you to take me to a place where even the wind seldom goes, and no one but a mouse ever comes."

In an instant the major-domo was where he wished to be, and the prince's watch with him.

The prince comes home from hunting in the evening, goes straight to his room, and looks for his watch the first thing. He looks for it, but does not find it. He turns over and looks through everything, but in vain: his watch is gone! gone! gone! Oh, the prince is sad! For what is he to do without a watch? There will be an end to his life if he does not suddenly make himself scarce. As quick as thought he ran out of the palace, and went straight ahead.

For seven days and seven nights he went on and on without stopping, he made inquiries in all directions, but did not come upon any trace of the precious treasure. On the eighth day, just at sundown, he reached a little hut. He pushes the door open. And then he finds that the Sun himself lives there, and was just then about to go to bed. He wishes him good-evening properly, and begs pardon for disturbing him so late.

"Pray what is your business, my son?" the Sun asked him.

He tells him that he is looking for such and such a major-domo.

"Oh, my dear son," answered the Sun, "I travel round the world, but only from east to west, and he whom you seek does not go that way, or I should certainly have seen him. But see, not far from here lives the King of the Winds; his sons travel over all parts of the world, he will certainly know about your major-domo."

The prince thanked him for the good advice, wished the Sun a peaceful good-night, and with that he went to the King of the Winds. But he, too, only said that neither he nor his sons had seen any such major-domo, and he must certainly have crept into some place such as the wind itself very seldom wanders into. Perhaps the King of the Mice would be able to direct him. He went to the King of the Mice. The King of the Mice immediately summoned all the mice there were, and inquired whether they had not seen such and such a major-domo.

"Might their eyes fall out if they had seen him," so answered they every one. The prince was just going to turn back very sadly, when there hobbled forward a lame mouse. The King of the Mice asks him, too, whether he had not seen a major-domo.

"Why, to be sure I have seen him," answered the lame mouse; "I have just come from there; but he lives under-ground, in a stone cave, and in such a small hole that even I can scarcely get in."

The prince was delighted, and asked the mouse only to take him to the cave, and they will soon contrive something when they are there. They came to the cave, and there they began to consult what they were to do now.

At last they determined that the mouse should creep into the hole, gnaw through the watch-chain while the major-domo was asleep, and bring the watch out to the prince.

When a good half-hour had passed, the mouse came with the watch; and in return the prince caused the genius to fetch so much corn that the mouse was able to live like a lord upon it all his life. The major-domo they left in the cave, where he neither lived nor died, and whence he would never escape by his own efforts.

The prince now went back to the court of his second father, and they were just then burying him!

The kingdom he had left to his youngest daughter, for she was the cleverest. They had only just buried the king when the two elder girls married two kings' sons, and he asked the youngest. We must say, by the way, he confessed that he was not the princesses' brother, and had only given himself out as the king's son to comfort him, and by advice of the dwarf.

Well, the youngest princess did not need much asking. They quickly took boards, made benches and tables, and held three such wedding-feasts all at once that, maybe, they have not come to an end yet.

THE LAD WHO KNEW EVERYTHING

Tradition Bearer: Benedek Elek

Source: Gaster, M. "Székeley Tales." *Folklore* 4 (1893): 339–344.

Date: ca. 1893

Original Source: Hungarian Székeley

National Origin: Hungarian

In this **variant** of "The Animal Languages" (AT 670), the gift of animal languages brings wealth and status to a poor youth. Unlike most other versions of the tale, "The Lad Who Knew Everything" takes a tragic turn. Compare this narrative with the more typical comic conclusions of "The Billy Goat and the King" (Volume 2, page 295) and "The King Who Learned the Speech of Animals" (Volume 2, page 301).

There was once a poor lad. All the great efforts he made were to no purpose, he could not make anything of them, and he only became more of a beggar every day. The poor lad was much worried and very low-spirited

to find that he was always unsuccessful in everything, whatever he attempted, and that he would have to remain a beggar all his life. Really he would not torment himself any more, he would put an end to this miserable life. All that he possessed was a rope, and with this he went into the wood, intending to hang himself.

While he was wandering sadly in the huge wood, he heard a sound of piteous lamentation; he goes towards it, and then he sees a little tiny snake writhing about on the top of a tree-trunk, which was on fire, but it was unable to escape, for it was surrounded by flames and red-hot embers, and it would be killed if it went near them.

“But,” said the poor lad to himself, “I won’t let this unreasoning animal die an innocent death, though I have determined to die myself.” With that he went up to the burning trunk, stretched out a good firm bough, and lifted the little snakelet down on it.

Ha! How profusely the poor little snake thanked him! And it would not leave its life-preserver any peace until he accompanied it to its father’s come, and allowed him also to thank him for his kindness.

“God bless you,” thought the lad, “it will prolong my life a little, at all events.”

For, words are words, but the poor lad was afraid of death. He therefore accompanied the little snakelet to his father’s home. They went slowly on until they reached a large cave. It was here that the young snake’s father lived, and he was the very King of the Snakes himself. Eh! behold a wonder! the King of the Snakes was just as big as a hay-fork, and in his head there shone such a large diamond that the poor lad almost lost the sight of his eyes when he stepped in. There lay the King of the Snakes in the middle of the cave, and when the lad stepped in he fixed his great eyes upon him.

“Well,” thought the lad, “I shall have no need to hang myself, for this snake will gobble me up at once.”

But when the aged king knew that the poor lad had pre-served his son’s life, his countenance changed at once, and he said to the lad, “God bless you, you poor boy, for saving my son’s life. In return I will make you fortunate all your life, and your descendants fortunate too; only I warn you of this, not to tell anyone in the world of my gift, for the very moment you do, your life will come to an end.”

Now the King of the Snakes whispered something in the lad’s ear, and then the poor lad felt at once that from that moment he was not the same person that he had been before. All at once he knew everything, and he knew everything in such sort that he was equally well able to talk to human beings and animals, and he could even understand the humming of the flies besides.

He thanked the King of the Snakes over and over again for his valuable gift, and said, “I thank you, illustrious King of the Snakes, for your invisible gift. I saved your child’s life, and you have saved mine, for I was resolved upon dying a horrible death!”

With that he took his leave, commending the King of the Snakes, with his entire family and all his people, to God, and then set out towards home. He went sauntering on through the wood, and all at once he hears the sparrows twittering in a tree overhead. The oldest sparrow was just then speaking and saying, "Ah! if this poor lad could know what I know, he certainly would not think of putting an end to his life, but he would grow so rich that he would not exchange even with the king."

"You don't say so!" said the other sparrows. "How would it be possible?"

"Why, this way, to be sure," said the other sparrow; "by digging up the pan of gold which is beneath the hollow willow tree, and he would be rich all his life, even if he were to distribute half to the poor."

"Hem," thinks the poor lad to himself, "I will try, anyhow, whether the old sparrow speaks the truth."

He went home, procured a spade and hoe, and in the evening returned to the wood, to the hollow tree. He began to dig, and he dug until his spade clinked against the pan.

Hurrah! he hurriedly seized hold of the pan, and the sweat just dropped from his face while he lifted the pan full of gold out of the hole.

For indeed it was full of gold to the top; the old sparrow had not lied. He took the gold home too that same evening, and the next morning he began at the lower end of the village, and did not stop until he had distributed half among the poor.

He gained great esteem in the village, you may be sure! And then, moreover, when his neighbor's cow fell ill, and he knew from its lowing what was the matter with it, and was able to cure it besides, the whole village and the neighborhood too, for a great distance round, came to him, bringing all their sick animals, and he cured them.

But when he had nothing else to do, he always wandered out in the woods and fields, and listened to what the birds were saying. One day, being very tired with wandering about so much, he sat down on the roots of a tree. While he was lying there idly, a raven overhead spoke and said, "Ah! if the person who is dozing under the tree knew what I know, he would be the king's son-in-law in a week!"

"If he knew what, then?" asked the other ravens.

"Why, this, that the king's daughter has lost her precious gold cross, and now she has bound herself not to marry anyone but the man who shall produce the gold cross, for it is a keepsake from her dear mother. The man who can find it is not yet born into this world. It is in a good place here, in the hollow of the tree. The old king, however, has had a proclamation made throughout the whole kingdom that he will give his daughter and half his kingdom to, whoever produces the gold cross."

The lad laughed to himself, and thought, "You have spoken just at the right time, you chattering raven!"

He waited for them to fly away, and then he climbed up the tree, and actually found the gold cross in the hollow.

He hastened home immediately, but before he went to the king, he had such a palace built for him that there was not its fellow for a distance of seventh-seven lands; then he sent for a tailor, and ordered such a brilliant gunya [short cloak] that he might even have been taken for a duke. When both the palace and his cloak were ready, and he had looked at himself repeatedly from head to foot in the pier-glass to see whether he looked like a gentleman (which he did, of course!), he took the gold cross and set out with it to the king's court. He went straight up into the princess's room, and told a great lie, saying that he had taken the cross away from twelve robbers.

And, the princess was so delighted, she could not think of anything in her great delight. Then, when she had had a good look at the lad, and saw that he was a handsome, knightly-looking youth, she certainly did not take back her word, but said, "Here is my hand, I am yours till death, till my coffin is closed!"

After that there was a wedding, but such a wedding that the whole country rang with it, and it was talked of besides more than seven times seven lands off. The young couple lived happily, only the wife was not pleased at her husband's always wandering in the woods and fields, nor at his constantly forgetting himself even when they went out together, and listening to the songs of all the birds. They often quarreled about this, but then they made peace again.

One day they rode out on horseback into the wood. For a good while they kept close together, but then the mistress's horse lagged a little behind. The master's horse neighed back at it, "I say, you, why are you lagging behind?"

"It is easy for you," answered the mistress's horse. "You have only one to go with besides yourself, and I have three."

On hearing this the master laughed very much.

"What are you laughing at so heartily?" asked his wife.

"That I can't tell you," answered her husband. There was great wrath at this! Her husband was laughing at her! Who could tell what he did not think about her! But she would not leave him any peace until he told her.

"Very well," said her husband, "I will tell you, but, believe me, I shall die that same instant. Do you wish me to die?"

"Don't make game of me!" burst forth the lady. "You won't die just for telling a secret to your wife."

"Well then, I will tell you. If you desire my death, let it be as you wish."

The lady only laughed. She did not believe her husband.

However, he told her from beginning to end his adventure with the snake, and when he had come to the end of his story, that moment he fell from his horse and died suddenly.

Now, indeed, the lady believed that her husband was right, but it was too late. The wonder-working doctor who could raise her husband up was not yet born. She was never comforted, not entirely even when her beautiful

little golden-haired son was born, and grew up into just such a gallant lad as his father had been. The one thing she taught her son was to keep any promise once made lest the same thing should happen to him as to his dear father.

So it was, that was the end, it was true. If anyone does not believe it, let him go and see.

THE GRATEFUL BEASTS

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Lang, Andrew. *The Yellow Fairy Book*. London: Longmans, Green and Company, 1894, 64–74.

Date: Unavailable

Original Source: Hermann R. Kletke

National Origin: Hungary

The following **ordinary folktale** begins with the episode of “The Two Travelers” (AT 613) in which a blinded man learns secrets that allow him to attain wealth and social status. Most of the tale, however, follows the developmental structure of “The Grateful Animals” (AT 544). In repaying their debts of gratitude, the nonhuman characters reveal themselves to have more integrity than the antagonists of the narrative.

There was once upon a time a man and woman who had three fine-looking sons, but they were so poor that they had hardly enough food for themselves, let alone their children. So the sons determined to set out into the world and to try their luck. Before starting their mother gave them each a loaf of bread and her blessing, and having taken a tender farewell of her and their father the three set forth on their travels.

The youngest of the three brothers, whose name was Ferko, was a beautiful youth, with a splendid figure, blue eyes, fair hair, and a complexion like milk and roses. His two brothers were as jealous of him as they could be, for they thought that with his good looks he would be sure to be more fortunate than they would ever be.

One day all the three were sitting resting under a tree, for the sun was hot and they were tired of walking. Ferko fell fast asleep, but the other two remained awake, and the eldest said to the second brother, “What do you say to doing our brother Ferko some harm? He is so beautiful that everyone takes a fancy to him, which is more than they do to us. If we could only get him out of the way we might succeed better.”

“I quite agree with you,” answered the second brother, “and my advice is to eat up his loaf of bread, and then to refuse to give him a bit of ours until he has promised to let us put out his eyes or break his legs.”

His eldest brother was delighted with this proposal, and the two wicked wretches seized Ferko’s loaf and ate it all up, while the poor boy was still asleep.

When he did awake he felt very hungry and turned to eat his bread, but his brothers cried out, “You ate your loaf in your sleep, you glutton, and you may starve as long as you like, but you won’t get a scrap of ours.”

Ferko was at a loss to understand how he could have eaten in his sleep, but he said nothing, and fasted all that day and the next night. But on the following morning he was so hungry that he burst into tears, and implored his brothers to give him a little bit of their bread. Then the cruel creatures laughed, and repeated what they had said the day before; but when Ferko continued to beg and beseech them, the eldest said at last, “If you will let us put out one of your eyes and break one of your legs, then we will give you a bit of our bread.”

At these words poor Ferko wept more bitterly than before, and bore the torments of hunger till the sun was high in the heavens; then he could stand it no longer, and he consented to allow his left eye to be put out and his left leg to be broken. When this was done he stretched out his hand eagerly for the piece of bread, but his brothers gave him such a tiny scrap that the starving youth finished it in a moment and besought them for a second bit.

But the more Ferko wept and told his brothers that he was dying of hunger, the more they laughed and scolded him for his greed. So he endured the pangs of starvation all that day, but when night came his endurance gave way, and he let his right eye be put out and his right leg broken for a second piece of bread.

After his brothers had thus successfully maimed and disfigured him for life, they left him groaning on the ground and continued their journey without him.

Poor Ferko ate up the scrap of bread they had left him and wept bitterly, but no one heard him or came to his help. Night came on, and the poor blind youth had no eyes to close, and could only crawl along the ground, not knowing in the least where he was going. But when the sun was once more high in the heavens, Ferko felt the blazing heat scorch him, and sought for some cool shady place to rest his aching limbs. He climbed to the top of a hill and lay down in the grass, and as he thought under the shadow of a big tree. But it was no tree he leant against, but a gallows on which two ravens were seated. The one was saying to the other as the weary youth lay down, “Is there anything the least wonderful or remarkable about this neighborhood?”

“I should just think there was,” replied the other; “many things that don’t exist anywhere else in the world. There is a lake down there below us, and anyone who bathes in it, though he were at death’s door, becomes sound and well on the spot, and those who wash their eyes with the dew on this hill become as sharp-sighted as the eagle, even if they have been blind from their youth.”

“Well,” answered the first raven, “my eyes are in no want of this healing bath, for, Heaven be praised, they are as good as ever they were; but my wing has been very feeble and weak ever since it was shot by an arrow many years ago, so let us fly at once to the lake that I may be restored to health and strength again.” And so they flew away.

Their words rejoiced Ferko’s heart, and he waited impatiently till evening should come and he could rub the precious dew on his sightless eyes.

At last it began to grow dusk, and the sun sank behind the mountains; gradually it became cooler on the hill, and the grass grew wet with dew. Then Ferko buried his face in the ground till his eyes were damp with dewdrops, and in a moment he saw clearer than he had ever done in his life before. The moon was shining brightly, and lighted him to the lake where he could bathe his poor broken legs.

Then Ferko crawled to the edge of the lake and dipped his limbs in the water. No sooner had he done so than his legs felt as sound and strong as they had been before, and Ferko thanked the kind fate that had led him to the hill where he had overheard the ravens’ conversation. He filled a bottle with the healing water, and then continued his journey in the best of spirits. He had not gone far before he met a wolf, who was limping disconsolately along on three legs, and who on perceiving Ferko began to howl dismally.

“My good friend,” said the youth, “be of good cheer, for I can soon heal your leg,” and with these words he poured some of the precious water over the wolf’s paw, and in a minute the animal was springing about sound and well on all fours. The grateful creature thanked his benefactor warmly, and promised Ferko to do him a good turn if he should ever need it. Ferko continued his way till he came to a ploughed field. Here he noticed a little mouse creeping wearily along on its hind paws, for its front paws had both been broken in a trap.

Ferko felt so sorry for the little beast that he spoke to it in the most friendly manner, and washed its small paws with the healing water. In a moment the mouse was sound and whole, and after thanking the kind physician it scampered away over the ploughed furrows.

Ferko again proceeded on his journey, but he hadn’t gone far before a queen bee flew against him, trailing one wing behind her, which had been cruelly torn in two by a big bird. Ferko was no less willing to help her than he had been to help the wolf and the mouse, so he poured some healing drops over the wounded wing. On the spot the queen bee was cured, and turning to Ferko she said, “I am most grateful for your kindness, and shall reward you some day.” And with these words she flew away humming, gaily.

Then Ferko wandered on for many a long day, and at length reached a strange kingdom. Here, he thought to himself, he might as well go straight to the palace and offer his services to the King of the country, for he had heard that the King’s daughter was as beautiful as the day. So he went to the royal palace, and as he entered the door the first people he saw were his two

brothers who had so shamefully ill-treated him. They had managed to obtain places in the King's service, and when they recognized Ferko with his eyes and legs sound and well they were frightened to death, for they feared he would tell the King of their conduct, and that they would be hung.

No sooner had Ferko entered the palace than all eyes were turned on the handsome youth, and the King's daughter herself was lost in admiration, for she had never seen anyone so handsome in her life before. His brothers noticed this, and envy and jealousy were added to their fear, so much so that they determined once more to destroy him. They went to the King and told him that Ferko was a wicked magician, who had come to the palace with the intention of carrying off the Princess.

Then the King had Ferko brought before him, and said, "You are accused of being a magician who wishes to rob me of my daughter, and I condemn you to death; but if you can fulfill three tasks which I shall set you to do your life shall be spared, on condition you leave the country; but if you cannot perform what I demand you shall be hung on the nearest tree." And turning to the two wicked brothers he said, "Suggest something for him to do; no matter how difficult, he must succeed in it or die."

They did not think long, but replied, "Let him build your Majesty in one day a more beautiful palace than this, and if he fails in the attempt let him be hung."

The King was pleased with this proposal, and commanded Ferko to set to work on the following day. The two brothers were delighted, for they thought they had now got rid of Ferko forever. The poor youth himself was heart-broken, and cursed the hour he had crossed the boundary of the King's domain. As he was wandering disconsolately about the meadows round the palace, wondering how he could escape being put to death, a little bee flew past, and settling on his shoulder whispered in his ear, "What is troubling you, my kind benefactor? Can I be of any help to you? I am the bee whose wing you healed, and would like to show my gratitude in some way."

Ferko recognized the queen bee, and said, "Alas! how could you help me? For I have been set to do a task which no one in the whole world could do, let him be ever such a genius! Tomorrow I must build a palace more beautiful than the King's, and it must be finished before evening."

"Is that all?" answered the bee, "then you may comfort yourself; for before the sun goes down tomorrow night a palace shall be built unlike any that King has dwelt in before. Just stay here till I come again and tell you that it is finished." Having said this she flew merrily away, and Ferko, reassured by her words, lay down on the grass and slept peacefully till the next morning. Early on the following day the whole town was on its feet, and everyone wondered how and where the stranger would build the wonderful palace. The Princess alone was silent and sorrowful, and had cried all night till her pillow was wet, so much did she take the fate of the beautiful youth to heart.

Ferko spent the whole day in the meadows waiting the return of the bee. And when evening was come the queen bee flew by, and perching on his shoulder she

said, "The wonderful palace is ready. Be of good cheer, and lead the King to the hill just outside the city walls." And humming gaily she flew away again.

Ferko went at once to the King and told him the palace was finished. The whole court went out to see the wonder, and their astonishment was great at the sight which met their eyes. A splendid palace reared itself on the hill just outside the walls of the city, made of the most exquisite flowers that ever grew in mortal garden. The roof was all of crimson roses, the windows of lilies, the walls of white carnations, the floors of glowing auriculars and violets, the doors of gorgeous tulips and narcissi with sunflowers for knockers, and all round hyacinths and other sweet-smelling flowers bloomed in masses, so that the air was perfumed far and near and enchanted all who were present.

This splendid palace had been built by the grateful queen bee, who had summoned all the other bees in the kingdom to help her.

The King's amazement knew no bounds, and the Princess's eyes beamed with delight as she turned them from the wonderful building on the delighted Ferko. But the two brothers had grown quite green with envy, and only declared the more that Ferko was nothing but a wicked magician.

The King, although he had been surprised and astonished at the way his commands had been carried out, was very vexed that the stranger should escape with his life, and turning to the two brothers he said, "He has certainly accomplished the first task, with the aid no doubt of his diabolical magic; but what shall we give him to do now? Let us make it as difficult as possible, and if he fails he shall die."

Then the eldest brother replied, "The corn has all been cut, but it has not yet been put into barns; let the knave collect all the grain in the kingdom into one big heap before tomorrow night, and if as much as a stalk of corn is left let him be put to death.

The Princess grew white with terror when she heard these words; but Ferko felt much more cheerful than he had done the first time, and wandered out into the meadows again, wondering how he was to get out of the difficulty. But he could think of no way of escape. The sun sank to rest and night came on, when a little mouse started out of the grass at Ferko's feet, and said to him, "I'm delighted to see you, my kind benefactor; but why are you looking so sad? Can I be of any help to you, and thus repay your great kindness to me?"

Then Ferko recognized the mouse whose front paws he had healed, and replied, "Alas I how can you help me in a matter that is beyond any human power! Before tomorrow night all the grain in the kingdom has to be gathered into one big heap, and if as much as a stalk of corn is wanting I must pay for it with my life."

"Is that all?" answered the mouse; "that needn't distress you much. Just trust in me, and before the sun sets again you shall hear that your task is done." And with these words the little creature scampered away into the fields.

Ferko, who never doubted that the mouse would be as good as its word, lay down comforted on the soft grass and slept soundly till next morning. The day passed slowly, and with the evening came the little mouse and said, "Now there is not a single stalk of corn left in any field; they are all collected in one big heap on the hill out there."

Then Ferko went joyfully to the King and told him that all he demanded had been done. And the whole Court went out to see the wonder, and were no less astonished than they had been the first time. For in a heap higher than the King's palace lay all the grain of the country, and not a single stalk of corn had been left behind in any of the fields. And how had all this been done? The little mouse had summoned every other mouse in the land to its help, and together they had collected all the grain in the kingdom.

The King could not hide his amazement, but at the same time his wrath increased, and he was more ready than ever to believe the two brothers, who kept on repeating that Ferko was nothing more nor less than a wicked magician. Only the beautiful Princess rejoiced over Ferko's success, and looked on him with friendly glances, which the youth returned.

The more the cruel King gazed on the wonder before him, the more angry he became, for he could not, in the face of his promise, put the stranger to death. He turned once more to the two brothers and said, "His diabolical magic has helped him again, but now what third task shall we set him to do? No matter how impossible it is, he must do it or die."

The eldest answered quickly, "Let him drive all the wolves of the kingdom on to this hill before tomorrow night. If he does this he may go free; if not he shall be hung as you have said."

At these words the Princess burst into tears, and when the King saw this he ordered her to be shut up in a high tower and carefully guarded till the dangerous magician should either have left the kingdom or been hung on the nearest tree.

Ferko wandered out into the fields again, and sat down on the stump of a tree wondering what he should do next. Suddenly a big wolf ran up to him, and standing still said, "I'm very glad to see you again, my kind benefactor. What are you thinking about all alone by yourself? If I can help you in any way only say the word, for I would like to give you a proof of my gratitude."

Ferko at once recognized the wolf whose broken leg he had healed, and told him what he had to do the following day if he wished to escape with his life. "But how in the world," he added, "am I to collect all the wolves of the kingdom on to that hill over there?"

"If that's all you want done," answered the wolf, "you needn't worry yourself. I'll undertake the task, and you'll hear from me again before sunset tomorrow. Keep your spirits up." And with these words he trotted quickly away.

Then the youth rejoiced greatly, for now he felt that his life was safe; but he grew very sad when he thought of the beautiful Princess, and that he would never see her again if he left the country. He lay down once more on the grass and soon fell fast asleep.

All the next day he spent wandering about the fields, and toward evening the wolf came running to him in a great hurry and said, "I have collected together all the wolves in the kingdom, and they are waiting for you in the wood. Go quickly to the King, and tell him to go to the hill that he may see the wonder you have done with his own eyes. Then return at once to me and get on my back, and I will help you to drive all the wolves together."

Then Ferko went straight to the palace and told the King that he was ready to perform the third task if he would come to the hill and see it done. Ferko himself returned to the fields, and mounting on the wolf's back he rode to the wood close by.

Quick as lightning the wolf flew round the wood, and in a minute many hundred wolves rose up before him, increasing in number every moment, till they could be counted by thousands. He drove them all before him on to the hill, where the King and his whole Court and Ferko's two brothers were standing. Only the lovely Princess was not present, for she was shut up in her tower weeping bitterly.

The wicked brothers stamped and foamed with rage when they saw the failure of their wicked designs. But the King was overcome by a sudden terror when he saw the enormous pack of wolves approaching nearer and nearer, and calling out to Ferko he said, "Enough, enough, we don't want any more."

But the wolf on whose back Ferko sat, said to its rider, "Go on! go on!" and at the same moment many more wolves ran up the hill, howling horribly and showing their white teeth.

The King in his terror called out, "Stop a moment; I will give you half my kingdom if you will drive all the wolves away." But Ferko pretended not to hear, and drove some more thousands before him, so that everyone quaked with horror and fear.

Then the King raised his voice again and called out, "Stop! you shall have my whole kingdom, if you will only drive these wolves back to the places they came from."

But the wolf kept on encouraging Ferko, and said, "Go on! go on!" So he led the wolves on, till at last they fell on the King and on the wicked brothers, and ate them and the whole Court up in a moment.

Then Ferko went straight to the palace and set the Princess free, and on the same day he married her and was crowned King of the country. And the wolves all went peacefully back to their own homes, and Ferko and his bride lived for many years in peace and happiness together, and were much beloved by great and small in the land.

THE GOLDEN SPINSTER

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Wratislaw, A. H. *Sixty Folk-Tales from Exclusively Slavonic Sources*. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Co., 1890, 82–89.

Date: Unavailable

Original Source: Collected from oral tradition by K. J. Erben

National Origin: Hungary

This tale of a daughter's predicament caused by her mother's false boasting is a **variant** of "The Name of the Helper" (AT 500). The plot is best known in the form popularized by the Grimms' "Rumpelstiltskin" (Grimm 55).

Far away somewhere beyond the Red Sea, there was a certain young lord. When he had grown up in body and mind, he bethought himself that indeed it would not be a bad thing to look round him in the world and seek out a nice wife for himself, and a good mistress for his household. Well, as he determined, so he did. He went out into the world, but could not find such a one as he would have liked.

At last he went somehow into the house of a widow, who had three daughters, all maidens. The two elder were as active as wasps for work, but the youngest, who was named Hanka, was like a leaden bird for everything that wanted doing. When the young lord came to them at spinning time he was astounded. "How is it," thought he, "that Hanka can be sleeping in the chimney-corner, while the other spinsters are hard at work at their tasks?" He said to their mother, "But, old lady, tell me, why don't you make that one, too, take a distaff? She is quite a grown-up girl, and would amuse herself by work."

"Ah! Young sir," replied the mother, "I would allow her to spin with all my heart; I would fill her distaff myself; but what then? She is such a spinster, that by herself she would by morning spin up not only all our spinning materials, but all the thatch from the roof, and that into golden threads; nay, at last she would betake herself to my gray hairs; I am obliged, therefore, to give her a holiday."

"If this be so," said the delighted suitor, "and if it is God's will, you can give her to me to wife. You see, I have a nice establishment—flax, hemp, whole heaps of the finer and commoner kinds of tow; she could spin away to her heart's content." At such language the old woman did not take long for consideration, and Hanka woke from her slumbers. They brought the bridegroom expectant a handsome olive-colored handkerchief out of the clothes-chest, adorned him with periwinkles, and performed the marriage ceremony that very evening. The other spinsters were somewhat mortified at Hanka's good fortune,

but finally were content at it, hoping that they, too, would get rings on their fingers, now that the idle hand, as they nicknamed Hanka, had obtained a husband. The next day our young bridegroom ordered his horses to be harnessed, and when all was ready, placed the tearful bride beside him in a handsome carriage, gave his hand to his mother-in-law, called out "Farewell!" to the bride's sisters, and they left the village at a gallop.

For better or worse! Poor Hanka sat by her youthful husband mournful and tearful, just as if the chickens had eaten up all her bread. He talked to her enough, but Hanka was as mute as a fish. "What's the matter with you?" said he. "Don't be frightened. At my house, indeed, there will be no going to sleep for you. I shall give you all that your heart desires. You will have flax, hemp, fine and coarse tow enough for the whole winter, and I have got in a store of apples for spittle."

But our Hanka became more sorrowful the further they went. Thus they arrived in the evening at the young lord's castle, got down from the carriage, and, after supper, the future lady was conducted into a large room, in which, from top to bottom, lay nothing but spinning materials. "Well," said he, "here you have distaff, spindle, and spindle-ring, and rosy apples and a few peas for spittle—spin away! If you spin all this, by morning, into golden threads, we shall be man and wife at once if not, I shall cause you to be put to death without further ado." Thereupon the young lord went out and left the spinster to spin.

When Hanka was left alone, she didn't seat herself under the distaff, for she didn't even know how to twirl the threads, but began sorrowfully to exclaim, "Oh God! God! here I am come out to vile disgrace! Why did not my mother teach me to work and spin like my two sisters? I might then have reposed in peace at home; but, as it is, sinful creature that I am, I must perish miserably."

As she was thus expressing her feelings, the wall suddenly opened, and a little manikin stood before the terrified Hanka, with a red cap on his head and an apron girt round his waist; before him he pushed a little golden hand-cart. "Why have you your eyes so tearful?" inquired he of Hanka. "What has happened to you?"

"As if; sinful soul that I am, I should not weep," said she; "only think, they have ordered me to spin all these spinning materials into golden threads by morning, and if I don't do so, they will have me put to death without any ceremony. Oh God! God! what shall I do, forlorn in this strange world?"

"If that is all," said the manikin, "don't be frightened. I will teach you to spin golden threads cleverly; but only on this condition, that I find you this time next year in this very place. Then, if you do not guess my honorable name, you will become my wife, and I shall convey you away in this cart. But, if you guess it, I shall leave you in peace. But this I tell you: if you choose to hide yourself anywhere this time next year, and if you fly ever so far beneath the sky, I shall find you, and will wring your neck. Well, have you agreed to this?"

It was not, sooth to say, very satisfactory to Hanka; but what could the poor thing do? At length she bethought herself, "Let it be left to God, whether I perish this way or that! I agree." The manikin, on hearing this, made three circuits round her with his golden cart, seated himself under the distaff, and repeating:

Thus, Haniczka, thus!
Thus, Haniczka, thus!
Thus, Haniczka, thus!

taught and instructed her to spin golden threads. After this, as he came, so he departed, and the wall closed up of itself behind him.

Our damsel, from that time forth a real golden spinster, sat under the distaff, and seeing how the spinning materials decreased and the golden threads increased, spun and spun away, and by morning had not only spun up all, but had had a good sleep into the bargain.

In the morning, as soon as the young lord awoke, he dressed himself and went to visit the golden spinster. When he entered the room he was all but blinded by the glitter, and wouldn't even believe his eyes, that it was all gold. But when he had satisfied himself that so it was, he began to embrace the golden spinster, and declared her his true and lawful wife. Thus they lived in the fear of God, and if our young lord had previously loved his Haniczka for the golden spinning, he then loved her a thousand times more for the beautiful son that she in the meantime bore him.

But what? There's no footpath without an end, neither could the joy of our wedded pair endure forever. Day passed after day, till finally the appointed time approached within a span. Now our Hanka began to be more sorrowful from moment to moment; her eyes were as red as if they were baked, and she did nothing but creep like a shadow from room to room. And, indeed, it was a serious thing for a young mother to have to lose all at once her good husband and her beautiful son! Hitherto her poor husband knew nought about anything, and comforted his wife as well as he could; but she would not be comforted. When she bethought herself what a nasty dwarf she was going to obtain instead of her shapely husband, she all but dashed herself against the walls from excessive agony.

At last she managed to overcome herself, and revealed everything to her husband as it had occurred to her on that first night. He became, from horror, as pale as a whitewashed wall, and caused proclamation to be made throughout the whole district that, if anyone knew of such a dwarf, and should make known his real name, he would give him a piece of gold as large as his head.

"Ah! what a windfall such a piece of gold as that would be!" whispered neighbor to neighbor, and they dispersed on all sides, examined all corners, all but looked into the mouse holes, searched and searched as for a needle, but, after all, couldn't find anything out. Nobody knew and nobody had seen the dwarf, and as for his name, no living soul could guess it. Under such

circumstances the last day arrived; nothing had been seen or heard of the manikin, and our Hanka, with her boy at her breast, was wringing her hands at the prospect of losing her husband.

Her unhappy husband, whose eyes were almost exhausted from weeping, in order, at any rate, to escape from beholding the agony of his wife, took his gun on his shoulder, fastened his faithful hounds in a leash, and went out hunting. After hunting time—it was about the hour of afternoon luncheon—it began to lighten on all sides and in all directions, rain poured so that it would have been a shame to turn a dog out into the roads, and in this tempest all our young lord's servants sought shelter where they could, and got so lost that he remained with only one on a densely wooded unknown hill, and that as soaked and dripping as a rat. Where were they to seek shelter before the ever-increasing storm? where to dry themselves? where to obtain harbor for the night? The unlucky pair, master and servant, looked round on all sides to see whether they couldn't espy a shepherd's hut or a cattle-shed; but where nothing is, there is nothing.

Finally, when they had almost strained their eyes out of the sockets, they saw where, out of the hole of the side shaft of a mine, puffs of smoke were rolling, as from a limekiln. "Go, lad," said the young lord to the servant, "look whence this smoke issues; there must be people there. Ask them whether they will give us lodging for the night."

The servant went off and returned in a jiffy with the intelligence that neither door, nor shed, nor people were there. "Fie, you're only a duffer!" said the lord to his servant with chattering teeth. "I'll go myself; you, for a punishment, shall drip and freeze." Well, the noble lord took the job in hand, but neither could he espy anything, save that in one place smoke kept continually issuing out of the side shaft.

At last in disgust he said, "Whatever devil on devil may bring, know I must whence all this smoke comes." So he went to the hole itself, knelt beside it and peeped in. As he was thus peeping, he espied, somewhere under ground, where food was cooking in a kitchen, and covers were laid for two on a stone table. Round this table ran a little manikin in a red cap with a golden hand-cart before him, and from time to time, after making the circuit, he sang:

I've manufactured a golden spinster for the young lord,
 She will try to guess my name tonight;
 If she guesses my name aright, I shall leave her;
 If she guesses it not, I shall take her:
 My name is Martynko Klyngas.

And again he ran like mad round the table and shouted:

I'm preparing nine dishes for supper,
 I'll place her in a silken bed;

If she guesses my name aright, I shall leave her;
If she guesses it not, I shall take her:
My name is Martynko Klyngas.

The young lord wanted nothing more; he ran as fast as his legs could carry him to his servant, and, as it now cleared up a little, they were fortunate enough to find a path, by which they hastened home.

He found his wife at home in agony, in misery, streaming with tears; for she thought she would not be able even to take leave of her husband, as he was so long away. "Don't afflict yourself, my wife," were the young lord's first words when he entered the room. "I know what you require; his name is Martynko Klyngas." And then he, without delay, recounted to her everything, where he had gone and what had happened to him.

Hanka could scarcely keep on her feet for joy, embraced and kissed her husband, and betook herself joyfully into the room, in which she had spent the first night, to finish spinning the golden threads. At midnight the wall opened, and the manikin with the red cap came in, as he had done that time last year, and running round her with the golden cart shouted with the utmost power of his lungs:

If you guess my name, I leave you;
If you guess it not, I take you;
Only guess, guess away!

"I'll have a try to guess," said Hanka; "your name is Martynko Klyngas." As soon as she had uttered this, the little dwarf seized his cart, threw his cap on the ground, and departed as he had come; the wall closed, and Hanka breathed in peace.

From that time forth she spun no more gold, and, indeed, neither was it necessary for her so to do, for they were rich enough. She and her husband lived happily together, their boy grew like a young tree by the water's side; and they bought a cow, and on the cow a bell, and here's an end to the tale I tell.

THE GLASS AXE

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Lang, Andrew. *The Yellow Fairy Book*. London: Longmans, Green and Company, 1894, 141–148.

Date: Unavailable

Original Source: Hermann R. Kletke

National Origin: Hungary

“The Glass Axe” draws on the basic plot structure of “The Girl as Helper of the Hero in His Flight” (AT 313A). In the classic versions of this **tale type**, the hero has been promised to an evil supernatural figure in return for the latter’s assistance. In this **variant**, however, there is the implication that the Queen’s pregnancy resulted from some such bargain, but this is never overtly stated.

There was once upon a time a King and Queen who had everything they could possibly wish for in this world except a child. At last, after twelve years, the Queen gave birth to a son; but she did not live long to enjoy her happiness, for on the following day she died. But before her death she called her husband to her and said, “Never let the child put his feet on the ground, for as soon as he does so he will fall into the power of a wicked Fairy, who will do him much harm.” And these were the last words the poor Queen spoke.

The boy thrived and grew big, and when he was too heavy for his nurse to carry, a chair was made for him on little wheels, in which he could wander through the palace gardens without help; at other times he was carried about on a litter, and he was always carefully watched and guarded for fear he should at any time put his feet to the ground.

But as this sort of life was bad for his health, the doctors ordered him horse exercise, and he soon became a first-rate rider, and used to go out for long excursions on horseback, accompanied always by his father’s stud-groom and a numerous retinue.

Every day he rode through the neighboring fields and woods, and always returned home in the evening safe and well. In this way many years passed, and the Prince grew to manhood, and hardly anyone remembered the Queen’s warning, though precautions were still taken, more from use and wont than for any other reason.

One day the Prince and his suite went out for a ride in a wood where his father sometimes held a hunt. Their way led through a stream whose banks were overgrown with thick brushwood. Just as the horsemen were about to ford the river, a hare, startled by the sound of the horses’ hoofs, started up from the grass and ran towards the thicket. The young Prince pursued the little creature, and had almost overtaken it, when the girth of his saddle suddenly broke in two and he fell heavily to the ground. No sooner had his foot touched the earth than he disappeared before the eyes of the horrified courtiers.

They sought for him far and near, but all in vain, and they were forced to recognize the power of the evil Fairy, against which the Queen had warned them on her death-bed. The old King was much grieved when they brought him the news of his son’s disappearance, but as he could do nothing to free him from his fate, he gave himself up to an old age of grief and loneliness, cherishing at

the same time the hope that some lucky chance might one day deliver the youth out of the hands of his enemy.

Hardly had the Prince touched the ground than he felt himself violently seized by an unseen power, and hurried away he knew not whither. A whole new world stretched out before him, quite unlike the one he had left. A splendid castle surrounded by a huge lake was the abode of the Fairy, and the only approach to it was over a bridge of clouds. On the other side of the lake high mountains rose up, and dark woods stretched along the banks; over all hung a thick mist, and deep silence reigned everywhere.

No sooner had the Fairy reached her own domain than she made herself visible, and turning to the Prince she told him that unless he obeyed all her commands down to the minutest detail he would be severely punished. Then she gave him an axe made of glass, and bade him cross the bridge of clouds and go into the wood beyond and cut down all the trees there before sunset. At the same time she cautioned him with many angry words against speaking to a black girl he would most likely meet in the wood.

The Prince listened to her words meekly, and when she had finished took up the glass axe and set out for the forest. At every step he seemed to sink into the clouds, but fear gave wings to his feet, and he crossed the lake in safety and set to work at once.

But no sooner had he struck the first blow with his axe than it broke into a thousand pieces against the tree. The poor youth was so terrified he did not know what to do, for he was in mortal dread of the punishment the wicked old Fairy would inflict on him. He wandered to and fro in the wood, not knowing where he was going, and at last, worn out by fatigue and misery, he sank on the ground and fell fast asleep.

He did not know how long he had slept when a sudden sound awoke him, and opening his eyes he saw a black girl standing beside him. Mindful of the Fairy's warning he did not dare to address her, but she on her part greeted him in the most friendly manner, and asked him at once if he were under the power of the wicked Fairy. The Prince nodded his head silently in answer.

Then the black girl told him that she too was in the power of the Fairy, who had doomed her to wander about in her present guise until some youth should take pity on her and bear her in safety to the other side of the river which they saw in the distance, and on the other side of which the Fairy's domain and power ended.

The girl's words so inspired the Prince with confidence that he told her all his tale of woe, and ended up by asking her advice as to how he was to escape the punishment the Fairy would be sure to inflict on him when she discovered that he had not cut down the trees in the wood and that he had broken her axe.

"You must know," answered the black girl, "that the Fairy in whose power we both are is my own mother, but you must not betray this secret, for it would

cost me my life. If you will only promise to try and free me I will stand by you, and will accomplish for you all the tasks which my mother sets you.”

The Prince promised joyfully all she asked; then having once more warned him not to betray her confidence, she handed him a draught to drink which very soon sunk his senses in a deep slumber.

His astonishment was great when he awoke to find the glass axe whole and unbroken at his side, and all the trees of the wood lying felled around him!

He made all haste across the bridge of clouds, and told the Fairy that her commands were obeyed. She was much amazed when she heard that all the wood was cut down, and saw the axe unbroken in his hand, and since she could not believe that he had done all this by himself, she questioned him narrowly if he had seen or spoken to the black girl. But the Prince lied manfully, and swore he had never looked up from his work for a moment. Seeing she could get nothing more out of him, she gave him a little bread and water, and showing him to a small dark cupboard she told him he might sleep there.

Morning had hardly dawned when the Fairy awoke the Prince, and giving him the glass axe again she told him to cut up all the wood he had felled the day before, and to put it in bundles ready for firewood; at the same time she warned him once more against approaching or speaking a word to the black girl if he met her in the wood.

Although his task was no easier than that of the day before, the youth set out much more cheerfully, because he knew he could count on the help of the black girl. With quicker and lighter step he crossed the bridge of clouds, and hardly had he reached the other side than his friend stood before him and greeted him cheerfully.

When she heard what the Fairy demanded this time, she answered smilingly, “Never fear,” and handed him another draught, which very soon caused the Prince to sink into a deep sleep.

When he awoke everything was done. All the trees of the wood were cut up into firewood and arranged in bundles ready for use.

He returned to the castle as quickly as he could, and told the Fairy that her commands were obeyed. She was even more amazed than she had been before, and asked him again if he had either seen or spoken to the black girl; but the Prince knew better than to betray his word, and once more lied freely.

On the following day the Fairy set him a third task to do, even harder than the other two. She told him he must build a castle on the other side of the lake, made of nothing but gold, silver, and precious stones, and unless he could accomplish this within an hour, the most frightful doom awaited him.

The Prince heard her words without anxiety, so entirely did he rely on the help of his black friend. Full of hope he hurried across the bridge, and recognized at once the spot where the castle was to stand, for spades, hammers, axes, and every other building implement lay scattered on the ground ready for the workman’s hand, but of gold, silver, and precious stones there was not a sign.

But before the Prince had time to feel despondent the black girl beckoned to him in the distance from behind a rock, where she had hidden herself for fear her mother should catch sight of her. Full of joy the youth hurried towards her, and begged her aid and counsel in the new piece of work he had been given to do.

But this time the Fairy had watched the Prince's movements from her window, and she saw him hiding himself behind the rock with her daughter. She uttered a piercing shriek so that the mountains re-echoed with the sound of it, and the terrified pair had hardly dared to look out from their hiding-place when the enraged woman, with her dress and hair flying in the wind, hurried over the bridge of clouds.

The Prince at once gave himself up for lost, but the girl told him to be of good courage and to follow her as quickly as he could. But before they left their shelter she broke off a little bit of the rock, spoke some magic words over it, and threw it in the direction her mother was coming from. In a moment a glittering palace arose before the eyes of the Fairy which blinded her with its dazzling splendor, and with its many doors and passages prevented her for some time from finding her way out of it.

In the meantime the black girl hurried on with the Prince, hastening to reach the river, where once on the other side they would forever be out of the wicked Fairy's power. But before they had accomplished half the way they heard again the rustle of her garments and her muttered curses pursuing them closely.

The Prince was terrified; he dared not look back, and he felt his strength giving way. But before he had time to despair the girl uttered some more magic words, and immediately she herself was changed into a pond, and the Prince into a duck swimming on its surface.

When the Fairy saw this her rage knew no bounds, and she used all her magic wits to make the pond disappear; she caused a hill of sand to arise at her feet, meaning it to dry up the water at once. But the sand hill only drove the pond a little farther away, and its waters seemed to increase instead of diminishing. When the old woman saw that the powers of her magic were of so little avail, she had recourse to cunning. She threw a lot of gold nuts into the pond, hoping in this way to catch the duck, but all her efforts were fruitless, for the little creature refused to let itself be caught.

Then a new idea struck the wicked old woman, and hiding herself behind the rock which had sheltered the fugitives, she waited behind it, watching carefully for the moment when the Prince and her daughter should resume their natural forms and continue their journey. She had not to wait long, for as soon as the girl thought her mother was safely out of the way, she changed herself and the Prince once more into their human shape, and set out cheerfully for the river.

But they had not gone many steps when the wicked Fairy hurried after them, a drawn dagger in her hand, and was close upon them, when suddenly,

instead of the Prince and her daughter, she found herself in front of a great stone church, whose entrance was carefully guarded by a huge monk.

Breathless with rage and passion, she tried to plunge her dagger into the monk's heart, but it fell shattered in pieces at her feet. In her desperation she determined to pull down the church, and thus to destroy her two victims forever. She stamped three times on the ground, and the earth trembled, and both the church and the monk began to shake. As soon as the Fairy saw this she retreated to some distance from the building, so as not to be hurt herself by its fall. But once more her scheme was doomed to failure, for hardly had she gone a yard from the church than both it and the monk disappeared, and she found herself in a wood black as night, and full of wolves and bears and wild animals of all sorts and descriptions.

Then her wrath gave place to terror, for she feared every moment to be torn in pieces by the beasts who one and all seemed to defy her power. She thought it wisest to make her way as best she could out of the forest, and then to pursue the fugitives once more and accomplish their destruction either by force or cunning.

In the meantime the Prince and the black girl had again assumed their natural forms, and were hurrying on as fast as they could to reach the river. But when they got there they found that there was no way in which they could cross it, and the girl's magic art seemed no longer to have any power. Then turning to the Prince she said, "The hour for my deliverance has not yet come, but as you promised to do all you could to free me, you must do exactly as I bid you now. Take this bow and arrow and kill every beast you see with them, and be sure you spare no living creature."

With these words she disappeared, and hardly had she done so than a huge wild boar started out of the thicket near and made straight for the Prince. But the youth did not lose his presence of mind, and drawing his bow he pierced the beast with his arrow right through the skull. The creature fell heavily on the ground, and out of its side sprang a little hare, which ran like the wind along the river bank. The Prince drew his bow once more, and the hare lay dead at his feet; but at the same moment a dove rose up in the air, and circled round the Prince's head in the most confiding manner. But mindful of the black girl's commands, he dared not spare the little creature's life, and taking another arrow from his quiver he laid it as dead as the boar and the hare. But when he went to look at the body of the bird he found instead of the dove a round white egg lying on the ground.

While he was gazing on it and wondering what it could mean, he heard the sweeping of wings above him, and looking up he saw a huge vulture with open claws swooping down upon him. In a moment he seized the egg and flung it at the bird with all his might, and lo and behold! instead of the ugly monster the most beautiful girl he had ever seen stood before the astonished eyes of the Prince.

But while all this was going on the wicked old Fairy had managed to make her way out of the wood, and was now using the last resource in her power to overtake her daughter and the Prince. As soon as she was in the open again she mounted her chariot, which was drawn by a fiery dragon, and flew through the air in it. But just as she got to the river she saw the two lovers in each other's arms swimming through the water as easily as two fishes.

Quick as lightning, and forgetful of every danger, she flew down upon them. But the waters seized her chariot and sunk it in the lowest depths, and the waves bore the wicked old woman down the stream till she was caught in some thorn bushes, where she made a good meal for all the little fishes that were swimming about.

And so at last the Prince and his lovely Bride were free. They hurried as quickly as they could to the old King, who received them with joy and gladness. On the following day a most gorgeous wedding feast was held, and as far as we know the Prince and his bride lived happily forever afterwards.

THE THREE LEMONS

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Wratislaw, A. H. *Sixty Folk-Tales from Exclusively Slavonic Sources*. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Co., 1890, 82–89.

Date: Unavailable

Original Source: Unavailable

National Origin: Hungary

This **variant** of the **ordinary folktale** “The Three Oranges” (AT 408) incorporates witches and giant ogres as helpers to the protagonist rather than giving them their usual malevolent roles. In most of its particulars, however, the narrative follows the plot of the quest for the “Orange Princess.” The **stock character** of the gypsy alludes to the historical prejudice against the Roma. See pages 163–177 for examples of three Roma folktales.

There was once upon a time an old king who had an only son. This son he one day summoned before him, and spoke to him thus, “My son, you see that my head has become white; ere long I shall close my eyes, and I do not yet know in what condition I shall leave you. Take a wife, my son! Let me bless you in good time, before I close my eyes.” The son made no reply, but became lost in thought; he would gladly with all his heart have fulfilled his father's wish, but there was no damsel in whom his heart could take delight.

Once upon a time, when he was sitting in the garden, and just considering what to do, all of a sudden an old woman appeared before him—where she came, there she came.

“Go to the glass hill, pluck the three lemons, and you will have a wife in whom your heart will take delight,” said she, and as she had appeared so she disappeared. Like a bright flash did these words dart through the prince’s soul. At that moment he determined, come what might, to seek the glass hill and pluck the three lemons. He made known his determination to his father, and his father gave him for the journey a horse, arms and armor, and his fatherly blessing.

Through forest-covered mountains, through desert plains, went our prince on his pilgrimage, for a very, very great distance; but there was nothing to be seen, nothing to be heard of the glass hill and the three lemons.

Once, quite wearied out with his long journey, he threw himself down under the cool shade of a broad lime tree. As he threw himself down, his father’s sword, which he wore at his side, clanged against the ground, and a dozen ravens began croaking at the top of the tree. Frightened by the clang of the sword, they rose on their wings, and flew into the air above the lofty tree. “Hem! till now I haven’t seen a living creature for a long while,” said the prince to himself, springing from the ground. “I will go in the direction in which the ravens have flown maybe some hope will disclose itself to me.”

He went on—he went on anew for three whole days and three nights, till at last a lofty castle displayed itself to him at a distance. “Praise be to God! I shall now at any rate come to human beings,” cried he, and proceeded further.

The castle was of pure lead; round it flew the twelve ravens, and in front of it stood an old woman—it was Jezibaba [a forest witch]—leaning on a long leaden staff. “Ah, my son! whither have you come? Here there is neither bird nor insect to be seen, much less a human being,” said Jezibaba to the prince. “Flee, if life is dear to you; for, if my son comes, he will devour you.”

“Ah! Not so, old mother, not so!” entreated the prince. “I have come to you for counsel as to whether you cannot let me have some information about the glass hill and the three lemons.”

“I have never heard of the glass hill; but stay! When my son comes home, maybe he will be able to let you have the information. But I will now conceal you somewhat; you will hide yourself under the besom [broom], and wait there concealed till I call you.”

The mountains echoed, the castle quaked, and Jezibaba whispered to the prince that her son was coming. “Foh! Foh! There is a smell of human flesh; I am going to eat it!” shouted Jezibaba’s son, while still in the doorway, and thumped on the ground with a huge leaden club, so that the whole castle quaked.

“Ah, not so, my son, not so!” said Jezibaba, soothing him. “There has come a handsome youth who wants to consult you about something.”

“Well, if he wants to consult me, let him come here.”

“Yes, indeed, my son, he shall come, but only on condition that you promise to do nothing to him.”

“Well, I’ll do nothing to him, only let him come.”

The prince was trembling like an aspen under the besom, for he saw before him through the twigs an ogre, up to whose knees he didn’t reach. Happily his life was safe-guarded, when Jezibaba bade him come out from under the besom. “Well, you beetle, why are you afraid?” shouted the giant. “Whence are you? What do you want?”

“What do I want?” replied the prince. “I’ve long been wandering in these mountains, and can’t find that which I am seeking. Now I’ve come to ask you whether you can’t give me information about the glass hill and the three lemons.”

Jezibaba’s son wrinkled his brow, but, after a while, said in a somewhat gentler voice, “There’s nothing to be seen here of the glass hill; but go to my brother in the silver castle, maybe he’ll be able to tell you something. But stay, I won’t let you go away hungry. Mother, here with the dumplings!” Old Jezibaba set a large dish upon the table, and her gigantic son sat down to it.

“Come and eat!” shouted he to the prince.

The prince took the first dumpling and began to eat, but two of his teeth broke, for they were dumplings of lead.

“Well, why don’t you eat? Maybe you don’t like them?” inquired Jezibaba’s son. “Yes, they are good; but I don’t want any just now.”

“Well, if you don’t want any just now, pocket some, and go your way.”

The good prince was obliged to put some of the leaden dumplings into his pocket. He then took leave and proceeded further.

On he went and on he went for three whole days and three nights, and the further he went, the deeper he wandered into a thickly wooded and gloomy range of mountains. Before him it was desolate, behind him it was desolate; there wasn’t a single living creature to be seen. All wearied from his long journey, he threw himself on the ground. The clang of his silver-mounted sword spread far and wide. Above him four and twenty ravens, frightened by the clash of his sword, began to croak, and, rising on their wings, flew into the air. “A good sign!” cried the prince. “I will go in the direction in which the birds have flown.”

And on he went in that direction, on he went as fast as his feet could carry him, till all at once a lofty castle displayed itself to him! He was still far from the castle, and already its walls were glistening in his eyes, for the castle was of pure silver. In front of the castle stood an old woman bent with age, leaning on a long silver staff, and this was Jezibaba. “Ah, my son! How is it that you have come here? Here there is neither bird nor insect, much less a human being!” cried Jezibaba to the prince; “if life is dear to you, flee away, for if my son comes, he will devour you!”

“Nay, old mother, he will hardly eat me. I bring him a greeting from his brother in the leaden castle.”

“Well, if you bring a greeting from the leaden castle, then come into the parlor, my son, and tell me what you are seeking.”

“What I am seeking, old mother? For ever so long a time I’ve been seeking the glass hill and the three lemons, and cannot find them; now I’ve come to inquire whether you can’t give me information about them.”

“I know nothing about the glass hill; but stay! when my son comes, maybe he will be able to give you the information. Hide yourself under the bed, and don’t make yourself known unless I call you.”

The mountains echoed with a mighty voice, the castle quaked, and the prince knew that Jezibaba’s son was coming home. “Foh! Foh! There’s a smell of human flesh; I’m going to eat it!” roared a horrible ogre already in the door-way, and thumped upon the ground with a silver club, so that the whole castle quaked.

“Ah! not so, my son, not so; but a handsome youth has come and has brought you a greeting from your brother in the leaden castle.”

“Well, if he’s been at my brother’s, and if he has done nothing to him, let him have no fear of me either; let him come out.” The prince sprang out from under the bed, and went up to him, looking beside him as if he had placed himself under a very tall pine. “Well, beetle, have you been at my brother’s?”

“Indeed, I have; and here I’ve still the dumplings, which he gave me for the journey.”

“Well, I believe you; now tell me what it is you want.”

“What I want? I am come to ask you whether you can’t give me information about the glass hill or the three lemons.”

“Hem! I’ve heard formerly about it, but I don’t know how to direct you. Meanwhile, do you know what? Go to my brother in the golden castle, he will direct you. But stay, I won’t let you go away hungry. Mother, here with the dumplings!” Jezibaba brought the dumplings on a large silver dish, and set them on the table. “Eat!” shouted her son.

The prince, seeing that they were silver dumplings, said that he didn’t want to eat just then, but would take some for his journey, if he would give him them.

“Take as many as you like, and greet my brother and aunt.” The prince took the dumplings, thanked him courteously, and proceeded further.

Three days had already passed since he quitted the silver castle, wandering continuously through densely wooded mountains, not knowing which way to go, whether to the right hand or to the left. All wearied out, he threw himself down under a wide-spreading beech, to take a little breath. His silver-mounted sword clanged on the ground, and the sound spread far and wide. “Krr, krr, krr!” croaked a flock of ravens over the traveler, scared by the clash of his sword, and flew into the air. “Praise be to God! the golden castle won’t be far off now,” cried the prince, and proceeded, encouraged, onwards in the direction in which the ravens showed him the road.

Scarcely had he come out of the valley on to a small hill, when he saw a beautiful and wide meadow, and in the midst of the meadow stood a golden

castle, just as if he were gazing at the sun; and before the gate of the castle stood an old bent Jezibaba, leaning on a golden staff “Ah! my son! what do you seek for here?” cried she to the prince. “Here there is neither bird nor insect to be seen, much less a human being! If your life is dear to you, flee, for if my son comes, he will devour you!”

“Nay, old mother, he’ll hardly eat me,” replied he. “I bring him a greeting from his brother in the silver castle.”

“Well, if you bring him a greeting from the silver castle, come into the parlor and tell me what has brought you to us.”

“What has brought me to you, old mother? I have long been wandering in this mountain range, and haven’t been able to find out where are the glass hill and the three lemons. I was directed to you, because haply you might be able to give me information about it.”

“Where is the glass hill? I cannot tell you that; but stay! When my son comes, he will counsel you which way you must go, and what you must do. Hide yourself under the table, and stay there till I call you.”

The mountains echoed, the castle quaked, and Jezibaba’s son stepped into the parlor. “Fob! Foh! There’s a smell of human flesh; I’m going to eat it!” shouted he, while still in the doorway, and thumped with a golden club upon the ground, so that the whole castle quaked.

“Gently, my son, gently!” said Jezibaba, soothing him; “there is a handsome youth come, who brings you a greeting from your brother in the silver castle. If you will do nothing to him, I will call him at once.”

“Well, if my brother has done nothing to him, neither will I do anything to him.” The prince came out from under the table and placed himself beside him, looking, in comparison, as if he had placed himself beside a lofty tower, and showed him the silver dumplings in token that he had really been at the silver castle. “Well, tell me, you beetle, what you want!” shouted the monstrous ogre; “if I can counsel you, counsel you I will; don’t fear!” Then the prince explained to him the aim of his long journey, and begged him to advise him which way to go to the glass hill, and what he must do to obtain the three lemons. “Do you see that black knoll that looms yonder?” said he, pointing with his golden club; “that is the glass hill; on the top of the hill stands a tree, and on the tree hang three lemons, whose scent spreads seven miles round. You will go up the glass hill, kneel under the tree, and hold up your hands; if the lemons are destined for you, they will fall off into your hands of themselves; but, if they are not destined for you, you will not pluck them, whatever you do. When you are on your return, and are hungry or thirsty, cut one of the lemons into halves, and you will eat and drink your fill. And now go, and God be with you! But stay, I won’t let you go hungry. Mother, here with the dumplings!” Jezibaba set a large golden dish on the table. “Eat!” said her son to the prince, “or, if you don’t want to do so now, put some into your pocket; you will eat them on the road.” The prince had no desire to eat, but put some into his pocket, saying that he would eat

them on the road. He then thanked him courteously for his hospitality and counsel, and proceeded further.

Swiftly he paced from hill into dale, from dale on to a fresh hill, and never stopped till he was beneath the glass hill itself. There he stopped, as if turned to a stone. The hill was high and smooth; there wasn't a single crack in it. On the top spread the branches of a wondrous tree, and on the tree swung three lemons, whose scent was so powerful that the prince almost fainted. *s God help me!* Now, as it shall be, so it will be. Now that I'm once here, I will at any rate make the attempt," thought he to himself; and began to climb up the smooth glass; but scarcely had he ascended a few fathoms when his foot slipped, and he himself, pop! down the hill, so that he didn't know where he was, or what he was, till he found himself on the ground at the bottom.

Wearied out, he began to throw away the dumplings, thinking that their weight was a hindrance to him. He threw away the first, and lo! the dumpling fixed itself on the glass hill. He threw a second and a third, and saw before him three steps, on which he could stand with safety.

The prince was overjoyed. He kept throwing the dumplings before him, and in every case steps formed themselves from them for him. First he threw the leaden ones, then the silver, and then the golden ones. By the steps thus constructed he ascended higher and higher till he happily attained the topmost ridge of the glass hill. Here he knelt down under the tree and held up his hands. And lo! The three beautiful lemons flew down of themselves into the palms of his hands. The tree disappeared, the glass hill crashed and vanished, and when the prince came to himself, there was no tree, no hill, but a wide plain lay extended before him.

He commenced his return homeward with delight. He neither ate nor drank, nor saw nor heard, for very joy. But when the third day came, a vacuum began to make itself felt in his stomach. He was so hungry that he would gladly have then and there betaken himself to the leaden dumplings if his pocket hadn't been empty. His pocket was empty, and all around was just as bare as the palm of his hand. Then he took a lemon out of his pocket and cut it into halves; and what came to pass? Out of the lemon sprang a beautiful damsel, who made a reverence before him, and cried out, "Have you made ready for me to eat? Have you made ready for me to drink? Have you made pretty dresses ready for me?"

"I have nothing, beautiful creature, for you to eat, nothing for you to drink, nothing for you to put on," said the prince, in a sorrowful voice, and the beautiful damsel clapped her white hands thrice before him, made a reverence and vanished.

"Aha! now I know what sort of lemons these are," said the prince; "stay! I won't cut them up so lightly." From the cut one he ate and drank to his satisfaction, and thus refreshed, proceeded onwards.

But on the third day a hunger three times worse than the preceding, assailed him. "God help me!" said he; "I have still one remaining over. I'll cut it up."

He then took out the second lemon, cut it in halves, and lo! a damsel still more beautiful than the preceding one placed herself before him. "Have you made ready for me to eat? Have you made ready for me to drink? Have you made pretty dresses ready for me?"

"I have not, dear soul! I have not!" and the beautiful damsel clapped her hands thrice before him, made a reverence, and vanished.

Now he had only one lemon remaining; he took it in his hand and said, "I will not cut you open save in my father's house," and therewith proceeded onwards. On the third day he saw, after long absence, his native town. He didn't know himself how he got there, when he found himself at once in his father's castle. Tears of joy bedewed his old father's cheeks, "Welcome, my son! Welcome a hundred times," he cried, and fell upon his neck. The prince related how it had gone with him on his journey, and the members of the household how anxiously they had waited for him.

On the next day a grand entertainment was prepared; lords and ladies were invited from all quarters; and beautiful dresses, embroidered with gold and studded with pearls were got ready. The lords and ladies assembled, took their seats at the tables, and waited expectantly to see what would happen. Then the prince took out the last lemon, cut it in halves, and out of the lemon sprang a lady thrice as beautiful as had been the preceding ones. "Have you made ready for me to eat? Have you made ready for me to drink? Have you got pretty dresses ready for me?"

"I have, my dear soul, got everything ready for you," answered the prince, and presented the handsome dresses to her. The beautiful damsel put on the beautiful clothes, and all rejoiced at her extraordinary beauty. Ere long the betrothal took place, and after the betrothal a magnificent wedding.

Now was fulfilled the old king's wish; he blessed his son, resigned the kingdom into his hands, and ere long died.

The first thing that occurred to the new king after his father's death was a war, which a neighboring king excited against him. Now he was constrained for the first time to part from his hard-earned wife. Lest, therefore, anything should happen to her in his absence, he caused a throne to be erected for her in a garden beside a lake, which no one could ascend, save the person to whom she let down a silken cord, and drew that person up to her.

Not far from the royal castle lived an old woman, the same that had given the prince the counsel about the three lemons. She had a servant, a gipsy, whom she was in the habit of sending to the lake for water. She knew very well that the young king had obtained a wife, and it annoyed her excessively that he had not invited her to the wedding, nay, had not even thanked her for her good advice.

One day she sent her maidservant to the lake for water. She went, drew water, and saw a beautiful image in the water. Under the impression that this was her own reflection, she banged her pitcher on the ground, so that it flew

into a thousand pieces. “Are you worthy,” said she, “that so beautiful a person as myself should carry water for an old witch like you?” As she uttered this she looked up, and lo! It wasn’t her own reflection that she saw in the water, but that of the beautiful queen. Ashamed, she picked up the pieces and returned home.

The old woman, who knew beforehand what had occurred, went out to meet her with a fresh pitcher, and asked her servant, for appearance’s sake, what had happened to her. The servant related all as it had occurred. “Well, that’s nothing!” said the old woman. “But, do you know what? Go you once more to the lake, and ask the lady to let down the silken cord and draw you up, promising to comb and dress her hair. If she draws you up, you will comb her hair, and when she falls asleep, stick this pin into her head. Then dress yourself in her clothes and sit there as queen.”

It wasn’t necessary to use much persuasion to the gipsy; she took the pin, took the pitcher, and returned to the lake. She drew water and looked at the beautiful queen. “Dear me! How beautiful you are! Ah! you are beautiful!” she screamed, and looked with coaxing gestures into her eyes. “Yes,” said she; “but you would be a hundred times more beautiful if you would let me comb and dress your hair; in truth, I would so twine those golden locks that your lord could not help being delighted.” And thus she jabbered, thus she coaxed, till the queen let down the silken cord and drew her up.

The nasty gipsy combed, separated, and plaited the golden hair till the beautiful queen fell sound asleep. Then the gipsy drew out the pin, and stuck it into the sleeping queen’s head. At that moment a beautiful white dove flew off the golden throne, and not a vestige remained of the lovely queen save her handsome clothes, in which the gipsy speedily dressed herself, took her seat in the place where the queen sat before, and gazed into the lake; but the beautiful reflection displayed itself no more in the lake, for even in the queen’s clothes the gipsy nevertheless remained a gipsy.

The young king was successful in overcoming his enemies, and made peace with them. Scarcely had he returned to the town, when he went to the garden to seek his delight, and to see whether anything had happened to her. But who shall express his astonishment and horror, when, instead of his beautiful queen, he beheld a sorry gipsy. “Ah, my dear, my very dear one, how you have altered!” sighed he, and tears bedewed his cheeks.

“I have altered, my beloved! I have altered; for anxiety for you has tortured me,” answered the gipsy, and wanted to fall upon his neck; but the king turned away from her and departed in anger. From that time forth he had no settled abode, no rest; he knew neither day nor night; but merely mourned over the lost beauty of his wife, and nothing could comfort him.

Thus agitated and melancholy, he was walking one day in the garden. Here, as he moved about at haphazard, a beautiful white dove flew on to his hand from a high tree, and looked with mournful gaze into his bloodshot eyes. “Ah,

my dove! why are you so sad? Has your mate been transformed like my beautiful wife?" said the young king, talking to it and caressingly stroking its head and back. But feeling a kind of protuberance on its head, he blew the feathers apart, and behold! the head of a pin! Touched with compassion, the king extracted the pin; that instant the beautiful mourning dove was changed into his beautiful wife.

She narrated to him all that had happened to her, and how it had happened; how the gipsy had deluded her, and how she had stuck the pin into her head. The king immediately caused the gipsy and the old woman to be apprehended and burnt without further ado.

From that time forth nothing interfered with his happiness, neither the might of his enemies nor the spite of wicked people. He lived with his beautiful wife in peace and love; he reigned prosperously, and is reigning yet, if he be yet alive.

Eastern Europe

ASHKENAZIM

RETURN OF A CANTONIST

Tradition Bearer: Mrs. D. Rivkin

Source: Verschleiser, Emanuel. *Interview of H. Kleinfeld. American Life Histories: Manuscripts from the Federal Writers' Project, 1936–1940.* Manuscript Division, Library of Congress. *American Memory.* Library of Congress, Washington, DC, June 10, 2007.

Date: 1938

Original Source: Russia

National Origin: Ashkenazim

The Ashkenazim are descended from West German Jewish communities that became a presence in the area with the advent of the medieval period (500–1000 C.E.). Members of the group established communities not only in Germany, but also throughout Central and Eastern Europe. Separation between the Ashkenazi Jewish communities and the Middle Eastern (Mizrahim) and Mediterranean (Sephardim) communities led to the development of distinctive traditions, including religious customs and *linguas franca* (most significantly Yiddish). The following **personal experience narrative** attests to the difficulty of perpetuating Ashkenazic religious and cultural traditions in the face of antisemitic political systems. The collector of this oral memoir states,

At the time of Czar Nicolai I [1825–1856], small Jewish children were caught in the streets, taken into far Russian provinces, brought up as Christians and given to the army. They were called “Cantonists.” Many stories grew up about them, relating dramatic reunions, return to the Jewish faith, etc.

I was looking out through the window. It was a clear snowy morning a carriage stopped at our door and a gentleman stepped out and came in to our house. I was not surprised because many Christian gentlemen came to our house. My father was dealing in hemp which he bought up from the local estates and sent off to far places, even Germany. We lived in the provincial county seat of Wietebesk. The gentleman began to inquire of my father about his family, how many brothers he had and all the history of his family.

My mother was scared and told my father. "I beg you, guard your tongue, you are always talking."

And after some more talk, when father asked the gentleman why all those questions, the stranger fell on my father's neck, saying, "I am your brother."

He was one of the "Cantonists." And he told us his whole history. When he was a child he was caught by the Czar catchers, taken with many other Jewish children; taken far away to be brought up as a Russian soldier and a Christian. But he never forgot that he was a Jew. He had talent as a musician and so was given musical education and became later a famous pianist. When he became a free man he made many times inquiries about his family because he never forgot that he is a Jew. At last he found his family and he is happy, and he wants to remain with us, he said, and become a Jew again. My mother had some fears but my father overcame them. The man remained in our house and returned to the Jewish faith.

My sister, a young girl of eighteen, fell in love with him. He was a man in his fifties but there was something compelling, inspiring in the man. She wanted to marry him. My father and mother were in despair. They threatened and cried, but nothing helped. She went away with him, married him. Although he formally returned to the Jewish faith, my father considered him a Christian and he sat Shiva (seven-day mourning) and tore his clothing, as is the Jewish custom, when somebody died. For him his daughter was dead.

She lived with him in Riga. She had with him two children. When she gave birth to the second child she died in milk-fever (milk in her breasts became poisoned). In her death agonies she cried that God punished her because she married a Christian.

HOW RABBI JOSHUA WENT TO PARADISE ALIVE

Tradition Bearer: K. Heisler

Source: Verschleiser, Emanuel. *Interview of H. Kleinfeld. American Life Histories: Manuscripts from the Federal Writers' Project, 1936–1940.* Manuscript Division, Library of Congress. *American Memory.* Library of Congress, Washington, DC, June 10, 2007.

Date: 1938

Original Source: Galicia (now Poland and the Ukraine)

National Origin: Ashkenazim

While the following comic narrative extols the power of religious devotion, the Rabbi's ultimate success results from wit. Therefore, the protagonist plays the role of a **trickster** whose ability is magnified by outmaneuvering the master deceiver.

The great Rabbi Joshua was wrapped up all his life in the study of the Torah and knew little about the everyday world. A man doesn't live forever. His time came and God said, to the Angel of Death, "Go to Reb Joshua, take his holy soul and bring it before my throne but I command you that whatever he ask of you thou it be the biggest and hardest thing you shall give it to him... Not many such pious men live on the earth."

The angel went to carry out God's command and he come to Reb Joshua. He stood before him and said, "Your time has come and you must leave this world for the other world. God himself sent me to you that I should take your soul to Him. But before I take you soul God has commanded me to fulfill one wish of yours. It may be hard to fulfill but I will do it. Because you found favor in God's eyes. So consider well.... Any desire I will do it even if it is most difficult, because you found favor in God's eyes. Well, what is your wish?"

"I ask of you," said Reb Joshua "that you show me my place in Paradise."

"Your request in very difficult to fulfill," the angel answered, "but alas I have to fulfill God's wish. Get ready. You will not be able to enter paradise but we will come near the wall of paradise and you will be able to see your place looking thru a gateway."

Reb Joshua was afraid to follow him. How can one believe the Angel of Death? Just when I will be contemplating something he will use his knife on my throat and there will be no help for it. Such a fellow isn't to be trusted. "Come and lose no time" the Angel of Death said, "you have only a few minutes to live."

"If you want me to go with you," Reb Joshua said, "give me your sword because I am greatly afraid of you."

The Angel of Death gave Reb Joshua his sword and led Reb Joshua through valleys and deserts until they came to Paradise. The angel then lifted Reb Joshua to the wall of paradise and Reb Joshua saw all the pious men sitting in happiness and peace. At the sight of this he lost all desire to return to our world. Why should he have to die first in order to enter paradise? He would rather save himself the pains of dying and enter paradise alive. Without much ado he jumped over the fence into paradise. The Angel of Death has no right to enter paradise. So Reb Joshua remained there alive.

The Angel of Death went with a complaint to the Almighty that Reb Joshua deceived him.

God answered, "That isn't deceiving. To deceive the Angel of Death in permissible. You want to kill him so he has a right to try to get away from you."

THE DYBBUK OF BUNKER STREET

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Polacheck, Hilda. *Chicago Folklore. American Life Histories: Manuscripts from the Federal Writers' Project, 1936–1940*. Manuscript Division, Library of Congress. *American Memory*. Library of Congress, Washington, DC, June 10, 2007.

Date: 1939

Original Source: Unavailable

National Origin: Ashkenazim

As a Diasporic community, the Ashkenazim are globally dispersed, but retain a coherent core of religious practices and traditional beliefs. The concept of an entity called the dybbuk is one such belief. A dybbuk is a detached soul of a person who, though dead, has not been allowed to enter the afterworld. The entity attaches itself to a living person, and in cases such as the one in this **personal experience narrative**, may serve to bring about the death of the host. In the immigrant context detailed below, belief in the dybbuk may function to reinforce traditional mores and moral codes or to explain forces (in this instance, a typhoid epidemic) that are not an element of the traditional worldview of the community.

Yes, I remember the story of the Dybbuk of Bunker Street. It was back in 1902, when the story got around that a dybbuk was going from house to house, making people sick. I was just eight years old then; my mother wanted to have a birthday party for me, but she didn't have enough money, so she took me to a nickel-show. On the way home, she told me she would buy some ice-cream for supper. But when we got home, our small kitchen was crowded with neighbors.

My father had been brought home from the clothing factory where he worked. I remember seeing him in bed. He looked very pale. I heard the women saying something about the dybbuk having gotten into him. My mother ran for the doctor and I was told to go out and pray. But I sat on the steps of the dark hall just outside the kitchen.

Two old women came into the hall. I guess they did not see me. I heard one of them say, "If a dybbuk gets into a God fearing person, and a holy Rabbi can be found who knows how to force the dybbuk out of the body, the person will get well. But if the dybbuk gets into a sinner, who does not eat kosher food and who does not daven, (pray) he hasn't got a chance. He will die."

Two days later my father was dead. I did not think he was a sinner. I did not think he had time to be a sinner. He worked every day and ate all his meals

at home. And my mother cooked only kosher food. I did not understand the whole business.

My mother got a job in the factory where my father worked, but she did not earn as much as he had. She used to get me ready for school before she went to work in the morning and give me a penny for a roll. This was my lunch. After school I played on the street or in the dirty alley, till my mother came home.

I remember that house on Bunker Street where the dybbuk was supposed to go from place to place. That house was built for one family, but when we lived there, six families were living in the house. No one had a bath room. There was one toilet in the hall for the six families, and some of them had as many as six or eight kids.

When my father was alive and my mother did not have to go to work, she used to bathe me in a wash tub in the kitchen. We had two rooms, a bedroom and a kitchen. She used to keep my clothes clean. I remember I had a white blouse with embroidery ruffles on the collar and the cuffs. It would take my mother an hour to iron this shirt, but she did not mind it. She used to heat the iron on a coal stove and it took a long time to get the iron hot. She used to like to dress me up on Saturdays and take me for a walk to look in the windows of the big store on Halsted Street. But she got awful mean after my father died. All she did in the evening was cry and fight with me. She stopped bathing me and I never wore that white blouse again. Sometimes I used to wonder if the dybbuk got into my mother. Maybe she was tired.

We had many Irish neighbors and a lot of them were sick, too. But the old Jewish women said that the dybbuk only made Jews sick. I used to play with a little Irish boy who was in my room in school. He lived next door to us. He had three brothers and two sisters, and the whole family got sick. They all died except the little boy. He'd a been better off if he had died. When he was ten years old he was sent to reform school. He was in jail most of his life.

Do I believe it was a dybbuk? Well, I don't know. It must-a been something that made people sick and mean. My mother did not get sick, but she was plenty mean. I got sick of hearing her fight, and when I was twelve, I ran away from home. One day I was hungry, so I stole two apples from the grocery stand. The grocery man caught me, and I was sent to reform school. The first time my mother came to see me, in the reform school, she said the dybbuk must have gotten into me. I guess she felt bad when I was sent to reform school. She used to bring me apples and sometimes an orange.

I remember another dybbuk story which the old women used to tell. A few doors from where we lived, there was a large stable where the horses and wagons of a large department store on State Street used to be kept. Every morning the drivers used to hitch the horses to the wagons and go down town to get the wagons loaded for deliveries. They used to deliver goods all over. Sometimes they went to Evanston and as far north as Highland Park.

Well, one of the drivers lived on bunker Street, and he started out to deliver goods. On the way he took sick and he was brought home. That evening some women came to see my mother, and I heard them say that the dybbuk surely had the driver. I was out on the street near the stable when the horses and wagon came back from the day's deliveries, and I heard the driver tell one of the other men that the people in Evanston to whom he had delivered goods, were sick, too. "Do you think the dybbuk traveled to Evanston?" he asked laughing.

A couple of weeks later, some ladies came around and they looked at all the houses and there was some talk that the flies brought the sickness. But the old women stuck to their dybbuk. They said that a dybbuk can enter the smallest and the largest thing. So maybe the dybbuk got into the flies. The flies may have stayed on the horses, or the harness and that is how the sickness got to Evanston. Then a few weeks later, I heard one of the drivers say that people in Evanston, called the sickness typhoid fever. That they had found out that Bunker Street was overcrowded. That so many people using one toilet made the water back up after heavy rains and then the flies were all over the toilets, and then they flew into the houses and got on the food and that is what caused the sickness.

But the best dybbuk story of all was the one about a young Jewish girl who ran away with a young Irish feller. Everybody on Bunker Street was having fits. The Jews said the dybbuk would surely get into the girl, and the Irish said that some devil would get the feller. But the girl's father got sick and died and the feller's two sisters and mother died from the same sickness, but nothing happened to the girl and the feller. So the story of the dybbuk was gradually forgotten.

All I got to say is that whether it was a dybbuk or typhoid fever, all my hard luck started when my father died. If I hadn't been sent to reform school, I wouldn't have landed in jail. Yes, I served ten years. When I came out of reform school, I was sixteen years old. I went to live with my mother, but she kept throwing it up to me that I disgraced her by being sent to reform school, so I lit out and ran away.

There was a gang hanging around Bunker Street and I joined them. We used to steal anything we could lay our hands on, then spend the money on eating, drinking and going to burlesque shows. Sometimes we got arrested, but one of the big shots used to get us out. I use to pass the house once in a while, where my mother lived, but I never went in. Then I heard she died and the relatives buried her. They did not tell me about it, so I was not at the funeral. I can never forget that.

Well, one day I was caught sticking up a man with a gun in my hand, and the big shot could not get me off. So I was sent up for [ten?] years. When I came out, I went to see an uncle. He told me that my mother had left me five hundred dollars from a lodge policy. I was sick of the life I was living, so I took the

money and opened a little cigar store. And as you see, I still have the store. I make enough to live on.

Just the other day, one of the old neighbors came into the store. What do you think we talked about? The Dybbuk of Bunker Street.

CONTEMPT FOR HIS TORTURERS

Tradition Bearer: Mr. Wollman

Source: Roth, Terry, and Sam Schwartz. *Interview of Mr. Wollman. American Life Histories: Manuscripts from the Federal Writers' Project, 1936–1940*. Manuscript Division, Library of Congress. *American Memory*. Library of Congress, Washington, DC. <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/wpaintro/wpahome.html> (October 16, 2005).

Date: 1939

Original Source: Poland

National Origin: Ashkenazim

The Ashkenazim (or Ashkenazic Jews) are the descendants of the medieval Jewish communities located in Germany and the surrounding territory. As noted above (“Return of a Cantonist,” page 141), many Ashkenazim eventually migrated to Eastern European countries, particularly Poland and Russia. The following **legend** portrays an appropriate survival attitude for adverse conditions. Although religion is an important component of the narrative, it transmits a social secular message as distinct from a religious truth in the context Mr. Wollman reports.

I’ll relate you a story my friend he told me.

In the olden days, about one hundred years ago, the Jews in Poland were the middle element, between the peasantry and the big landlords. They used to collect taxes from the peasants for the big landlords.

There was one Jew, he had about six daughters to marry and he was the one that collected the taxes. The landlord was the nobility. So since he had about six daughters to marry, he took down some money that he collected, and he married them off. Then he didn’t have money to pay to the landlords. Those days, the landlord was the absolutely Czar of his peasants.

So, you’ll pardon me, since he didn’t have the money, he went to the landlord and he said to leave down his pants and flog him. Because he didn’t have the money to pay. So they flogged him and they let him to rest off a week and another day they flogged him and let him to rest. So the Jewish fellow went to the Rabbi and he told the Rabbi, “What shall I do? They are flogging me and it hurts.”

So the Rabbi answered him. “What do you care? He’s only a goy (non-Jew). It doesn’t mean anything.”

Why did he tell me that? Because he’s a married man and has five children. And he was out of work at that time. So he related that story in connection with his condition. This is the philosophy of the Hasidism. That he looked with contempt on his torturers. No matter how they torture him, he doesn’t care.

ONE THOUSAND RUBLES

Tradition Bearer: K. Heisler

Source: Verschleiser, Emanuel. *Interview of H. Kleinfeld. American Life Histories: Manuscripts from the Federal Writers’ Project, 1936–1940*. Manuscript Division, Library of Congress. *American Memory*. Library of Congress, Washington, DC, June 10, 2007.

Date: 1938

Original Source: Russia

National Origin: Ashkenazim

This joke features a Jewish **trickster** turning the tables on “a gentleman” (presumably a non-Jew) who had intended to test the protagonist’s sincerity. A subtext of the narrative is the conflict between Jew and Gentile in both the European and American contexts.

A merchant went once for a walk. What does a Jew and a merchant think about especially when business is bad? He thinks how to help himself. If he would at least have one thousand rubles he could help himself, if not he is lost. He will be bankrupt. He is so engrossed in his thoughts that he is talking out loud, “Ai, if I would only find one thousand rubles! I have to have a thousand rubles. Nine hundred even wouldn’t help.”

Behind him walked a gentleman who heard what the Jew said. He thinks to himself, “I will try the Jew.” He takes out of his pocket nine hundred rubies and throws them on the ground.

The Jew sees the nine hundred rubles, he isn’t lazy, he picks them up and hides them.

The gentleman sees it, comes running, “Listen,” he says, “didn’t you say that you wouldn’t pick up less than a thousand.”

“I’ll tell you,” answers the Jew, “I reminded myself that I have home a hundred rubles.”

POLAND

THE SPIRIT OF A BURIED MAN

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Wratislaw, A. H. *Sixty Folk-Tales from Exclusively Slavonic Sources*. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Co., 1890, 121–125.

Date: Unavailable

Original Source: Unavailable

National Origin: Poland

Bordered on the west by the central European country of Germany and on the east, north, and south by other eastern European countries, the Polish folktale corpus maintains features of both regions. For example, the scholarship notes that Polish **märchens** often omit the beginning, middle, and closing **formulas** of other Eastern European **variants** (Brzozowska-Krajka 2006). The following tale incorporates the familiar **tale type** of “The Grateful Dead” (AT 505), but it portrays the hero as utilizing the powers of transformation with which he has been rewarded to save a king and win a princess as in “The Man Who Flew Like a Bird and Swam Like a Fish” (AT 665). As in many tales of transformation, the hero’s identity is verified by a token taken from him when he was in animal form.

A poor scholar was going by the highway into a town, and found under the walls of the gate the body of a dead man, unburied, trodden by the feet of the passers-by. He had not much in his purse, but willingly gave enough to bury him, that he might not be spat upon and have sticks thrown at him. He performed his devotions over the fresh heaped-up grave, and went on into the world to wander.

In an oak wood sleep overpowered him, and when he awoke, he espied with wonderment a bag full of gold. He thanked the unseen beneficent hand, and came to the bank of a large river, where it was necessary to be ferried over. The two ferrymen, observing the bag full of gold, took him into the boat, and just at an eddy took from him the gold and threw him into the water. As the waves carried him away insensible, he by accident clutched a plank, and by its aid floated successfully to the shore.

It was not a plank, but the spirit of the buried man, who addressed him in these words, "You honored my remains by burial; I thank you for it. In token of gratitude I will teach you how you can transform yourself into a crow, into a hare, and into a deer." Then he taught him the spell. The scholar, when acquainted with the spell, could with ease transform himself into a crow, into a hare, and into a deer.

He wandered far, he wandered wide, till he wandered to the court of a mighty king, where he remained as an archer in attendance at the court. This king had a beautiful daughter, but she dwelt on an inaccessible island, surrounded on all sides by the sea. She dwelt in a castle of copper, and possessed a sword such that he who brandished it could conquer the largest army. Enemies had invaded the territory of the king; he needed and desired the victorious sword. But how to obtain it, when nobody had up to that time succeeded in getting on to the lonely island? He therefore made proclamation that whoever should bring the victorious sword from the princess should obtain her hand, and, moreover, should sit upon the throne after him. No one was venturesome enough to attempt it, till the wandering scholar, then an archer attached to the court, stood before the king announcing his readiness to go, and requesting a letter, that on receipt of that token the princess might give up the weapon to him. All men were astonished, and the king entrusted him with a letter to his daughter.

He went into the forest, without knowing in the least that another archer attached to the court was dogging his steps. He first transformed himself into a hare, then into a deer, and darted off with haste and speed; he traversed no small distance, till he stood on the shore of the sea. He then transformed himself into a crow, flew across the water of the sea, and didn't rest till he was on the island. He went into the castle of copper, delivered to the beautiful princess the letter from her father, and requested her to give him the victorious sword.

The beautiful princess looked at the archer. He captured her heart at once. She asked inquisitively how he had been able to get to her castle, which was on all sides surrounded by water and knew no human footsteps. Thereupon the archer replied that he knew secret spells by which he could transform himself into a deer, a hare, and a crow.

The beautiful princess, therefore, requested the archer to transform himself into a deer before her eyes. When he made himself into a graceful deer, and began to fawn and bound, the princess secretly pulled a tuft of fur from his back.

When he transformed himself again into a hare, and bounded with pricked up ears, the princess secretly, pulled a little fur off his back. When he changed himself into a crow and began to fly about in the room, the princess secretly pulled a few feathers from the bird's wings. She immediately wrote a letter to her father and delivered up the victorious sword.

The young scholar flew across the sea in the form of a crow, then ran a great distance in that of a deer, till in the neighborhood of the wood he bounded as a hare. The treacherous archer was already there in ambush, saw when he changed himself into a hare, and recognized him at once. He drew his bow, let fly the arrow, and killed the hare. He took from him the letter and carried off the sword, went to the castle, delivered to the king the letter and the sword of victory, and demanded at once the fulfillment of the promise that had been made.

The king, transported with joy, promised him immediately his daughter's hand, mounted his horse, and rode boldly against his enemies with the sword. Scarcely had he espied their standards, when he brandished the sword mightily several times, and that towards the four quarters of the world. At every wave of the sword large masses of enemies fell dead on the spot, and others, seized with panic, fled like hares. The king returned joyful with victory, and sent for his beautiful daughter, to give her to wife to the archer who brought the sword.

A banquet was prepared. The musicians were already striking up, the whole castle was brilliantly lighted; but the princess sat sorrowful beside the assassin-archer. She knew at once that he was in nowise the man whom she saw in the castle on the island, but she dared not ask her father where the other handsome archer was; she only wept much and secretly: her heart beat for the other.

The poor scholar, in the hare's skin, lay slain under the oak, lay there a whole year, till one night he felt himself awakened from a mighty sleep, and before him stood the well-known spirit, whose body he had buried. He told him what had happened to him, brought him back to life, and said, "Tomorrow is the princess's wedding; hasten, therefore, to the castle without a moment's delay; she will recognize you; the archer, too, who killed you treacherously, will recognize you."

The young man sprang up promptly, went to the castle with throbbing heart, and entered the grand saloon, where numerous guests were eating and drinking. The beautiful princess recognized him at once, shrieked with joy, and fainted; and the assassin-archer, the moment he set eyes on him, turned pale and green from fear.

Then the young man related the treason and murderous act of the archer, and in order to prove his words, turned himself in presence of all the assembled company into a graceful deer, and began to fawn upon the princess. She placed the tuft of fur pulled off him in the castle on the back of the deer, and the fur immediately grew into its place. Again he transformed himself into a hare, and similarly the piece of fur pulled off, which the princess had kept, grew into its

place immediately on contact. All looked on in astonishment till the young man changed himself into a crow. The princess brought out the feathers which she had pulled from its wings in the castle, and the feathers immediately grew into their places.

Then the old king commanded the assassin-archer to be put to death. Four horses were led out, all wild and unbroken. He was bound to them by his hands and feet, the horses were started off by the whip, and at one bound they tore the assassin-archer to pieces.

The young man obtained the hand of the young and charming princess. The whole castle was in a brilliant blaze of light, they drank, they ate with mirth; and the princess did not weep, for she possessed the husband that she wished for.

PRINCE UNEXPECTED

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Wratislaw, A. H. *Sixty Folk-Tales from Exclusively Slavonic Sources*. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Co., 1890, 108–120.

Date: Unavailable

Original Source: Unavailable

National Origin: Poland

The hero in this **variant** of “The Girl as Helper in the Hero’s Flight” (AT 313) is rescued by the shape-shifting youngest daughter of the immortal Bony lord of the underworld. The **motifs** of twelve sisters, a subterranean sojourn, the transformation of a princess into a flower, and a hero who enters a trance provoked considerable speculation about the solar and seasonal symbolism in this tale among nineteenth-century folklorists.

There was a king and queen who had been married for three years, but had no children, at which they were both much distressed. Once upon a time the king found himself obliged to make a visit of inspection round his dominions; he took leave of his queen, set off and was not at home for eight months.

Towards the end of the ninth month the king returned from his progress through his country, and was already hard by his capital city, when, as he journeyed over an uninhabited plain during the most scorching heat of summer, he felt such excessive thirst that he sent his servants round about to see if they could find water anywhere and let him know of it at once. The servants

dispersed in various directions, sought in vain for a whole hour, and returned without success to the king.

The thirst-tormented king proceeded to traverse the whole plain far and wide himself, not believing that there was not a spring somewhere or other; on he rode, and on a level spot, on which there had not previously been any water, he espied a well with a new wooden fence round it, full to the brim with spring water, in the midst of which floated a silver cup with a golden handle. The king sprang from his horse and reached after the cup with his right hand; but the cup, just as if it were alive and had eyes, darted quickly on one side and floated again by itself. The king knelt down and began to try to catch it, now with his right hand, now with his left, but it moved and dodged away in such a manner that, not being able to seize it with one hand, he tried to catch it with both. But scarcely had he reached out with both hands when the cup dived like a fish, and floated again on the surface. "Hang it!" thought the king, "I can't help myself with the cup, I'll manage without it." He then bent down to the water, which was as clear as crystal and as cold as ice, and began in his thirst to drink.

Meanwhile his long beard, which reached down to his girdle, dipped into the water. When he had quenched his thirst, he wanted to get up again—something was holding his beard and wouldn't let it go. He pulled once and again, but it was of no use; he cried out therefore in anger, "Who's there? let go!"

"It's I, the subterranean king, immortal Bony, and I shall not let go till you give me that which you left unknowingly at home, and which you do not expect to find on your return." The king looked into the depth of the well, and there was a huge head like a tub, with green eyes and a mouth from ear to ear, which was holding the king by the beard with extended claws like those of a crab, and was laughing mischievously.

The king thought that a thing of which he had not known before starting, and which he did not expect on his return, could not be of great value, so he said to the apparition, "I give it." The apparition burst with laughter and vanished with a flash of fire, and with it vanished also the well, the water, the wooden fence, and the cup; and the king was again on a hillock by a little wood kneeling on dry sand, and there was nothing more. The king got up, crossed himself, sprang on his horse, hastened to his attendants, and rode on.

In a week or maybe a fortnight the king arrived at his capital; the people came out in crowds to meet him; he went in procession to the great court of the palace and entered the corridor. In the corridor stood the queen awaiting him, and holding close to her bosom a cushion, on which lay a child, beautiful as the moon, kicking in swaddling clothes. The king recollected himself, sighed painfully, and said within himself, "This is what I left without knowing and found without expecting!" And bitterly, bitterly did he weep. All marveled, but nobody dared to ask the cause. The king took his son, without saying a word, in his arms, gazed long on his innocent face; carried him into the palace himself, laid him in the cradle, and, suppressing his sorrow, devoted himself to the

government of his realm, but was never again cheerful as formerly, since he was perpetually tormented by the thought that some day Bony would claim his son.

Meanwhile weeks, months, and years flowed on, and no one came for his son. The prince, named "Unexpected," grew and developed, and eventually became a handsome youth. The king also in course of time regained his usual cheerfulness; and forgot what had taken place, but alas everybody did not forget so easily.

Once the prince, while hunting in a forest, became separated from his suite and found himself in a savage wilderness. Suddenly there appeared before him a hideous old man with green eyes, who said, "How do you do, Prince Unexpected? You have made me wait for you a long time."

"Who are you?"

"That you will find out hereafter, but now, when you return to your father, greet him from me, and tell him that I should be glad if he would close accounts with me, for if he doesn't soon get out of my debt of himself, he will repent it bitterly." After saying this the hideous old man disappeared, and the prince in amazement turned his horse, rode home and told the king his adventure.

The king turned as pale as a sheet, and revealed the frightful secret to his son. "Don't cry, father!" replied the prince, "it isn't a great misfortune! I shall manage to force Bony to renounce the right over me, which he tricked you out of in so underhand a manner, and if in the course of a year I do not return, it will be a token that we shall see each other no more." The prince prepared for his journey, the king gave him a suit of steel armor a sword, and a horse, and the queen hung round his neck a cross of pure gold. At leave-taking they embraced affectionately, wept heartily, and the prince rode off.

On he rode one day, two days, three days, and at the end of the fourth day at the setting of the sun he came to the shore of the sea, and in the self-same bay espied twelve dresses, white as snow, though in the water, as far as the eye could reach, there was no living soul to be seen; only twelve white geese were swimming at a distance from the shore. Curious to know to whom they belonged, he took one of the dresses, let his horse loose in a meadow, concealed himself in a neighboring thicket, and waited to see what would come to pass.

Thereupon the geese, after disporting themselves on the sea, swam to the shore; eleven of them went to the dresses, each threw herself on the ground and became a beautiful damsel, dressed herself with speed, and flew away into the plain. The twelfth goose, the last and prettiest of all, did not venture to come out on the shore, but only wistfully stretched out her neck, looking on all sides. On seeing the prince she called out with a human voice, "Prince Unexpected, give me my dress; I will be grateful to you in return."

The prince hearkened to her, placed the dress on the grass, and modestly turned away in another direction. The goose came out on the grass, changed herself into a damsel, dressed herself hastily, and stood before the prince; she was young and more beautiful than eye had seen or ear heard of.

Blushing, she gave him her white hand, and, casting her eyes down, said with a pleasing voice, "I thank you, good prince, for hearkening to me: I am the youngest daughter of immortal Bony; he has twelve young daughters, and rules in the subterranean realm. My father, prince, has long been expecting you and is very angry; however, don't grieve, and don't be frightened, but do as I tell you. As soon as you see King Bony, fall at once on your knees, and, paying no regard to his outcry, upbraiding, and threats, approach him boldly. What will happen afterwards you will learn, but now we must part." On saying this the princess stamped on the ground with her little foot; the ground sprang open at once, and they descended into the subterranean realm, right into Bony's palace, which shone all underground brighter than our sun.

The prince stepped boldly into the reception-room. Bony was sitting on a golden throne with a glittering crown on his head; his eyes gleamed like two saucers of green glass and his hands were like the nippers of a crab. As soon as he espied him at a distance, the prince fell on his knees, and Bony yelled so horribly that the vaults of the subterranean dominion quaked; but the prince boldly moved on his knees towards the throne, and, when he was only a few paces from it, the king smiled and said, "Thou hast marvelous luck in succeeding in making me smile; remain in our subterranean realm, but before thou becomest a true citizen thereof thou art bound to execute three commands of mine; but because it is late today, we will begin tomorrow; meanwhile go to thy room."

The prince slept comfortably in the room assigned to him, and early on the morrow Bony summoned him and said, "We will see, prince, what thou canst do. In the course of the following night build me a palace of pure marble; let the windows be of crystal, the roof of gold, an elegant garden round about it, and in the garden seats and fountains; if thou buildest it, thou wilt gain thyself my love; if not, I shall command thy head to be cut off."

The prince heard it, returned to his apartment, and was sitting mournfully thinking of the death that threatened him, when outside at the window a bee came buzzing and said, "Let me in!" He opened the lattice, in flew the bee, and the princess, Bony's youngest daughter, appeared before the wondering prince. "What are you thus thinking about, Prince Unexpected?"

"Alas! I am thinking that your father wishes to deprive me of life."

"Don't be afraid! lie down to sleep, and when you get up tomorrow morning your palace will be ready."

So, too, it came to pass. At dawn the prince came out of his room and espied a more beautiful palace than he had ever seen, and Bony, when he saw it, wondered, and wouldn't believe his own eyes. "Well! thou hast won this time, and now thou hast my second command. I shall place my twelve daughters before thee tomorrow; if thou dost not guess which of them is the youngest, thou wilt place thy head beneath the axe."

"I unable to recognize the youngest princess!" said the prince in his room; "what difficulty can there be in that?"

“This,” answered the princess, flying into the room in the shape of a bee, “that if I don’t help you, you won’t recognize me; for we are all so alike that even our father only distinguishes us by our dress.”

“What am I to do?”

“What, indeed! That will be the youngest over whose right eye you espy a ladycow [lady bug, a small beetle]; only look well. Adieu!”

On the morrow King Bony again summoned Prince Unexpected. The princesses stood in a row side by side, all dressed alike and with eyes cast down. The prince looked and marveled how alike all the princesses were; he went past them once, twice—he did not find the appointed token; the third time he saw a ladycow over the eyebrow of one, and cried out, “This is the youngest princess!”

“How the deuce have you guessed it?” said Bony angrily. “There must be some trickery here. I must deal with your lordship differently. In three hours you will come here again, and will show your cleverness in my presence. I shall light a straw, and you will stitch a pair of boots before it goes out, and if you don’t do it you will perish.”

The prince returned desponding and found the bee already in his apartment. “Why pensive again, prince?”

“How shouldn’t I be pensive, when your father wants me to stitch him a pair of boots, for what sort of cobbler am I?”

“What else will you do?”

“What am I to do? I shan’t stitch the boots, and I’m not afraid of death—one can but die once!”

“No, prince, you shall not die! I will endeavor to rescue you, and we will either escape together or perish together! We must flee—there’s nothing else to be done.” Saying this, the princess spat on one of the window-panes, and the spittle immediately froze.

She then went out of the room with the prince, locked the door after her, and threw the key far away; then, taking each other by the hands, they ascended rapidly, and in a moment found themselves on the very spot whence they had descended into the subterranean realm; there was the self-same sea, the self-same shore overgrown with rushes and thorn bushes, the self-same fresh meadow, and in the meadow cantered the prince’s well-fed horse, who, as soon as he descried his rider, came galloping straight to him. The prince didn’t stop long to think, but sprang on his horse, the princess seated herself behind him, and off they set as swift as an arrow.

King Bony at the appointed hour did not wait for Prince Unexpected, but sent to ask him why he did not appear. Finding the door locked, the servants knocked at it vigorously, and the spittle answered them from the middle of the room in the prince’s voice, “Anon!”

The servants carried this answer to the king; he waited, waited, no prince; he therefore again sent the same servants, who heard the same answer, “Anon!” and carried what they had heard to the king.

“What’s this? Does he mean to make fun of me?” shouted the king in wrath, “Go at once, break the door open and conduct him to me!”

The servants hurried off, broke open the door, and rushed in. What, indeed? there was nobody there, and the spittle on the pane of glass was splitting with laughter at them. Bony all but burst with rage, and ordered them all to start off in pursuit of the prince, threatening them with death if they returned empty-handed. They sprang on horseback and hastened away after the prince and princess.

Meanwhile Prince Unexpected and the princess, Bony’s daughter, were hurrying away on their spirited horse, and amidst their rapid flight heard “tramp, tramp,” behind them. The prince sprang from the horse, put his ear to the ground and said, “They are pursuing us.”

“Then,” said the princess, “we have no time to lose.” Instantly she transformed herself into a river, changed the prince into a bridge, the horse into a raven, and the grand highway beyond the bridge divided into three roads. Swiftly on the fresh track hastened the pursuers, came on to the bridge, and stood stupefied; they saw the track up to the bridge, but beyond it disappeared, and the highway divided into three roads. There was nothing to be done but to return, and they came with nought. Bony shouted with rage, and cried out, “A bridge and a river! It was they. How was it that ye did not guess it? Back, and don’t return without them!” The pursuers recommenced the pursuit.

“I hear ‘tramp, tramp!’” whispered the princess, Bony’s daughter, affrightedly to Prince Unexpected, who sprang from the saddle, put his ear to the ground, and replied, “They are making haste, and are not far off.” That instant the princess and prince, and with them also their horse, became a gloomy forest, in which were roads, by-roads, and footpaths without number, and on one of them it seemed that two riders were hastening on a horse.

Following the fresh track, the pursuers came up to the forest, and when they espied the fugitives in it, they hastened speedily after them. On and on hurried the pursuers, seeing continually before them a thick forest, a wide road and the fugitives on it; now, now they thought to overtake them, when the fugitives and the thick forest suddenly vanished, and they found themselves at the self-same place whence they had started in pursuit. They returned, therefore, again to Bony empty-handed.

“A horse, a horse! I’ll go myself! they won’t escape out of my hands!” yelled Bony, foaming at the mouth, and started in pursuit.

Again the princess said to Prince Unexpected, “Methinks they are pursuing us, and this time it is Bony, my father, himself, but the first church is the boundary of his dominion, and he won’t be able to pursue us further. Give me your golden cross.” The prince took off his affectionate mother’s gift and gave it to the princess, and in a moment she was transformed into a church, he into the priest, and the horse into the bell; and that instant up came Bony.

“Monk!” Bony asked the priest, “hast thou not seen some travelers on horseback?”

“Only just now Prince Unexpected rode this way with the princess, Bony’s daughter. They came into the church, performed their devotions, gave money for a mass for your good health, and ordered me to present their respects to you if you should ride this way.” Bony, too, returned empty-handed. But Prince Unexpected rode on with the princess, Bony’s daughter, in no further fear of pursuit.

They rode gently on, when they saw before them a beautiful town, into which the prince felt an irresistible longing to go. “Prince,” said the princess, “don’t go; my heart forebodes misfortune there.”

“I’ll only ride there for a short time, and look round the town, and we’ll then proceed on our journey.”

“It’s easy enough to ride thither, but will it be as easy to return? Nevertheless, as you absolutely desire it, go, and I will remain here in the form of a white stone till you return; be circumspect, my beloved; the king, the queen, and the princess, their daughter, will come out to meet you, and with them will be a beautiful little boy—don’t kiss him, for, if you do, you will forget me at once, and will never set eyes on me more in the world—I shall die of despair. I will wait for you here on the road for three days, and if on the third day you don’t return, remember that I perish, and perish all through you.” The prince took leave and rode to the town, and the princess transformed herself into a white stone, and remained on the road.

One day passed, a second passed, the third also passed, and nothing was seen of the prince. Poor princess! He had not obeyed her counsel; in the town, the king, the queen, and the princess their daughter, had come out to meet him, and with them walked a little boy, a curly-headed chatterbox, with eyes as bright as stars. The child rushed straight into the prince’s arms, who was so captivated by the beauty of the lad that he forgot everything, and kissed the child affectionately. That moment his memory was darkened, and he utterly forgot the princess, Bony’s daughter.

The princess lay as a white stone by the wayside, one day, two days, and when the third day passed and the prince did not return from the town, she transformed herself into a cornflower, and sprang in among the rye by the roadside.

“Here I shall stay by the roadside; maybe some passer-by will pull me up or trample me into the ground,” said she, and tears like dew-drops glittered on the azure petals. Just then an old man came along the road, espied the corn-flower in the rye by the wayside, was captivated by its beauty, extracted it carefully from the ground, carried it into his dwelling, set it in a flower-pot, watered it, and began to tend it attentively. But—O marvel!—ever since the time that the cornflower was brought into his dwelling, all kind of wonders began to happen in it. Scarcely was the old man awake, when everything in the house was

already set in order, nowhere was the least atom of dust remaining. At noon he came home—dinner was all ready, the table set; he had but to sit down and eat as much as he wanted.

The old man wondered and wondered, till at last terror took possession of him, and he betook himself for advice to an old witch of his acquaintance in the neighborhood. “Do this,” the witch advised him, “get up before the first morning dawn, before the cocks crow to announce daylight, and notice diligently what begins to stir first in the house, and that which does stir, cover with this napkin: what will happen further, you will see.”

The old man didn’t close his eyes the whole night, and as soon as the first gleam appeared and things began to be visible in the house, he saw how the cornflower suddenly moved in the flower-pot, sprang out, and began to stir about the room; when simultaneously everything began to put itself in its place; the dust began to sweep itself clean away, and the fire kindled itself in the stove. The old man sprang cleverly out of his bed and placed the cloth on the flower as it endeavored to escape, when lo! the flower became a beautiful damsel—the princess, Bony’s daughter.

“What have you done?” cried the princess. “Why have you brought life back again to me? My betrothed, Prince Unexpected, has forgotten me, and, therefore, life has become distasteful to me.”

“Your betrothed, Prince Unexpected, is going to be married today; the wedding feast is ready, and the guests are beginning to assemble.”

The princess wept, but after awhile dried her tears, dressed herself in frieze, and went into the town like a village girl. She came to the royal kitchen, where there was great noise and bustle. She went up to the clerk of the kitchen with humble and attractive grace, and said in a sweet voice, “Dear sir, do me one favor; allow me to make a wedding-cake for Prince Unexpected.”

Occupied with work, the first impulse of the clerk of the kitchen was to give the girl a rebuff, but when he looked at her, the words died on his lips, and he answered kindly, “Ah, my beauty of beauties! Do what you will; I will hand the prince your cake myself.”

The cake was soon baked, and all the invited guests were sitting at table. The clerk of the kitchen himself placed a huge cake on a silver dish before the prince; but scarce had the prince made a cut in the side of it, when lo an unheard-of marvel displayed itself in the presence of all. A gray tom-pigeon and a white hen-pigeon came out of the cake; the tom-pigeon walked along the table, and the hen-pigeon walked after him, cooing:

Stay, stay, my pigeonet, oh stay!
 Don’t from thy true love flee away;
 My faithless lover I pursue,
 Prince Unexpected like unto,
 Who Bony’s daughter did betray.

Scarcely had Prince Unexpected heard this cooing of the pigeon, when he regained his lost recollection, bounced from the table, rushed to the door, and behind the door the princess, Bony's daughter, took him by the hand; they went together down the corridor, and before them stood a horse saddled and bridled.

Why delay? Prince Unexpected and the princess, Bony's daughter, sprang on the horse, started on the road, and at last arrived happily in the realm of Prince Unexpected's father. The king and queen received them with joy and merriment, and didn't wait long before they prepared them a magnificent wedding, the like of which eye never saw and ear never heard of.

TWARDOWSKI THE MAGICIAN

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Lach-Szyrma, W. S. "Slavonic Folk-Lore." *Folk-Lore Record* 4 (1881): 59–62.

Date: Unavailable

Original Source: Poland

National Origin: Poland

The following **legend** turns the historical Polish physician and scientist into a Renaissance Faust. A number of **validating devices** are utilized to encourage acceptance of the narrative. Locally well-known figures such as the mythical Krakus who rescued the town of Cracow by killing the dragon Smok Wawelski and King Sigismund Augustus and local landmarks such as the silver-mines of Olkusz and Hawk's Rock give an illusion of credibility to the more fantastic elements of the tale.

John Twardowski is said to have been a doctor of medicine in the university of Cracow, and probably was a man in advance of his age in knowledge of natural science. He is said to have studied the occult sciences in books of magic, and secretly to have gone forth from the city to Podgorice, where he summoned the demon to his presence. Like Doctor Faust in the legend, and sorcerers in general, he signed a contract with his own blood. The demon was to do everything he was ordered, and have no power over Twardowski until he met him at Rome. It is needless to say that Twardowski never went to Italy afterwards.

Twardowski was wont to perform his magical incantations on the mountains of Krzemionki, or on the tumulus of Krakus, the mythic founder of Cracow. This idea of a supernatural hallow around the mounds or barrows of the prehistoric race is not confined to Eastern Europe. In Cornwall also there is a belief in some

of these barrows having a mystical connection and being haunted by spirits. The tomb of Krakus is a large prehistoric mound of great antiquity outside the city, not unlike many of our British barrows. It was, of course, a haunted place.

Twardowski must have given the demon much trouble. He ordered him to collect an enormous quantity of silver and bury it at Olkusz. The silver-mines of Olkusz are evidence of the veracity of this legend. He had to do other hard things. He compelled him to bring a huge rock to Piaskowa, and fix it with the sharp point down. The Hawk's Rock is still pointed at by the peasants as a record of Twardowski's powers.

The art of levitation he understood like most sorcerers. He had a painted horse on which he flew where he would (perhaps a more elegant edition of the broomstick of the British witches. Twardowski was a nobleman, and it would have been undignified doubtless for a noble-man to ride on a broomstick.)

He could go on the Vistula in a boat without sail or oar. (Query, might not this be something more than a folk legend, and Twardowski, who it seems was an able mechanician, have constructed a water velocipede to astonish the people?)

His grandest achievement, which may possibly be an historical event, though it is difficult to believe such credulity in a king of the sixteenth century, was his summoning Queen Barbara Radzivil. King Sigismund Augustus had married this celebrated beauty in 1548, and was devotedly attached to her. But in 1551 Queen Barbara, beloved by the king and nation, only six months after her coronation, died (May 12, 1551). King Augustus was inconsolable, and his terrible loss preyed on his mind. In the delirium of his bereavement he told his courtiers that nothing could console him but the sight of his beloved queen again, or of her spirit. The request was unreasonable, but the nobles humored the royal widower's fancy. He made an offer of five hundred pieces of gold for a sight of Queen Barbara's spirit. The bribe was heavy, but none of the spiritualists or necromancers of the period could earn it.

In his distress Gonska, the king's buffoon, is said to have visited Twardowski, and asked him to relieve the king and earn the five hundred pieces. Twardowski declared his readiness to summon Queen Barbara, even in the palace at Cracow where she had lived. At the appointed night King Sigismund Augustus descended into the palace vaults to behold his loved one. Twardowski, begging him neither to speak nor move, performed some incantations, and then, amidst blue fire, there appeared what seemed Queen Barbara in a white robe. The king was consoled by the vision, and paid Twardowski his fee, which was earned, it is said, by a Miss Przelawska, a Lutheran girl, who had fled from persecution to Twardowski, and who, being very like Queen Barbara, acted the ghost's part.

At length the demon resolved to trap Twardowski. Disguised as a servant he went to the magician asking his help for his master, who was ill. As Twardowski felt himself safe in Gallicia, he went unsuspectingly. He entered an inn in the village to which the messenger conducted him. He never thought of looking at

the sign-board, which bore the fatal name of "Rome." A flock of crows and owls, however, gathered on the roof. The demon entered in his best attire, but with horns and hoofs only too imperfectly concealed. Twardowski saw his danger in a moment. Knowing the helplessness of his foe against a baptized child, he snatched from the cradle the innkeeper's innocent babe. Under the babe's defense he foiled his foe for some time, for the fiend could not touch him without hurting the sinless child. At length Twardowski, who was a match for the demon even in the Hotel de Rome, was appealed to by the devil as a man of honor. "*Verbum nobile debet esset stabile.*" Twardowski, bad though he was, could not break his word, even to the "Father of Lies." He put back the baby, and at once went up the chimney. But his honorable conduct was not allowed to be the cause of his final ruin.

As he was borne in the air by the demon over Cracow, the memory of a hymn to the Virgin, which he had composed when a child, came to his mind. He sang it lustily in his dire trial. The fiend was as transfixed over Cracow as over Helston, but he did not drop him on earth. Twardowski remains still there, floating in the air, and the peasants say he may sometimes be seen on a fine night moving between the stars, awaiting his doom.

ROMA

JACK AND HIS GOLDEN SNUFF-BOX

Tradition Bearer: John Roberts

Source: Groome, Francis Hindes. *Gypsy Folk Tales*. London: Hurst & Blackett, 1899, 209–220.

Date: Unavailable

Original Source: Roma (Welsh)

National Origin: Roma

The Roma are an ethnic group, popularly known by the term Gypsies, a term that is now considered derogatory by the Roma (or Romani) people. This widely distributed group is believed to have originated in South Asia before settling throughout Europe, the British Isles, and the Americas. Historically, the Roma have been subjected to discrimination that has ranged from the negative stereotyping that appears in other narratives in this collection (see, for example, “The Three Lemons,” page 130) to campaigns of “ethnic cleansing.” In contrast, “Jack and His Snuff-box” present a diametrically opposed positive image of the Roma. The tale bears some similarities to the South Asian narrative “The Charmed Ring” (Volume 2, page 176), but the Indian tale is a **variant** of “The Magic Ring” (AT 560). This tale, collected from Welsh Rom (singular of “Roma”) John Roberts, more closely resembles an “Aladdin” tale (AT 561). In addition to its positive depiction of Roma characters, the following tale includes elements of Roma culture, such as the use of unique family whistles by means of which families can identify each other and an example of the Angloromani dialect (for example, Dordi translates to “look-ye”).

Once upon a time there was an old man and an old woman, and they had one son, and they lived in a great forest. And their son never saw any other people in his life, but he knew that there was some more in the world besides his own father and mother, because he had lots of books, and he used to read every day about them. And when he read about some pretty young women, he used to go mad to see some of them. Till one day, when his father was out cutting wood, he told his mother that he wished to go away to look for his living in some other country, and to see some other people besides them two. And he said, "I see nothing at all here but great trees around me; and if I stay here, maybe I shall go mad before I see anything."

The young man's father was out all this time, when the conversation was going on between him and his poor old mother.

The old woman begins by saying to her son before leaving, "Well, well, my poor boy, if you want to go, it's better for you to go, and God be with you." (The old woman thought for the best when she said that.) "But stop a bit before you go. Which would you like best for me to make you—a little cake and to bless you, or a big cake and to curse you?"

"Dear! dear!" said he, "make me a big cake. Maybe I shall be hungry on the road."

The old woman made the big cake, and she went on top of the house, and she cursed him as far as she could see him.

He presently meets with his father, and the old man says to him, "Where are you going, my poor boy?" When the son told the father the same tale as he told his mother, "Well," says his father, "I'm sorry to see you going away, but if you've made your mind to go, it's better for you to go."

The poor lad had not gone far, till his father called him back; when the old man drew out of his pocket a golden snuff-box, and said to him, "Here, take this little box, and put it in your pocket, and be sure not to open it till you are near your death."

And away went poor Jack upon his road, and walked till he was tired and hungry, for he had eaten all his cake upon the road; and by this time night was upon him, as he could hardly see his way before him. He could see some light a long way before him, and he made up to it, and found the back door and knocked at it, till one of the maidservants came and asked him what he wanted. He said that night was on him, and he wanted to get some place to sleep. The maidservant called him in to the fire, and gave him plenty to eat, good meat and bread and beer; and as he was eating his refreshments by the fire, there came the young lady to look at him. And she loved him well, and he loved her. And the young lady ran to tell her father, and said there was a pretty young man in the back kitchen. And immediately the gentleman came to him, and questioned him, and asked what work he could do. He said, the silly fellow, that he could do anything. (Jack meant that he could do any foolish bit of work, what would be wanted about the house.)

“Well,” says the gentleman to him, “at eight o’clock in the morning I must have a great lake and some of the largest man-of-war vessels sailing before my mansion, and one of the largest vessels must fire a royal salute, and the last round break the leg of the bed where my young daughter is sleeping on. And if you don’t do that, you will have to forfeit your life.”

“All right,” said Jack. And away he went to his bed, and said his prayers quietly, and slept till it was near eight o’clock, and he had hardly any time to think what he was to do, till all of a sudden he remembered about the little golden box that his father gave him. And he said to himself, “Well, well, I never was so near my death as I am now”; and then he felt in his pocket, and drew the little box out.

And when he opened it, there hopped out three little red men and asked Jack, “What is your will with us?”

“Well,” said Jack, “I want a great lake and some of the largest man-of-war vessels in the world before this mansion, and one of the largest vessels to fire a royal salute, and the last round to break one of the legs of the bed where this young lady is sleeping on.”

“All right,” said the little men; “go to sleep.”

Jack had hardly time to bring the words out of his mouth, to tell the little men what to do, but what it struck eight o’clock, when bang, bang went one of the largest man-of-war vessels; and it made Jack jump out of bed to look through the window. And I can assure you it was a wonderful sight for him to see, after being so long with his father and mother living in a wood. By this time Jack dressed himself, and said his prayers, and came down laughing, because he was proud, he was, because the thing was done so well.

The gentleman comes to him, and says to him, “Well, my young man, I must say that you are very clever indeed. Come and have some breakfast.” And the gentleman tells him, “Now there are two more things you have to do, and then you shall have my daughter in marriage.” Jack gets his breakfast, and has a good squint at the young lady, and also she at him. (However, I must get on again with my dear little story.)

The other thing that the gentleman told him to do was to fell all the great trees for miles around by eight o’clock in the morning; and, to make my long story short, it was done, and it pleased the gentleman well. The gentleman said to him, “The other thing you have to do” (and it was the last thing), “you must get me a great castle standing on twelve golden pillars; and there must come regiments of soldiers, and go through their drill. At eight o’clock the commanding officer must say, ‘Shoulder up’.”

“All right,” said Jack; when the third and last morning came and the three great feats were finished, when he had the young daughter in marriage.

But, oh dear! there is worse to come yet.

The gentleman now makes a large hunting party, and invites all the gentlemen around the country to it, and to see the castle as well. And by this time

Jack has a beautiful horse and a scarlet dress to go with them. On that morning his valet, when putting Jack's clothes by, after changing them to go a-hunting, put his hand in one of Jack's waist-coat pockets and pulled out the little golden snuff-box, as poor Jack left behind in a mistake. And that man opened the little box, and there hopped the three little red men out, and asked him what he wanted with them.

"Well," said the valet to them, "I want this castle to be moved from this place far and far across the sea."

"All right," said the little red men to him, "do you wish to go with it?"

"Yes," said he.

"Well, get up," said they to him; and away they went, far and far over the great sea.

Now the grand hunting party comes back, and the castle upon the twelve golden pillars disappeared, to the great disappointment of those gentleman as did not see it before. That poor silly Jack is threatened by taking his beautiful young wife from him, for taking them in the way he did. But the gentleman is going to make a 'greement with him, and he is to have a twelvemonths and a day to look for it; and off he goes with a good horse and money in his pocket.

Now poor Jack goes in search of his missing castle, over hills, dales, valleys, and mountains, through woolly woods and sheepwalks, farther than I can tell you tonight or ever intend to tell you. Until at last he comes up to the place where lives the King of all the little mice in the world. There was one of the little mice on sentry at the front gate going up to the palace, and did try to stop Jack from going in.

He asked the little mouse, "Where does the King live? I should like to see him." This one sent another with him to show him the place; and when the King saw him, he called him in. And the King questioned him, and asked him where he was going that way. Well, Jack told him all the truth, that he had lost the great castle, and was going to look for it, and he had a whole twelvemonths and a day to find it out.

And Jack asked him whether he knew anything about it; and the King said, "No, but I am the King of all the little mice in the world, and I will call them all up in the morning, and maybe they have seen something of it."

Then Jack got a good meal and bed, and in the morning he and the King went on to the fields; and the King called all the mice together, and asked them whether they had seen the great beautiful castle standing on golden pillars. And all the little mice said, "No, there was none of them had seen it."

The old King said to him that he had two other brothers, "One is the King of all the frogs; and my other brother, who is the oldest, he is the King of all the birds in the world. And if you go there, maybe they know something about it" (the missing castle). The King said to him, "Leave your horse here with me till you come back, and take one of my best horses under you, and give this cake

to my brother; he will know then who you got it from. Mind and tell him I am well, and should like dearly to see him."

And then the King and Jack shook hands together. And when Jack was going through the gates, the little mouse asked him should he go with him; and Jack said to him, "No, I shall get myself into trouble with the King."

And the little thing told him, "It will be better for you to have me go with you; maybe I shall do some good to you sometime without you knowing it."

"Jump up, then."

And the little mouse ran up the horse's leg, and made it dance; and Jack put the mouse in his pocket. Now Jack, after wishing good-morning to the King, and pocketing the little mouse which was on sentry, trudged on his way. And such a long way he had to go, and this was his first day. At last he found the place; and there was one of the frogs on sentry, and gun upon his shoulder, and did try to hinder Jack not to go in. And when Jack said to him that he wanted to see the King, he allowed him to pass; and Jack made up to the door. The King came out, and asked him his business; and Jack told him all from beginning to ending.

"Well, well, come in."

He gets good entertainment that night; and in the morning the King made a curious sound, and collected all the frogs in the world. And he asked them, did they know or see anything of a castle that stood upon twelve golden pillars. And they all made a curious sound, Kro-kro, kro-kro, and said, "No."

Jack had to take another horse, and a cake to his brother which is the King of all the fowls of the air. And as Jack was going through the gates, the little frog which was on sentry asked John should he go with him. Jack refused him for a bit; but at last he told him to jump up, and Jack put him in his other waistcoat pocket. And away he went again on his great long journey; it was three times as long this time as it was the first day; however, he found the place, and there was a fine bird on sentry. And Jack passed him, and he never said a word to him. And he talked with the King, and told him everything, all about the castle.

"Well," said the King to him, "you shall know in the morning from my birds whether they know anything or not."

Jack put up his horse in the stable, and then went to bed, after having something to eat. And when he got up in the morning, the King and he went on to some fields, and there the King made some funny noise, and there came all the fowls that were in all the world. And the King asked them, Did they see the fine castle? and all the birds answered, "No."

"Well," said the king, "where is the great bird?"

They had to wait, then, for a long time for eagle to make his appearance, when at last he came all in a perspiration, after sending two little birds high up in the sky to whistle on him to make all the haste he possibly could. The King asked the great bird, Did he see the great castle?

And the bird said, "Yes, I came from there where it now is."

"Well," says the King, "this young gentleman has lost it, and you must go with him back to it. But stop till you get a bit of something to eat first."

They killed a thief, and sent the best part of it to feed the eagle on his journey over the seas, and had to carry Jack on his back. Now, when they came in sight of the castle, they did not know what to do to get the little golden box.

Well, the little mouse said to them, "Leave me down, and I will get the little box for you." So the mouse stole himself in the castle, and had a hold of the box; and when he was coming down the stairs, fell it down, and very near being caught. He came running out with it, laughing his best.

"Have you got it?" Jack said to him.

He said, "Yes"; and off they went back again, and left the castle behind. As they were all of them (Jack, mouse, frog, and eagle) passing over the great sea, they fell to quarreling about which it was that got the little box, till down it slipped into the water. (It was by them looking at it, and handing it from one hand to the other, that they dropped the little box in the bottom of the sea.)

"Well, well," said the frog, "I knew as I would have to do something, so you had better let me go down in the water."

And they let him go, and he was down for three days and three nights; and up he comes, and shows his nose and little mouth out of the water. And all of them asked him, "Did he get it?" and he told them, "No."

"Well, what are you doing there, then?"

"Nothing at all," he said; "only I want my full breath"; and the poor little frog went down the second time, and he was down for a day and a night, and up he brings it.

And away they did go, after being there four days and nights and, after a long tug over seas and mountains, arrive at the old King's palace, who is the master of all the birds in the world. And the King is very proud to see them, and has a hearty welcome and a long conversation. Jack opens the little box, and told the little men to go back and to bring the castle here to them. "And all of you make as much haste back again as you possibly can."

The three little men went off; and when they came near the castle, they were afraid to go to it, till the gentleman and lady and all the servants were gone out to some dance. And there was no one left behind there, only the cook and another maid with her. And it happened to be that a poor Gypsy woman, knowing that the family was going from home, made her way to the castle to try to tell the cook's fortune for a bit of victuals, was there at the time. And the little red men asked her, "Which would she rather—go or stop behind?"

And she said, "I will go with you."

And they told her to run upstairs quick. She was no sooner up and in one of the drawing-rooms than there comes just in sight the gentleman and lady and all the servants. But it was too late. Off they went at full speed, and the Gypsy woman laughing at them through the window, making motion for them to stop,

but all to no purpose. They were nine days on their journey, in which they did try to keep the Sunday holy, by one of the little men turned to be priest, the other the clerk, and third presided at the organ, and the three women were the singers (cook, housemaid, and Gypsy woman), as they had a grand chapel in the castle already. Very remarkable, there was a discord made in the music, and one of the little men ran up one of the organ-pipes to see where the bad sound came from, when he found out that it only happened to be that the three women were laughing at the little red man stretching his little legs full length on the bass pipes, also his two arms the same time, with his little red nightcap, what he never forgot to wear, and what they never witnessed before, could not help calling forth some good merriment while on the face of the deep. And, poor things! Through them not going on with what they begun with, they very near came to danger, as the castle was once very near sinking in the middle of the sea.

At length, after merry journey, they come again to Jack and the King. The King was quite struck with the sight of the castle; and going up the golden stairs, wishing to see the inside, when the first one that attracted his attention was the poor Gypsy woman. And he said to her, "How are you, sister?"

She said to him, "I am very well. How are you?"

"Quite well," said he to her; "come into my place, to have a talk with you, and see who you are, and who your people are."

The old Gypsy woman told him that some of her people were some of them from the Lovells, Stanleys, Lees, and I don't know all their names. The King and Jack was very much pleased with the Gypsy woman's conversation, but poor Jack's time was drawing to a close of a twelvemonths and a day. And he, wishing to go home to his young wife, gave orders to the three little men to get ready by the next morning at eight o'clock to be off to the next brother, and to stop there for one night; also to proceed from there to the last or the youngest brother, the master of all the mice in the world, in such place where the castle shall be left under his care until it's sent for. Jack takes a farewell of the King, and thanks him very much for his hospitality, and tells him not to be surprised when he shall meet again in some other country.

Away went Jack and his castle again, and stopped one night in that place; and away they went again to the third place, and there left the castle under his care. As Jack had to leave the castle behind, he had to take to his own horse, which he left there when he first started. The king liked the Gypsy woman well, and told her that he would like if she would stay there with him; and the Gypsy woman did stay with him until she was sent for by Jack.

Now poor Jack leaves his castle behind and faces towards home; and after having so much merriment with the three brothers every night, Jack became sleepy on horseback, and would have lost the road if it was not for the little men a-guiding him. At last he arrives, weary and tired, and they did not seem to receive him with any kindness whatever, because he did not find the stolen

castle. And to make it worse, he was disappointed in not seeing his young and beautiful wife to come and meet him, through being hindered by her parents. But that did not stop long. Jack put full power on.

Jack dispatched the little men off to bring the castle from there, and they soon got there; and the first one they seen outside gather sticks to put on the fire was the poor Gypsy woman. And they did whistle to her, when she turned around smartly and said to them, “Dordi! dordi! How are you, comrades? Where do you come from, and where are you going?”

“Well, to tell the truth, we are sent to take this castle from here. Do you wish to stop here or to come with us?”

“I would like better to go with you than to stay here.”

“Well, come on, my poor sister.”

Jack shook hands with the King, and returned many thanks for his kingly kindness. When, all of a sudden, the King, seeing the Gypsy woman, which he fell in so much fancy with, and whom he so much liked, was going to detain the castle until such time he could get her out. But Jack, perceiving his intentions, and wanting the Gypsy woman himself for a nurse, instructed the little men to spur up and put speed on. And off they went, and were not long before they reached their journey’s end, when out comes the young wife to meet him with a fine lump of a young son.

Now, to make my long story short, Jack, after completing what he did, and to make a finish for the poor broken-hearted Gypsy woman, he has the loan of one of his father-in-law’s largest man-of-wars, which is laying by anchor, and sends the three little men in search of her kinsfolk, so as they may be found, and to bring them to her. After long searching they are found and brought back, to the great joy of the woman and delight of his wife’s people-in-law, for after a bit they became very fond of each other. When they came on land, Jack’s people allowed them to camp on their ground near a beautiful river; and the gentlemen and ladies used to go and see for them every day. Jack and his wife had many children, and had some of the Gypsy girls for nurses; and the little children were almost half Gypsies, for the girls continually learning them our language. And the gentleman and the lady were delighted with them. And the last time I was there, I played my harp for them, and got to go again.

MADE OVER TO THE DEVIL

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Groome, Francis Hindes. *Gypsy Folk Tales*. London: Hurst & Blackett, 1899, 125–128.

Date: Unavailable

Original Source: Roma (Romania/Ukraine)

National Origin: Roma

The following tale was drawn from the section of Eastern Europe formerly known as Burkovina (or Burkowina), an area currently split between Romania and Ukraine. A relatively common feature of oral performance, as distinct from literary texts, is the occasional “omission” of linking details. “Made over to the Devil,” a **variant** of “The Girl as Helper in the Hero’s Flight” (AT 313), exemplifies this feature. For this reason, it is useful to compare the current version of the **tale type** with the more detailed Polish variant of the same narrative, “Prince Unexpected” (page 152).

There was a rich man, and he went into the forest, and fell into a bog with his carriage. And his wife brought forth a son, and he knew it not. And the Devil came forth, and said, “What will you give me if I pull you out?”

“I will give you what you want.”

“Give me what you have at home.”

“I have horses, oxen.”

“Give me that which you have not seen.”

“I will.”

“Make a covenant with me.”

He made a covenant with him, and the Devil pulled him out of the mud, and the man went home. By the time he got home he had forgotten the covenant.

The boy was twenty years old. “Make me a cake, mother, for I’m off to the place my father pledged me to.” And he went far over the mountains, and came to the Devil’s house. There was an old woman in the house, and a daughter of the Devil’s, and she asked him, “Whither art going, lad?”

“I have come to the lord here, to serve.”

And the girl saw him, and he pleased her. “I may tell you that he is my father. My father will turn himself into a horse, and will tell you to mount him and traverse the world. And do you make yourself an iron club and an iron curry-comb, and hit him with the club, for he will not stoop, and get on his back, and as you go keep hitting him on the head.”

He traversed the world, and came home, put him in the stable, and went to the maiden.

“My father didn’t fling you?”

“No, for I kept hitting him on the head.”

The Devil called him, and took a jar of poppy-seed, and poured it out on the grass, and told him to gather it all up, and fill the jar, for, “If you don’t, I will cut off your head.”

He went to the maiden, and wept.

“What are you weeping for?”

“Your father has told me to fill the jar with poppy-seed; and if I don’t, he will cut off my head.”

She said, “Fear not.” She went outside and gave a whistle, and the mice came as many as all the blades of grass and the leaves.

And they asked, “What do you want, mistress?”

“Gather the poppy-seed and fill the jar.”

And the mice came and picked up the grains of poppy-seed one by one, and filled the jar. The Devil saw it. “You’re a clever chap. Here is one more task for you: drain the marsh, and plough it, and sow it, and tomorrow bring me roasted maize. And if you do not, I shall cut your head off.”

He went to the maiden and wept. “Your father has told me to drain the marsh, and give him roasted maize tomorrow.”

“Fear not.”

She went outside, and took the fiery whip. And she struck the marsh once, and it was dried up; a second time she struck, and it was ploughed; the third time she struck, it was sowed; the fourth time she struck, and the maize was roasted; and in the morning he gave him roasted maize.

She said to him, “We are three maidens. He will make us all alike, will call you to guess which is the eldest, which is the middle one, and which the youngest; and you will not be able to guess, for we shall be all just alike. I shall be at the top, and notice my feet, for I shall keep tapping one foot on the other; the middle one will be in the middle, and the eldest fronting you, and so you will know.”

The Devil said to him, “One more task I will give you. Fell the whole forest, and stack it by tomorrow.”

He went to the maiden, and the maiden asked him, “Have you a father and mother?”

“I have.”

“Ah! let us fly, for my father will kill you. Take the whetstone, and take a comb; I have a towel.”

They set out and fled. The Devil arose, saw that the forest is not felled. “Go and call him to me.”

Ho, ho! there is neither the lad nor the maiden.

“Hah! go after them.”

They went, and the two saw them coming after them. And she said to him, “I will make myself a field of wheat, and do you make yourself to be looking at the wheat, and they will ask you, ‘Didn’t a maiden and a lad pass by?’”

“Bah! they passed when I was sowing the wheat.”

“Go back, for we shall not catch them.”

They went back. “We did not catch them.”

“On the road did not you find anything?”

“We found a field of wheat and a peasant.”

“Go back, for the field of wheat was she, and he was the peasant.”

They saw them again. She said to the lad, "I will turn a somersault and make myself an old church, and do you turn a somersault and make yourself an old monk, and they will ask you, 'Didn't a maiden and a lad pass by?'"

"They passed just as I began the church."

"Ah! go back, for we shall never catch them. When he was beginning the church! It is old now."

"Did you not find anything on the road?"

"We found a church and a monk."

"The church was she, and he was the monk. I will go myself."

They saw him. "Now my father is coming; we shall not escape. Fling the comb."

He flung the comb, and it became a forest from earth to sky. Whilst he was gnawing away the forest, they got a long way ahead. He was catching them up; she cried, "Fling the whetstone."

He flung the whetstone, and it became a rock of stone from earth even to heaven. Whilst he, the Devil, was making a hole in the rock, they got a long way ahead. Again he is catching them up.

"Father is catching us up." She flung the towel, and it became a great water and a mill.

They halted on the bank.

And he cried, "Harlot, how did you cross the water?"

"Fasten the millstone to your neck, and jump into the water."

He fastened the millstone to his neck, and jumped into the water, and was choked.

She said, "Fear not, for my father is choked."

He went to his father with the maiden. His father rejoiced; but the maiden said to the lad, "I will go to expiate my father's sins, for I choked him. I go for three years."

She took her ring, and broke it in half, and gave one half to him. "Keep that, and do not lose it." She departed for three years.

He forgot her, and made preparations to marry. He was holding his wedding. She came, and he knew her not.

"Drink a glass of brandy."

She drank out of his glass, and flung the half of the ring into the glass, and gave it to him. When he drank, he got it into his mouth, and he took it in his hand and looked at it, and he took his half and fitted the two together. "Hah! this is my wife; this one saved me from death."

And he quashed that marriage, and took his first wife and lived with her.

THE VAMPIRE

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Groome, Francis Hindes. *Gypsy Folk Tales*. London: Hurst & Blackett, 1899, 14–18.

Date: Unavailable

Original Source: Roma (Romania)

National Origin: Roma

Author Francis Hinds Groom glosses the word “bee” as “a species of assembly very popular in Wallachia (modern Romania). If any family has some particular work to do on any particular account, they invite the neighborhood to come and work for them. When the work is completed there is high glee, singing and dancing, and story-telling” (14). Certain elements of the tale are cross-culturally distributed. For example, it is noted that the “old woman saw he [Nita’s suitor] had cock’s feet.” Unusual feet (cock’s feet, hooves, feet turned backwards, for example) are commonly marks of demons, revenants, or other malevolent supernaturals in the world’s folk traditions. The ability to produce a gaze that injures or kills, as the tale notes “Then he looked,” is most familiar as the concept of the “evil eye.” The act of transformation by performing inverted acts (in this case, the flower turning into a girl by turning a somersault) is found in both initiation and in the shape-shifting acts of witches and werewolves, especially in Eastern Europe.

There was an old woman in a village. And grown-up maidens met and span, and made a “bee.” And the young sparks [“eligible” young men] came and laid hold of the girls, and pulled them about and kissed them. But one girl had no sweetheart to lay hold of her and kiss her. And she was a strapping lass, the daughter of wealthy peasants; but three whole days no one came near her. And she looked at the big girls, her comrades. And no one troubled himself with her. Yet she was a pretty girl, a prettier was not to be found.

Then came a fine young spark, and took her in his arms and kissed her, and stayed with her until cock-crow. And when the cock crowed at dawn he departed. The old woman saw he had cock’s feet. And she kept looking at the lad’s feet, and she said, “Nita, my lass, did you see anything?”

“I didn’t notice.”

“Then didn’t I see he had cock’s feet?”

“Let be, mother, I didn’t see it.”

And the girl went home and slept; and she arose and went off to the spinning, where many more girls were holding a “bee.” And the young sparks came, and took each one his sweetheart. And they kissed them, and stayed a while, and went home. And the girl’s handsome young spark came and took her in his arms and kissed her and pulled her about, and stayed with her till midnight. And the cock began to crow. The young spark heard the cock crowing, and

departed. What said the old woman who was in the hut, “Nita, did you notice that he had horse’s hoofs?”

“And if he had, I didn’t see.”

Then the girl departed to her home. And she slept and arose in the morning, and did her work that she had to do. And night came, and she took her spindle and went to the old woman in the hut. And the other girls came, and the young sparks came, and each laid hold of his sweetheart. But the pretty girl looks at them. Then the young sparks gave over and departed home. And only the girl remained neither a long time nor a short time. Then came the girl’s young spark.

Then what will the girl do? She took heed, and stuck a needle and thread in his back. And he departed when the cock crew, and she knew not where he had gone to. Then the girl arose in the morning and took the thread, and followed up the thread, and saw him in a grave where he was sitting. Then the girl trembled and went back home.

At night the young spark that was in the grave came to the old woman’s house and saw that the girl was not there. He asked the old woman, “Where’s Nita?”

“She has not come.”

Then he went to Nita’s house, where she lived, and called, “Nita, are you at home?”

Nita answered, [“I am”].

“Tell me what you saw when you came to the church. For if you don’t tell me I will kill your father.”

“I didn’t see anything.”

Then he looked, and he killed her father, and departed to his grave.

Next night he came back. “Nita, tell me what you saw.”

“I didn’t see anything.”

“Tell me, or I will kill your mother, as I killed your father. Tell me what you saw.”

“I didn’t see anything.”

Then he killed her mother, and departed to his grave. Then the girl arose in the morning. And she had twelve servants. And she said to them, “See, I have much money and many oxen and many sheep; and they shall come to the twelve of you as a gift, for I shall die tonight. And it will fare ill with you if you bury me not in the forest at the foot of an apple tree.”

At night came the young spark from the grave and asked, “Nita, are you at home?”

“I am.”

“Tell me, Nita, what you saw three days ago, or I will kill you, as I killed your parents.”

“I have nothing to tell you.”

Then he took and killed her. Then, casting a look, he departed to his grave.

So the servants, when they arose in the morning, found Nita dead. The servants took her and laid her out decently. They sat and made a hole in the wall and passed her through the hole, and carried her, as she had bidden, and buried her in the forest by the apple tree.

And half a year passed by, and a prince went to go and course hares with greyhounds and other dogs. And he went to hunt, and the hounds ranged the forest and came to the maiden's grave. And a flower grew out of it, the like of which for beauty there was not in the whole kingdom. So the hounds came on her monument, where she was buried, and they began to bark and scratched at the maiden's grave. Then the prince took and called the dogs with his horn, and the dogs came not. The prince said, "Go quickly thither."

Four huntsmen arose and came and saw the flower burning like a candle. They returned to the prince, and he asked them, "What is it?"

"It is a flower, the like was never seen."

Then the lad heard, and came to the maiden's grave, and saw the flower and plucked it. And he came home and showed it to his father and mother. Then he took and put it in a vase at his bed-head where he slept. Then the flower arose from the vase and turned a somersault, and became a full-grown maiden. And she took the lad and kissed him, and bit him and pulled him about, and slept with him in her arms, and put her hand under his head. And he knew it not. When the dawn came she became a flower again.

In the morning the lad rose up sick, and complained to his father and mother, "Mammy, my shoulders hurt me, and my head hurts me."

His mother went and brought a wise woman and tended him. He asked for something to eat and drink. And he waited a bit, and then went to his business that he had to do. And he went home again at night. And he ate and drank and lay down on his couch, and sleep seized him. Then the flower arose and again became a full-grown maiden. And she took him again in her arms, and slept with him, and sat with him in her arms. And he slept. And she went back to the vase. And he arose, and his bones hurt him, and he told his mother and his father.

Then his father said to his wife, "It began with the coming of the flower. Something must be the matter, for the boy is quite ill. Let us watch tonight, and post ourselves on one side, and see who comes to our son."

Night came, and the prince laid himself in his bed to sleep. Then the maiden arose from the vase, and became there was never anything more fair—as burns the flame of a candle. And his mother and his father, the king, saw the maiden, and laid hands on her. Then the prince arose out of his sleep, and saw the maiden that she was fair. Then he took her in his arms and kissed her, and lay down in his bed, slept till day.

And they made a marriage and ate and drank. The folk marveled, for a being so fair as that maiden was not to be found in all the realm. And he dwelt with her half a year, and she bore a golden boy, two apples in his hand. And it pleased the prince well.

Then her old sweetheart heard it, the vampire who had made love to her, and had killed her. He arose and came to her and asked her, "Nita, tell me, what did you see me doing?"

"I didn't see anything."

"Tell me truly, or I will kill your child, your little boy, as I killed your father and mother. Tell me truly."

"I have nothing to tell you."

And he killed her boy. And she arose and carried him to the church and buried him.

At night the vampire came again and asked her, "Tell me, Nita, what you saw."

"I didn't see anything."

"Tell me, or I will kill the lord whom you have wedded."

Then Nita arose and said, "It shall not happen that you kill my lord. God send you burst."

The vampire heard what Nita said, and burst. Ay, he died, and burst for very rage. In the morning Nita arose and saw the floor swimming two hand's-breadth deep in blood. Then Nita bade her father-in-law take out the vampire's heart with all speed. Her father-in-law, the king, hearkened, and opened him and took out his heart, and gave it into Nita's hand. And she went to the grave of her boy and dug the boy up, applied the heart, and the boy arose. And Nita went to her father and to her mother, and anointed them with the blood, and they arose. Then, looking on them, Nita told all the troubles she had borne, and what she had suffered at the hands of the vampire.

ROMANIA

MANOLI

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Mawr, Mrs. E. B. "Manoli: A Legend of the 13th Century." *Roumanian Fairy Tales and Legends*. London: H. K. Lewis, 1881, 97–105.

Date: Unavailable

Original Source: Romania

National Origin: Romania

Radu the Black, according to Romanian tradition, was the founder of Wallachia (one of the three major principalities that along with Transylvania and Moldavia constitute modern Romania) in the late thirteenth century. The **legend** of Manoli maintains a dual focus on the dedication to the fidelity of the tragic lovers Manoli and Flora and the ruthless duplicity of Radu.

A brilliant cortège winds along the banks of a river; a crowd of powerful nobles respectfully surround their Chief, whose great height and manly expression, seem to indicate him worthy of being the Commander amongst them all. In his immediate neighborhood, nine artisans may be observed; they also yield obedience to a Chief, noted for his superior experience and knowledge.

The river below, the river whose waters roll through a country so wild, here shooting up into cascades, and there falling back murmuring on the pointed rocks worn and sharpened by their beatings; lower down, flowing evenly along—sometimes subdued, sometimes in revolt—emblematic alike of life, will, impatience, and human resignation; this river is the Argis, and the country through which it flows is called *Lesser Wallachia*.

The Chief whom we see surrounded by his nobles, mounted on their splendid horses, with gorgeous trappings, is *Radu the Black*, Prince of the country, and founder of the Principality.

This brilliant cavalcade is in reality a pious pilgrimage, in search of a suitable site, to be consecrated by the erection of a Monastery, unequalled for beauty of position, and richness of design.

This is also why, amongst so illustrious a company are to be found the nine masons, headed by the master hand of all the masons—the renowned *Manoli*.

A young shepherd comes in sight, playing on his flute, a *Doïna* (National wail) of his country.

“Shepherd,” cried Radu, stopping him, “thou must often with thy flocks have explored the banks of the Argis; tell me, hast thou never seen a wall hidden amongst the green brushwood of the nut trees?”

“Yes, Prince, I have seen a wall which was begun to be built, and my dogs howled at it, as if they had been howling for a death.”

“Right,” said the Prince, with satisfaction, “it is there that our Monastery shall rise”; then calling Manoli and his masons, “Listen,” he said, “I wish you to build me an edifice, so noble and beautiful, that its equal shall never be found, neither in the present nor in the future. I promise to you all, treasures, titles, and estates, which shall make you equals with the Boyards [nobles] of my court. I promise, on the honor of a Prince, and you know you may rely on my promises. Wait I don’t thank me yet! My word is sacred, and again I say, what I promise I always carry out; if you *do not succeed*, I will have you walled up living, in the foundation of the Monastery, which shall be built by cleverer hands than yours.”

Terror, and ambition, two great incentives for all men! So the masons get quickly to work; they measure the ground; they dig the soil; and soon a majestic wall begins to rise. Satisfied with their work, and certain of success, they fall asleep and dream of the lands, and treasures, and titles, which their skillfulness is to bring them.

Morning comes, the golden rays of the sun dart over the waters of the Argis; the cool morning air, and the desire to continue their work—only interrupted for needful repose—arouse the masons; they seize their tools, and walk quickly to recommence their labors; but, alas! that wall, those solid foundations, all, all, during the night, had crumbled and disappeared.

Instead of sitting down and complaining, the masons recommenced their task; they think of the Prince, and of his oath, and they Work and tremble, and tremble and work. At length, at the end of the day—a long summer’s day, they have repaired the terrible disaster, and when evening comes, they again seek repose.

Again morning, and again sunlight reveals the crumbled walls!

In despair, the workmen recommence; for has not the Prince sworn his terrible oath? But when night comes, they no longer dream of treasures and titles, but of the terrible chastisement which awaits them.

When they again awake, all is ruin, and this happens four times to them.

The fourth night, notwithstanding his anxiety, Manoli sleeps, and he dreams a strange and terrible dream. He awakes, and calls his comrades. "Listen," he says, "to what has been told to me while I was asleep. A voice whispered to me that all our work will be in vain; that each night, the work of each day will be destroyed, unless we wall up, living, in our edifice, the first woman, be she wife or sister, who in the early morning comes to bring our food."

The prospects of the honors which the construction of the Monastery was to bring them; the riches and titles with which their work was to be recompensed—decided the workmen, and they each swore a solemn oath, to wall up while living, be she sister, or wife, the first woman who should come amongst them next day.

Morning arrived, clear and pure, as if it would not light on one despairing heart. Manoli anxiously looks into the distance, his oath strikes him with terror; but he is ambitious, and why should he refuse to sacrifice some one, to insure his own safety, and the success of his labor? Looking at it in this light, the engagement becomes a sacred duty; it is humane even, to secure the safety of several, at the price of one, and Manoli begins to regard the proceeding as heroic. Yet he is restless, and gets on a hillock to look around him, to see still further; he even mounts a scaffolding, and his eyes scan fearfully the surrounding plain.

Distant, far distant, he sees something advancing. Who comes in such haste? In truth, it is a woman, careful and diligent, bringing the early morning meal to the man she loves. See, with light quick step, she comes nearer and nearer, she is recognized. It is the beautiful Flora, the wife of Manoli. Everything disappears from Manoli's sight, the sun is dark, and swollen; instead of light, there is the darkness of the tomb.

He falls on his knees, and, joining his hands, calls, "Oh, Lord, God; open the cataracts of Heaven, shower on the earth torrents of water, turn the streamlets into lakes, oh, Merciful Savior, that my wife may not be able reach me here!" Did God listen to his prayer? Shortly clouds covered the sky, and heavy rain began to fall, but Flora continued her way. Was not her husband waiting? What mattered these obstacles?

Against stream and torrent, she still advances, and Manoli watching her, again kneels, joins his hands, and cries, "Oh, my God, send a wind to twist and tear up the plantains, to overthrow the mountains, and to force my wife to return to the valley!"

The wind rises and whistles in the forest, uproots the plantains, to overthrow mountains, yet Flora only hastens more quickly to reach her husband and at length arrives at the fatal spot. Then the masons tremble at the sight, but tremble with joy.

While Manoli, grief stricken, takes his wife in his arms and says, "Listen, my dear, to amuse ourselves, we are going to pretend to build you up in these walls, it will be I, who will place you there, so remain very quiet."

Flora laughingly consented, for she loved Manoli and had full confidence in him. Manoli sighed heavily, but though sighing, began to build the wall, which already reaches to the ankles of Flora—to her knees—higher and higher. Flora laughs no longer, but, seized with terror, cries, “Manoli, oh, Manoli, leave off this cruel joking, the wall presses on me, it will crush me.”

Manoli is silent, but works on, the wall still rises, and is now level with her waist.

Again she cries, “Manoli! Manoli! stay your hand; soon I shall no longer see you; I love you so; you are sacrificing me, and yet you say you love me too.”

Manoli works on, and to console himself, thinks, “Shortly I shall hear no longer her complaining; suffering is not so bad, when one does not witness it.”

The work proceeds—the wall rises even to her eye-brows—at length she is hid from sight entirely. Manoli moves away, but still hears the faint moaning voice of his wife. “Manoli, Manoli, the wall is pressing on me, and my life is dying out.”

The day was magnificent on which the Prince came to kneel and give thanks at the beautiful Monastery the best proportioned, and the finest in style and grandeur which had ever been built. The master masons, Manoli amongst them, swelling with pride, waited, at the top of the scaffolding, the visit, the praise, and the recompense of Raddi their Prince.

“Well, is it true,” said the Prince, “that you could never imagine, or construct, an edifice more splendid than this? Can no other Sovereign signalize his power and his wealth by a finer building than this?”

The masons inflamed with pride and emulation, cried with a triumphant air, “Know, Prince, that we are the Master Masons, whose science and skill is unrivalled: we might be able, even, to create a greater work than this.”

The Prince turned aside with a wicked smile.

“Wait up here for me,” he said, “I will go down to fully examine the edifice from below, and I will come up again and make my observations to you.” Hurrying from the scaffolding, he gave a quick sign, and command to the people below, who speedily knocked away, props, poles, and planks, and the masons fell from the great height to an instantaneous death. Manoli, alone caught at a projecting carving, and passing from one to another, would soon have reached the ground, but there came from the wall which he was touching, the cry, “Manoli, Manoli, the cold wall is pressing on me, my body is crushed, and my life is dying out.” At this sound, Manoli, turns giddy and faint, and falls to the earth.

On the spot where he fell, there springs a fountain of clear sparkling water, but its taste is salt and bitter, as the tears which are shed in Romania, even now, when any one relates the sorrows and the sacrifice of Flora, the wife of Manoli.

THE FISHERMAN AND THE BOYARD'S DAUGHTER

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Mawr, Mrs. E. B. *Roumanian Fairy Tales and Legends*. London: H. K. Lewis, 1881, 90–96.

Date: Unavailable

Original Source: Romania

National Origin: Romania

From the mid-fifteenth century to the early twentieth century the noble class (the “boyards” or “boyars”) were the prevailing political force in Romania, particularly in the principalities of Wallachia and Moldavia. The pre-twentieth century nonboyard audiences of the preceding tale would find considerable satisfaction in the fisherman’s gaining the advantage of his noble wife by means of “The Silence Wager” (AT 1351). For the upper class, it undoubtedly functioned as a **cautionary tale**.

Once on a time there was a good-looking fisherman, young and intelligent. Every time that he went through the court of a certain Boyard [nobleman], Mariola, the daughter of this Boyard, would call him to her, purchase his fish, and give him money to ten times its value. So much money did he gain in this way, that he began to be indifferent to its possession and yet each day Mariola would still be a customer.

On one of these occasions, while she was handing him the money, she touched his hand and gave it a squeeze; the fisherman grew as red as a beet-root, and looked down, but regaining confidence, began to give himself airs, and twirl his moustache.

Gradually they entered into conversation, and she learned that he was unmarried, and became altogether charmed with the replies she drew from him. Although he was but a fisherman, she fell desperately in love with him, and giving him a purse of gold, she bade him go and buy clothing suitable for a gentleman, and then to come back to her to shew her if they were becoming to him.

After having bought a *caftan*, and other things fit for a real Boyard, he dressed himself in them, and came to exhibit himself to Mariola. She almost failed to recognize him, for both his carriage and dress were far above one of his station, and she could no longer restrain the love which she had for him in her heart, and gave him to understand that he might be her husband if he wished. The fisherman hesitated, knowing that he was no match for a Boyard’s daughter; but finding that she still insisted, with much bashfulness, and twirling his *caciula* (cap) from hand to hand, he eventually consented.

On hearing this astounding intelligence, the Boyard was very angry, saying that a fisherman was no match for his child; but as he loved Mariola so tenderly, and seeing that her heart was set upon the marriage, eventually he consented to her prayer.

Mariola again gave a purse of gold to her intended, bidding him buy wedding garments and all that was necessary. Shortly he presented himself, clad in a rich suit embroidered thickly with gold; Mariola conducted him to her father's presence, and they were at once affianced. Not many days after this, the wedding took place, and they took their seats at the banquet given in honor of the occasion.

There was a rule in those days, that the newly married pair should each eat from one lightly boiled egg; the fisherman cut a thin slice of bread, and was going to dip it into the egg, when Mariola caught his arm, saying, "No! I must eat of it first; I am a Boyard's daughter, and you are only a fisherman."

No reply did he make, but rising quietly from the table, quitted the banquet hall, to the astonishment of many of the guests, who did not know that he had been a fisherman.

The bride was very troubled at the mistake she had made, and sat biting her lips with dismay and chagrin. Being unable to support her position, she withdrew to her bedroom, and locked herself in.

All night long sleep would not come to her, and she could only think of her absent bridegroom. At early morning she went to her father to demand permission to go in search of her husband. Her father tried to dissuade her from taking such a step, but in vain, and she set off on her errand.

She traversed the town, the country, villages, country again—again villages; until at length, in one of these small villages, she saw him meanly dressed, and acting as servant at a wayside inn. Approaching him quickly, she began to address him, but he would not appear to know her, and continued his occupation. She entreated him only to speak one word to her, but he only shrugged his shoulders, and turned away his head.

The master of the inn seeing this interruption, called, "How is it that you interfere with my servant, and prevent his working? Don't you see that he is dumb? If you are as respectable as your appearance would show, I advise you to go away and leave him alone."

"He is not dumb," cried she, "he is my husband, and left me for a simple misunderstanding."

The villagers, who had collected around, were astonished at what she said, for she did not look like one who would be poking fun at them.

The innkeeper was also incredible, saying, that a man who was able to speak, would not remain a whole week without uttering a word. In truth, all around took him to be a mute, and used to converse with him by signs. He had already gained their goodwill, by his usefulness and good temper.

Mariola seeing that no one would believe her story, offered to make a bet, that in three days she would make her husband speak, if she were allowed always to be at his side; that if she did not succeed she would consent to be hung. This bet was accepted and legalized by the Prefect of the village.

The following day was to be the first of the trial the fisherman at the beginning of this, knew nothing of the bet, though later on, he got a whisper of it.

Mariola was constantly entreating for one little word. "My darling," she said, "I have been very wrong; I married you because I loved you, I bind myself never again, in all our life-time, to commit such a fault; soften your heart and speak one word to me." Yet no answer—only a shrug of the shoulders, as if he did not understand what she was saying.

The first day passed—came the second day; that passed too, and yet not a sound.

On the third day, Mariola began to tremble with fear, and followed the fisherman wherever he went, still begging him to speak only one word to her. He, on the other hand, fearing to be overcome by her tears, fled from her presence.

The three days have passed, all the villagers are taken up with the affair of the dumb servant at the inn, and the pretty looking girl, who had mistaken him for some one else, and brought this misfortune on herself.

The scaffold was erected, the people had congregated together to see the end of this tragedy; the officials were there, who, against their will, were bound to carry out the punishment.

The executioner approached Mariola, and led her to the scaffold, saying, that as she had failed to make the dumb man speak, she must accept the forfeit of her life.

Sighing, she turned her head once more towards her impassive husband, but seeing no yielding from him, she prepared herself to die. Loosening her hair, making the sign of the cross, she commended herself in prayer to God. All the spectators were moved at the sight. On the steps of the scaffold, with the Priest at her side, once more she turned towards the fisherman, crying, "My dear husband, pray come to my rescue, one word from you will suffice." Shaking his head, he looked in another direction.

With the noose in his hand, waited the executioner; soon he adjusted it round Mariola's pretty neck—one more minute and all would have been over; but the fisherman, stretching forth his hand, called—"Stop!"

All the people were struck with astonishment, and tears of joy rolled down their cheeks. The executioner withdrew the noose, and the fisherman, looking severely at Mariola, asked, "Will you again taunt me with being a fisherman?"

With great emotion she cried, "Forgive me, my dear husband, I own my fault, and will never wound your feelings again."

"Let her come down," said he, "for she is indeed my wife"; and taking her by the hand, he led her back to their home, where their life was one banquet of happiness and prosperity in future.

THE STORY OF THE SWAN MAIDEN AND THE KING

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Gaster, M. *Rumanian Bird and Beast Stories*. London: Folk-Lore Society, 1915, 249–254.

Date: Unavailable

Original Source: Romania

National Origin: Romania

The following **ordinary folktale** embeds the **tale type** “The Singing Bone” (AT 780) within the framework of “The Swan Maiden” (AT 400). As noted previously (for example, “The Three Lemons,” page 130), a gypsy appears as a malevolent **stock figure**. In addition, “The Story of the Swan Maiden and the King” provides another instance of the Romanian belief in transformation by means of turning somersaults (discussed in the introduction to “The Vampire,” page 173).

Once upon a time a king went out hunting, and after he had been hunting in the forest for a long time without finding anything, he found himself suddenly in an open plain, in which there was a huge lake, and in the midst of the lake he saw there a bird swimming about, the like of which he had never seen before. It was a swan.

Drawing his bow, he wanted to shoot it. To his surprise it spoke to him in a human voice, and said, “Do not kill me.”

So he tried his best to catch it, and succeeded. Pleased with the capture of the bird, he carried it home alive, and gave it to the cook to kill it to make a meal of it for him. The cook was a Gypsy. She whetted her knife and went to the bird to cut its throat, when, to her astonishment, the bird turned three somersaults, and there stood before her a most beautiful maiden, more beautiful than she had ever seen before. So she ran to the king and told him what had happened.

The king, who first thought that the cook was trying to play some trickery with him, did not listen to her, but when she persisted in her tale, the king, driven by curiosity, went into the kitchen, and there he saw a girl more beautiful than any that he had ever yet set his eyes upon. He asked her who she was, and she said she was the swan who was swimming on the lake, that she had willfully gone away from her mother, who lived in the land of fairies, and that she had left two sisters behind. So the king took her into the palace and married her.

The Gypsy, who was a pretty wench, had thought that the king would marry her, and when she saw what had happened, she was very angry. But she

managed to conceal her anger, and tried to be kind to the new queen, biding her time all the while.

The king and queen lived on for a while in complete happiness, and after a time a child was born unto her.

It so happened that the king had to go on a long journey, leaving the wife and child in the care of the Gypsy. One day the Gypsy came to the queen, and said to her, "Why do you always sit in the palace? Come, let us walk a little in the garden, to hear the birds singing, and to see the beautiful flowers."

The queen, who had no suspicion, took the advice of the Gypsy, and went with her for a walk into the garden. In the middle of the garden there was a deep well, and the Gypsy said artfully to the young queen, "Just bend over the well, and look into the water below, and see whether your face has remained so beautiful as it was on the first day when you turned into a maiden from being a swan."

The queen bent over the well to look down into the depths, and that was what the Gypsy was waiting for, for no sooner did the queen bend over the well, than, getting hold of her by her legs, she threw her down head foremost into the well and drowned her.

When the king came home and did not find the queen, he asked what had happened, and where she was. The Gypsy, who had meanwhile taken charge of the child, and looked after it very carefully, said to the king that the young queen, pining for her old home, had turned again into a swan and flown away.

The king was deeply grieved when he heard this, but believing what the Gypsy had told him, he thought that nothing could be done, and resigned himself to the loss of his wife. The Gypsy woman looked after the child with great care, hoping thereby that she might win the king's love, and that he would marry her. A month, a year passed, and nothing was heard of the wife. And the king, seeing the apparent affection of the Gypsy for the child, decided at last to marry her, and fixed the day of the wedding.

Out of the fountain into which the queen had been thrown, there grew a willow tree with three branches, one stem in the middle and two branching out right and left. Not far from the garden there lived a man who had a large flock of sheep. One day he sent his boy to lead the sheep to the field. On his way the boy passed the king's garden with the well in the middle of it.

As the boy had left his flute at home, when he saw the willow he thought he would cut one of the branches and make a flute. Going into the garden, he cut the middle stem, and made a flute of it. When he put it to his lips, the flute by itself began to play as follows, "O boy, do not blow too hard, for my heart is aching for my little babe which I left behind in the cradle, and to suckle at the black breast of a Gypsy."

When the boy heard what the flute was playing, not understanding what it meant, he was greatly astonished, and ran home to tell his father what had

happened with the flute. The father, angry that he had left the sheep alone, scolded him, and took away the flute. Then he tried to see whether the boy had told the truth. As soon as he put it to his mouth the flute started playing the same tune as when the boy had tried to play it. The father said nothing, and wondering at the meaning of the words he hid the flute away in a cupboard.

When the king's wedding day drew near, all the musicians of the kingdom were invited to come and play at the banquet. Some of them passed the old man's house, and hearing from them that they were going to play at the king's banquet, he remembered the marvelous flute, and asked whether he could not go also, as he could play the flute so wonderfully well. His son—the young boy—had meanwhile gone into the garden in the hope of getting another flute, as the willow had three branches. So he cut one of the branches and made a flute of it. Now this flute did not play at all.

When the old man came to the palace, there was much rejoicing and singing. At last his turn came to play. As soon as he put the flute to his lips, the flute sang, "O man, do not blow so hard, for my heart aches for my little babe left in the cradle to be suckled by a black Gypsy."

The Gypsy, who was the king's bride and sat at the head of the table, at once understood the saying of the flute, although she did not know what the flute had to do with the queen whom she had killed.

The king, who marveled greatly at the flute and at the tune which it was singing, took a gold piece and gave it to the man for the flute, and when he started blowing it, the flute began to sing, "O my dear husband, do not blow so hard, for my heart aches for our little babe whom I left in the cradle to be suckled by the black Gypsy. Quickly, quickly, do away with this cruel Gypsy, as otherwise you will lose your wife."

The guests who were present marveled at the song, and no one understood its meaning. The Gypsy, however, who understood full well what it meant, turning to the king, said, "Illustrious king, do not blow this flute and make yourself ridiculous before your guests. Throw it into the fire."

But the king, who felt offended by the words of the Gypsy, made her take up the flute and blow. With great difficulty she submitted to the order of the king, and she was quite justified in refusing to play it, for no sooner had she put the flute to her lips when it sang, "You enemy of mine, do not blow hard, for my heart aches for my little babe left in the cradle to be suckled by you, you evil-minded Gypsy. You have thrown me into the well, and there put an end to my life, but God had pity on me, and he has preserved me to be again the true wife of this illustrious king."

Furious at these words, the Gypsy threw the flute away with so much force that she thought it would break into thousands of splinters. But it was not to be as she thought, for by this very throw the flute was changed into a beautiful woman, more beautiful, indeed, than any had ever seen before. She was the very queen whom the Gypsy had thrown into the well.

When the king saw her, he embraced her and kissed her, and asked her where she had been such a long time. She told him that she had slept at the bottom of the well, into which she had been thrown by the Gypsy, who had hoped to become the queen, and this would have come to pass had it not been for the boy cutting a flute out of the stem of the willow tree. "And now, punish the Gypsy as she deserves, otherwise your wife must leave you."

When the king heard these words, he called the boy and asked him whether he had cut himself a flute from the stem of the willow tree which had grown out of the well in the garden. "It is so, O illustrious king," said the boy, "and may I be forgiven for the audacity of going into the king's garden. I went and cut for myself a flute from the stem of the willow tree, and when I began to blow it, it played, 'Do not blow so hard,' O boy, for my heart is aching within me, for my little babe which I left behind in the cradle, and to suckle at the black breast of a Gypsy."

Then he told him he had gone back to his father, who instead of praising him for the marvelous flute, gave him a good shaking. He had then gone a second time into the garden, and had cut off one of the branches to make a flute, but this did not play like the first one. The king gave the boy a very rich gift, and he ordered the Gypsy to be killed.

Some time afterwards, the queen came to the king and asked leave to go to her mother to tell her all that had happened to her, and to say good-bye forever now, as she henceforth would live among human beings. The king reluctantly gave way. She then made three somersaults, and again became a swan, as she had been when the king found her for the first time on the waters of the lake.

Spreading her wings she flew far away until she reached the house of her mother, who was quite alone. Her two sisters were not there. They had left her some time ago and no one knew whither they had gone. The young queen did not go into the house. She was probably afraid lest her mother would not let her go back again, so she settled on the roof, and there she sang, "Remain in health, good mother mine, as the joy is no longer granted you to have me with you in your house, for you will only see me again when I lose my kingdom, dear mother mine, not before, and not till then."

And without waiting for the answer of her mother she returned back again to her husband. Sitting on the window sill, she sang again, "Rise up, O husband, open the doors, wake up the servants and let them be a witness of my faithfulness to you, for since I have married you I have left my mother, and my sisters have gone away from me, and from a swan I have become a true wife to live in happiness with you. Henceforth I shall no longer be a swan, but you must take care of me that I do not go hence from you. I do not know whether my fate will be a better one by being a queen in this world. O sweet water, how I long to bathe in you! And my white feathers, they will belong to my sisters. Since I am to leave them forever, and my mother with them, O Lord, what have I done? Shall I be able to live upon the earth, and shall I keep the kingdom? Thou, O

Lord, O merciful, hearken unto me and grant that this kingdom may not be in vain.”

And turning again head over heels, she became a woman as before, and entering the palace she lived there with her husband—the king—and if they have not died since, they are still alive.

THE TWELVE-HEADED GRIFFIN

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Mawr, Mrs. E. B. *Roumanian Fairy Tales and Legends*. London: H. K. Lewis, 1881, 48–57.

Date: Unavailable

Original Source: Romania

National Origin: Romania

The classic folktale plot labeled as “The Dragon Slayer” (AT 300) provides the core for “The Twelve-Headed Griffin.” The monster defeated by Theodor is called a griffin, a mythical beast with head and wings of an eagle and the body of a lion, only in the title. In the narrative itself, reference is made only to a monster. The bull is not a common animal helper in other **variants** of this **tale type**, but the “evil gypsy” is a cliché in the Eastern European folktale corpus.

Once upon a time there lived a King and Queen whose greatest blessing from God was an only child of fifteen, named Theodor.

This boy from his childhood had learnt to ride, and to shoot with the bow, and had become a great proficient in both arts.

One day while practicing archery, one of his arrows shot out of sight. The boy having marked the direction which it took, went to his father to request his swiftest horse, and money to go in search of his arrow.

His father gave him money, and permission to take the best horse in his stables.

With joy the boy mounted swiftly, and set off at a gallop.

After riding long and far, so far that the sun was disappearing from the horizon, he found himself in a vast prairie full of flowers. Stopping his horse, standing up in his stirrups, and shading his eyes with his hand, he perceived his arrow sticking in the ground. Dismounting he went quickly to the spot, seized the arrow with both hands, and with difficulty drew it out, leaving a great hole in the earth where it had penetrated. On looking down this hole, he saw at the bottom of it, a fine bull, and on the bull’s back, a sword and a letter.

In great surprise at all these strange surroundings, he opened the letter and read, "Whomsoever will take this bull and will give it three pecks of wheat and a gallon of wine, and continue to do so daily, the bull will have power to bring back to life the man who does this, no matter how many times he may die. This sword will turn into stone any living or inanimate object."

Leading the bull, and strapping on the sword, the boy went on his way.

Towards night he reached a city and asked food and shelter of an old woman whom he met with. For himself a draught of water, for the bull a gallon of wine. The old woman fed him and his animals, and gave the requisite wine to the bull. *Water* she said she had none, for in the whole city there was but one fountain, and that at the outskirts of the town; and that this fountain was guarded by a twelve-headed monster. Whomsoever needed water must sacrifice a young maiden to his appetite.

She told him that the next day it was the King's turn to give his daughter, and that this said King had made a proclamation to the effect, that whosoever would kill this monster and save his daughter, immense riches, and the hand of his daughter in marriage would be the reward.

The youth hearing all this, requested the old woman to awake him very early next morning, and to give him her water-jars, saying he would fill them without giving anything to the monster. She promised this, and he soon fell into a sound sleep.

According to promise the next morning she aroused him, and taking his sword, his bow and arrows, and the water-jars, set off for the well. Arrived there, he found the King's daughter weeping, and waiting to be eaten by the monster. Said the youth to her, "I have come to deliver you from the fangs of the monster, on one condition, that is, that you let me sit down by your side, lay my head on your lap, and if I should fall asleep, not to awake me until the monster shews himself."

The young girl acquiesced with joy, and sitting down beside her, the youth laid his head on her lap, and soon fell asleep. When the monster made his appearance, the girl was so overwhelmed with terror that she could not awake the youth, but cried so plentifully that the scalding tears fell on his face. Jumping up, he saw the Monster before him. Charging his bow, he placed himself in front of the maiden; the monster seeing this, exclaimed, "Stand aside, and let me take my right," but the youth refused, it the same time drew the string of his bow and sent an arrow into the head which was stretched forth for his destruction.

The monster writhed with pain, and projected a *second* head, and then began a terrible strife. The youth's only defense was his courage and his bow, but the monster had his twelve heads, and his poisoned breath.

All that long summer's day they fought until evening; as night fell the boy could hardly stand from fatigue, had broken his bow, and had but one arrow in his quiver. But, on the other hand, the monster remained with only one head left out of the twelve.

At length, the youth took from the maiden's head, a long mesh of her rich hair—she, more dead than alive from terror, and with it bound his broken bow together, and the fight recommenced. Eventually the youth was victorious, but fell down faint from loss of blood.

While both these young creatures lay fainting by the well side, there came up a Tzigan [Rom, gypsy], in the service of the King, to fetch water. Seeing the monster annihilated, he sought the young Princess, and finding that she was not dead, but only in a swoon, he threw water over her, and she quickly returned to her senses. The Tzigan enquired of her who had killed the monster, and the maiden pointed to the apparently dead Theodor. Quick as thought the Tzigan seized the youth's sword, and cut his body into hundreds of pieces.

Then, collecting the twelve heads and tongues of the monster, and charging the maiden not to tell to the King who had performed this mighty deed, he accompanied her to her father's palace.

Without the knowledge of the Tzigan, the maid let fall a ring, and a handkerchief, beside the remains of the slaughtered youth.

When the King saw his daughter approach, he was overwhelmed with joy, and demanded the name of her deliverer. "I, mighty King," replied the Tzigan, with pride.

"Can this be true?" enquired the King.

"It is true," said his daughter, tremulously.

Though the King was sorely grieved that the deliverer of his child was a gypsy, and a slave, yet he felt bound to fulfill the promise that she should be given him to wife.

II

While Theodor was lying hewed in morsels, by the side of the well, the old woman, his hostess, went to her stable to feed and give drink to the Bull. On seeing her, he refused all nourishment, telling her that "he was thirsting after water, and not after wine, and that she must lead him to the public well; as now that the monster existed no longer, all the world could drink water in peace." He bade her take with them a lump of salt, and soon they arrived at the well.

When the woman saw the morsels of what had once been the brave youth, she began to cry aloud; but the bull said to her, "Don't distress yourself in that way, but do as I tell you: take up piece by piece, limb by limb, and place them together, as they were in life." Obeying him, she put the different members once more together again. The bull licked well the lump of salt, then breathed over, and licked the youth. Wherever his tongue passed over, the marks of the sword disappeared, and when he once more breathed into his face, Theodor opened his eyes and exclaimed, "Have I slept long?"

"You would have slept longer," said the woman, "if your bull had not brought you to life."

All was as a dream to him, and it was only after the bull had explained all that had occurred, that he understood why the maiden was no longer by his side.

On looking around him he saw the ring and the handkerchief which she had dropped; he took possession of them, and they returned to the old woman's dwelling.

The following day the King caused a proclamation to be issued to the effect that the nuptials of his beloved daughter, with Burcea, the Tzigan, would take place in eight days. Burcea her deliverer, inviting the neighboring Kings and Nobles to come and do honor to the ceremony.

He sent for the court tailor, and commanded for his future son-in-law, clothing befitting his new rank. He ordered his treasurer to pay to Burcea, any sum of money which he might demand.

On the appointed day, the guests were assembled in the Imperial Palace; but all were melancholy, and angry, that an ugly, uneducated gipsy, should have gained such a high-born, lovely bride.

Amongst them all, the King was the most grieved, with the exception, perhaps, of his daughter, who reproached herself for not having told the truth to the King, her father.

Burcea, the Tzigan, alone, was joyful.

In those days, it was the custom at the marriage of a King's daughter, for each subject to offer a present, according to his means; so Theodor begged the old woman to make him a cake, which she should take to the palace as his offering. She willingly agreed, and began to make the cake. When it was ready for the oven, the youth slipped the ring into the middle of the cake, and covered the paste over it.

The cake was baked, and wrapped in a clean napkin, and taken by the old woman to the gate of the palace. Her dress was so old and so patched, that the servants forbade her to enter; but the Princess looking from the window, gave orders that she should be admitted, and brought into her presence.

This was quickly done, and the cake was offered with humble wishes for her future happiness. The Princess took the cake and broke it; imagine her surprise when she found her ring in the middle of it! "Where is the person who put this ring here?" asked she of the old woman.

"It must be the handsome boy that is at my cottage," said she, "he who was hewn to pieces by your slave, and was restored to life and health by his friendly bull."

"Take this purse of money for yourself," said the Princess, "and return quickly to your home, tell my deliverer to come here, for I am awaiting him."

The woman sped swiftly on her errand. Full of joy, the youth seized his sword, and taking the handkerchief, set off for the Imperial palace.

On reaching the reception ball, he saw a crowd of Nobles, and in their center, Burcea the Tzigan, swelling with pride, and thinking himself as powerful as a Grand Vizier.

The youth passed speedily on, until he reached an apartment where the Princess was reclining. Seeing him, she sprang up, and flung herself into his arms, crying out, "this is my deliverer, this is my deliverer."

A crowd quickly surrounded them, and Theodor, in a clear voice, said, "It is true that I am the deliverer of this maiden, who would have been eaten by the monster of the well. I killed him, and she was free; but faint from fatigue and loss of blood, when a slave of the King's, coming to the well, and seeing me in this state, hewed me to pieces with my own sword, and threatened the maiden with death, if she avowed the truth. At the same time he possessed himself with the proofs of the monster's destruction. Had it not been for a bull, endowed with a miraculous power of bringing the dead to life, I should now be ready for my grave. Seeing that many wise men are here, and knowing that there is wisdom in numbers, I entreat all present to judge and condemn the one who is guilty."

"To death! to death!" cried the crowd.

The Emperor, calling his servants, ordered them to bring two horses from his stables, one bred in the mountains, the other bred in the plains, and to tie the limbs of Burcea, the Tzigan, to these two animals; his order was obeyed, the horses were let loose, and setting off in a gallop in different directions, the body of the slave was torn limb from limb.

And now, indeed, there was a real rejoicing; but the marriage, and the court festivities were all postponed, until the arrival of the parents of Theodor, who embraced him, and wept for joy and pride, that he had so nobly distinguished himself.

They built for him, and his young bride, a magnificent palace; at the entrance to the courtyard, there was also a well of purest water, apparently guarded and watched over by a gigantic bull in marble.

RUSSIA

THE ROGUISH PEASANT

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Hodgetts, Edith M. S. *Tales and Legends from the Land of the Tzar: A Collection of Russian Stories*. New York: Charles E. Merrill and Company, 1892, 256–261.

Date: Unavailable

Original Source: Russia

National Origin: Russia

Spanning Eurasia from Poland in the west to the Bering Sea in the east and from Nordic Finland and Norway to East Asian China and Mongolia, Russia is the largest country in the world. In addition, the prevailing social structure through the Tsarist period of Russian history led to a cultural context that was congenial to the preservation and performance of folklore in the village context. These two factors encouraged the development of a diverse repertoire that persisted into the twentieth century.

Hodgetts, who was born and raised in Russia, does not give a specific source for this tale. In her introduction she states, with reference to her sources, “Some of these tales were dictated in the original Russian at school, others were related to me by my nurse and other servants of my father’s household, while some are translations which I have made from various collections of Russian stories current among the people” (vii). The following narrative is an example of the well-known **trickster** tale “The Student from Paradise” (AT 1540) and also the Egyptian tale “Gifts for My Son Mohammed” (Volume 1, page 3). The final episode in which the trickster asks his victim to guard an alleged bird under a hat is a **variant** of “Holding Down the Hat” (AT 1528).

Once upon a time there lived in a Russian village an old peasant woman who had two sons. One, however, died; and the other was from home, but was soon expected to return to his native village.

One evening, as the peasant woman was working in her little hut, a soldier walked in at the open door. "Good day, little mother!" he said. "Can I stay here the night?"

"Yes, certainly, with pleasure, little father. But whence come you, and who are you?"

"I am nobody in particular, little mother. I am an emigrant for the next world."

"Ah! My precious soul! One of my sons died a little while ago. Did you happen to come across him?"

"Why, yes, of course! We lived in the same sphere."

"No, really! You don't mean it?"

"He feeds and looks after the young cranes in the next world."

"Oh, my precious soul! But where did he get them?"

"Where did he get them! Why, the young cranes roam about among the sweet-briar!"

"How did he look? What clothes had he on?"

"Clothes! He was all in tatters, and a pair of wings."

"Poor fellow! Well, I have got about forty yards of gray cloth and a ten-ruble note. Take them, good man, and give them to my son."

"With pleasure, little mother."

Next morning the old woman gave the soldier the cloth and the money, and wished him a safe journey back. And she also begged him to come again soon and tell her how her son was getting on.

She waited and waited for many a week, but the soldier did not return. At last the day arrived when her other son was expected home.

"How are you, mother mine?" he exclaimed, coming into the hut and embracing his mother. "Have you any news?"

"Yes, my boy. Not very long ago an emigrant from the other world came to stay the night here, and he brought some news of your brother, for they both lived in the same sphere. But he said that the poor fellow had nothing but a pair of wings, so I gave him forty yards of cloth and ten rubles."

"Good gracious, mother, you have given away everything we had. And for what? Just because that man was artful enough to tell you a lot of lies. It really is most astonishing how confiding some people are! I think I will go into the wide world and tell a lot of lies, and see whether, after cheating everybody, I become a very rich man or not. If I succeed, I shall come home again, and then we can live happily together, and have food and money in plenty ever after."

Next day the son went off to try his luck. He went on and on until he came to an estate belonging to a rich Russian *barin* or gentleman. He walked up to the lordly mansion and saw, in a garden near the house, a large pig with a

number of little ones walking about. A thought struck him, and he went down on his knees before the pigs, and began making most polite bows to them.

Now the mistress of the house, who was looking out of one of the windows, saw the performance, and was greatly amused. "Go," she said to one of her maids, "and ask the mujik [peasant] what he is bowing for."

The maid went up to the peasant, saying, "Little mujik, tell me why you are on your knees before the pigs, and why you are bowing to them? My lady has sent me to ask."

"Tell your mistress, my little dear, that yonder pig is my wife's sister, and my son is going to be married tomorrow, so I am asking her and her young ones to come to the wedding. That is all. And she has consented, on condition that your lady allows them. So go and ask your mistress whether she will let them come with me."

The girl burst out laughing, and went straight to her mistress, who also began laughing heartily when she heard all the peasant had said. "What a donkey!" she cried. "Fancy asking the pigs to his son's wedding! Well, never mind. Let all his friends have a good laugh at him. Yes, he may take the pigs. But first dress them up in my *shuba* (fur coat), and let the coachman get my own little carriage and team ready, so that the pigs need not go to the wedding on foot."

When the carriage was ready, they dressed the pig up in the lady's fur coat, and placed it in the carriage with the young ones, and gave the reins to the peasant, who at once rode away homewards.

Now the master of the house, who was away shooting at the time, returned home a few minutes after the peasant had left. His wife ran out to meet him, laughing.

"I am so glad you have returned, my dear!" she said, "as I am longing to have someone to laugh with. Such a funny thing happened while you were away. A peasant came here and began kneeling and bowing before our pigs. He declared that one of them was his wife's sister, and he was asking her and the little ones to come to his son's wedding!"

"Yes," the husband replied. "and did you let her go?"

"Of course I did. I even had the pig dressed in my best *shuba*, and had her put in my own little carriage and team, and let the peasant drive it himself. I think it was nothing but right for me to do so. The peasant was so very polite to the pigs. What do you think, my dear?"

"What did I think? Well this: that the peasant was an ass, and you were another!"

And the good man, like the rest of his sex, thought it was a splendid opportunity for flying into a rage. He told his wife that she had been cheated, and then rushing out of the house, he flung himself upon his horse and galloped off after the peasant, who, when he heard that he was being pursued, conveyed the carriage and team into a dark forest hard by, and then going back, took off his

cap, seated himself near the entrance of the forest, put the cap beside him on the ground, and waited until the horseman came up to him.

“Hark you, little father!” cried the *barin*, “have you seen a peasant drive this way with a carriage and team and a number of pigs in it?”

“See him? I should rather think I did! He rode past a long time ago.”

“In which direction did he drive? How had I better go? Do you think I am likely to overtake him?”

“Yes, you could overtake him, I daresay. But the way he went by has many a turning, and you are sure to lose yourself. Is the road quite unknown to you?”

“Yes, little brother. I think, if you don’t mind, it would be better for you to go in search of him and bring him back to me, for you seem to know the way so well!”

“No, brother, I could not possibly, for I have a falcon under my cap here and must watch it.”

“I can do that for you.”

“No, you are sure to let him out, and the bird is very valuable. Besides, if I lost it my master would never forgive me.”

“But how much is it worth?”

“Three hundred rubles, I should think.”

“Very well then, if I lose the bird I will pay the money.”

“No, brother, if you really want me to go after the peasant, you had better give me the money now, for heaven knows what might happen afterwards. You might lose the bird, and then take your departure too, and I should never see either the falcon or the money!”

“Oh, you incredulous man! Here, take the three hundred rubles anyhow!”

The peasant took the money, and at the *barin*’s wish mounted his horse and rode off into the forest, leaving the *barin* to watch over the empty cap.

He waited and waited, but the peasant did not return, which he thought looked rather queer. The sun began to set. Still no peasant.

“Stop!” thought the *barin*. “Let me look and see whether there really is a falcon under that cap. If there is, then the peasant may possibly return. If not, well, then it is of no use waiting here and wasting my time.” He peeped under the cap, but no falcon was to be seen.

“Ah, the wretch!” he laughed. “I do believe that he was the very same man who cheated my wife out of her carriage and team, her *shuba*, and the pigs.”

He spat on the ground three times with vexation, and returned home to his wife penitent. Meanwhile our friend the peasant had long since got safely back to his mother with all his treasures. “Well, mother mine!” he cried, “this world of ours can certainly boast of some very good-natured fools. Just look, without any reason whatever, they gave me three horses, a carriage, three hundred rubles, and a pig with her little ones. Now we can live happily for some time at least, thanks to the stupidity of these people. It really is wonderful.

THE SILVER PLATE AND THE TRANSPARENT APPLE

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Hodgetts, Edith M. S. *Tales and Legends from the Land of the Tzar: A Collection of Russian Stories*. New York: Charles E. Merrill and Company, 1892, 14–20.

Date: Unavailable

Original Source: Russia

National Origin: Russia

In this unusual version of “The Singing Bone” (AT 780), a younger sibling suffers the usual fate of mistreatment and misjudgment. “Simpleton” is revealed as far from simple, though perhaps too forgiving by normal standards.

There lived once a peasant with his wife and three daughters. Two of these girls were not particularly beautiful, while the third was sweetly pretty. However, as she happened to be a very good girl, as well as simple in her tastes, she was nicknamed Simpleton, and all who knew her called her by that name, though she was in reality far from being one.

Her sisters thought of nothing but dress and jewelry. The consequence was that they did not agree with their younger sister. They teased her, mimicked her, and made her do all the hard work. Yet Simpleton never said a word of complaint, but was ready to do anything. She fed the cows and the poultry. If anyone asked her to bring anything, she brought it in a moment. In fact, she was a most obliging young person.

One day the peasant had to go to a big fair to sell hay, so he asked his two eldest daughters what he should bring them.

“Bring me some red fustian to make myself a sarafan [coat without sleeves],” said the eldest.

“Buy me some yards of nankeen to make myself a dress,” said the second.

Simpleton meanwhile sat in a corner looking at her sisters with great eagerness. Though she was a simpleton, her father found it hard to go away without asking her what she would like him to bring her, so he asked her too.

“Bring me, dear father,” said she, “a silver plate and a transparent apple to roll about on it.”

The father was rather astonished, but he said nothing and left.

“Whatever made you ask for such rubbish?” asked her sisters laughing.

“You will see for yourselves when my father brings them,” said Simpleton, as she left the room.

The peasant, after having sold his hay, bought his daughters the things they had asked for, and drove home. The two elder girls were delighted with their

presents and laughed at Simpleton, waiting to see what she intended doing with the silver plate and transparent apple. Simpleton did not eat the apple, as they at first thought she would, but sat in a corner pronouncing these words, “Roll away, apple, roll away, on this silver plate. Show me different towns, fields, and woods, the seas, the heights of the hills, and the heavens in all their glory.” Away rolled the apple, and on the plate became visible, towns, one after another. Ships were seen sailing on the seas. Green fields were seen. The heights of the hills were shown. The beauty of the heavens and the setting of the sun were all displayed most wonderfully.

The sisters looked on in amazement. They longed to have it for themselves and wondered how they could best get it from Simpleton, for she took such great care of it, and would take nothing in exchange.

At last one day the wicked sisters said coaxingly to Simpleton, “Come with us, dear, into the forest and help us pick strawberries.”

Simpleton gave the plate and the apple to her father to take care of and joined her sisters. When they arrived at the forest they set to work picking wild strawberries. After some time the two elder sisters suddenly came upon a spade lying on the grass. They seized it, and while Simpleton was not looking they gave her a heavy blow with the spade. She turned ghastly pale, and fell dead on the ground.

They took her up quickly, buried her under a birch tree, and went home late to their parents, saying, “Simpleton has run away from us. We looked for her everywhere but cannot find her. She must have been eaten up by some wild beasts while we were not looking.”

The father, who really had a little love for the girl, became very sad, and actually cried. He took the plate and apple and locked them both up carefully in a glass case. The sisters also cried very much and pretended to be very sorry, though the real reason was that they found out that they were not likely to have the transparent apple and plate after all, but would have to do all the hard work themselves.

One day a shepherd, who was minding a flock of sheep, happened to lose one, and went into the forest to look for it, when suddenly he came upon a hillock under a birch tree, round which grew a number of red and blue flowers, and among them a reed.

The young shepherd cut off the reed and made himself a pipe. But what was his astonishment when the moment he put the pipe to his mouth, it began to play by itself, saying, “Play, play, little pipe. Comfort my dear parents, and my sisters, who so cruelly misused me, killed me, and buried me for the sake of my silver plate and transparent apple.”

The shepherd ran into the village greatly alarmed, and a crowd of people soon collected round him asking him what had happened. The shepherd again put the pipe to his mouth, and again the pipe began to play of itself.

“Who killed whom, and where, and how?” asked all the people together, crowding round.

“Good people,” answered the shepherd, “I know no more than you do. All I know is that I lost one of my sheep and went in search of it, when I suddenly came upon a hillock under a birch tree with flowers round it, and among them was a reed, which I cut off and made into a pipe, and the moment I put the thing into my mouth it began to play of itself, and pronounce the words which you have just heard.”

It so happened that Simpleton’s father and sisters were among the crowd and heard what the shepherd said.

“Let me try your pipe,” said the father, taking it and putting it into his mouth.

And immediately it began to repeat the words, “Play, play, little pipe. Comfort my dear parents, and my sisters, who misused, killed, and buried me for the sake of the silver plate and transparent apple.”

The peasant made the shepherd take him to the hillock at once. When they got to it they began to dig open the hillock, where they found the dead body of the unfortunate girl. The father fell on his knees before it and tried to bring her back to life, but all in vain.

The people again began asking who it was that killed and buried her, whereupon the pipe replied, “My sisters took me into the forest and slew me for the silver plate and transparent apple. If you want to wake me from this sound slumber, you must bring me the water of life from the royal fountain.”

The two miserable sisters turned pale and wanted to run away, whereupon the people seized them, tied them together, and marched them off to a dark cell, where they locked them up until the king should pronounce judgment on them.

The peasant went to the palace and was brought before the king’s son, and falling upon his knees before the prince, he related the whole story. Whereupon the king’s son told him to take as much of the water of life from the royal fountain as he pleased. “When your daughter is well, bring her to me,” continued the prince, “and also her evil-minded sisters.”

The peasant was delighted. He thanked the young prince and ran to the forest with the water of life. After he had sprinkled the body several times with the water, his daughter woke up and stood before him, prettier than ever. They embraced each other tenderly, while the people rejoiced and congratulated the happy man.

Next morning the peasant went with his three daughters to the palace and was brought before the king’s son.

The young prince, when he beheld Simpleton, was greatly struck with her beauty and asked her at once to show him the silver plate and transparent apple.

“What would your highness like to see?” asked the girl, bringing forward her treasures. “Would you like to know whether your kingdom is in good order, or if your ships are sailing, or whether there is any curious comet in the heavens?”

“Anything you like, sweet maiden.”

Away rolled the apple round about the plate, on which became visible soldiers of different arms, with muskets and flags, drawn up in battle array. The

apple rolled on, and waves rose, and ships were seen sailing about like swans, while flags waved in the air. On rolled the apple, and on the plate the glory of the heavens was displayed. The sun, moon, and stars, and various comets were seen.

The king's son was greatly astonished and offered to buy the plate and apple, but Simpleton fell on her knees before him, exclaiming, "Take my silver plate and my apple. I want no money and no gifts for them, if you will only promise to forgive my sisters."

The young prince was so moved by her pretty face and her tears that he at once forgave the two wicked girls. Simpleton was so overjoyed that she threw her arms round their necks and tenderly embraced them.

The king's son took Simpleton by the hand and said, "Sweet maiden, I am so struck by the great kindness you have shown your sisters after their cruel treatment of you, that I have decided (provided you agree to it) to have you for my wife, and you shall be known henceforth as the Benevolent Queen."

"Your highness does me great honor," said Simpleton, blushing. "But it lies in my parents' hand. If they do not object, I will marry you."

It is needless to say that neither parent objected, but gave their consent and blessing.

"I have one more request to ask your highness," said Simpleton, "and that is to let my parents and sisters live with us in the palace."

The young prince made no objection whatever to this proposal (though most probably he felt sorry for it afterwards; however, the story does not say anything about that). The sisters threw themselves at Simpleton's feet, exclaiming that they did not deserve such kindness after all that they had said and done to her.

Next day the marriage was celebrated, and crowds of people ran about everywhere crying out, "Long live our king and queen!"

From that day Simpleton was no more, but the Benevolent Queen reigned in her stead.

IVANOUSHKA THE SIMPLETON

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: De Blumentahal, Verra Xenophontovna Kalamatiano. *Folktales from the Russian*. Great Neck, NY: Core Collection Books, Inc., 1903, 77–106.

Date: Unavailable

Original Source: Russia

National Origin: Russia

The following tale exemplifies structural pattern of threes common to the **ordinary folktale** (or **märchen**): three brothers and tasks in multiples of three, for example. Also typical is the fact that the youngest,

least-promising brother triumphs in the end. The plot of the narrative is patterned on “The Princess on the Glass Mountain” (AT 530) and, as a concluding episode, “The Pig with the Golden Bristles” (AT 530A).

In a kingdom far away from our country, there was a town over which ruled the Tsar Pea with his Tsaritzza Carrot. He had many wise statesmen, wealthy princes, strong, powerful warriors, and also simple soldiers, a hundred thousand, less one man. In that town lived all kinds of people: honest, bearded merchants, keen and open-handed rascals, German tradesmen, lovely maidens, Russian drunkards; and in the suburbs all around, the peasants tilled the soil, sowed the wheat, ground the flour, traded in the markets, and spent the money in drink.

In one of the suburbs there was a poor hut where an old man lived with his three sons, Thomas, Pakhom, and Ivan. The old man was not only clever, he was wise. He had happened once to have a chat with the devil. They talked together while the old man treated him to a tumbler of wine and got out of the devil many great secrets. Soon after this the peasant began to perform such marvelous acts that the neighbors called him a sorcerer, a magician, and even supposed that the devil was his kin.

Yes, it is true that the old man performed great marvels. Were you longing for love, go to him, bow to the old man, and he would give you some strange root, and the sweetheart would be yours. If there is a theft, again to him with the tale. The old man conjures over some water, takes an officer along straight to the thief, and your lost is found; only take care that the officer steals it not.

Indeed the old man was very wise; but his children were not his equals. Two of them were almost as clever. They were married and had children, but Ivan, the youngest, was single. No one cared much for him because he was rather a fool, could not count one, two, three, and only drank, or ate, or slept, or lay around. Why care for such a person? Every one knows life for some is brighter than for others. But Ivan was good-hearted and quiet. Ask of him a belt, he will give a kaftan also; take his mittens, he certainly would want to have you take his cap with them. And that is why all liked Ivan, and usually called him Ivanoushka the Simpleton; though the name means fool, at the same time it carries the idea of a kind heart.

Our old man lived on with his sons until finally his hour came to die. He called his three sons and said to them, “Dear children of mine, my dying hour is at hand and ye must fulfill my will. Every one of you come to my grave and spend one night with me; thou, Tom, the first night; thou, Pakhom, the second night; and thou, Ivanoushka the Simpleton, the third.” Two of the brothers, as clever people, promised their father to do according to his bidding, but the Simpleton did not even promise; he only scratched his head.

The old man died and was buried. During the celebration the family and guests had plenty of pancakes to eat and plenty of whisky to wash them down. Now you remember that on the first night Thomas was to go to the grave; but he was too lazy, or possibly afraid, so he said to the Simpleton, "I must be up very early tomorrow morning; I have to thresh; go thou for me to our father's grave."

"All right," answered Ivanoushka the Simpleton. He took a slice of black rye bread, went to the grave, stretched himself out, and soon began to snore.

The church clock struck midnight; the wind roared, the owl cried in the trees, the grave opened and the old man came out and asked, "Who is there?"

"I," answered Ivanoushka.

"Well, my dear son, I will reward thee for thine obedience," said the father.

Lo! The cocks crowed and the old man dropped into the grave. The Simpleton arrived home and went to the warm stove.

"What happened?" asked the brothers.

"Nothing," he answered. "I slept the whole night and am hungry now."

The second night it was Pakhom's turn to go to his father's grave. He thought it over and said to the Simpleton, "Tomorrow is a busy day with me. Go in my place to our father's grave."

"All right," answered Ivanoushka. He took along with him a piece of fish pie, went to the grave and slept. Midnight approached, the wind roared, crows came flying, the grave opened and the old man came out.

"Who is there?" he asked.

"I," answered his son the Simpleton.

"Well, my beloved son, I will not forget thine obedience," said the old man.

The cocks crowed and the old man dropped into his grave. Ivanoushka the Simpleton came home, went to sleep on the warm stove, and in the morning his brothers asked, "What happened?"

"Nothing," answered Ivanoushka.

On the third night the brothers said to Ivan the Simpleton, "It is thy turn to go to the grave of our father. The father's will should be done."

"All right," answered Ivanoushka. He took some cookies, put on his sheepskin, and arrived at the grave.

At midnight his father came out. "Who is there?" he asked.

"I," answered Ivanoushka. "Well," said the old father, "my obedient son, thou shalt be rewarded"; and the old man shouted with a mighty voice:

"Arise, bay horse—thou wind-swift steed, Appear before me in my need; Stand tip as in the storm the weed!"

And lo!—Ivanoushka the Simpleton beheld a horse running, the earth trembling under his hoofs, his eyes like stars, and out of his mouth and ears smoke coming in a cloud. The horse approached and stood before the old man.

"What is thy wish?" he asked with a man's voice.

The old man crawled into his left ear, washed and adorned himself, and jumped out of his right ear as a young, brave fellow never seen before.

“Now listen attentively,” he said. “To thee, my son, I give this horse. And thou, my faithful horse and friend, serve my son as thou hast served me.”

Hardly had the old man pronounced these words when the first cock crew and the sorcerer dropped into his grave. Our Simpleton went quietly back home, stretched himself under the icons, and his snoring was heard far around.

“What happened?” the brothers again asked.

But the Simpleton did not even answer; he only waved his hand.

The three brothers continued to live their usual life, the two with cleverness and the younger with foolishness. They lived a day in and an equal day out. But one morning there came quite a different day from all others. They learned that big men were going all over the country with trumpets and players; that those men announced everywhere the will of the Tsar, and the Tsar’s will was this: The Tsar Pea and the Tsaritzza Carrot had an only daughter, the Tsarevna [Princess] Baktriana, heiress to the throne. She was such a beautiful maiden that the sun blushed when she looked at it, and the moon, altogether too bashful, covered itself from her eyes. Tsar and Tsaritzza had a hard time to decide to whom they should give their daughter for a wife. It must be a man who could be a proper ruler over the country, a brave warrior on the battlefield, a wise judge in the council, an adviser to the Tsar, and a suitable heir after his death. They also wanted a bridegroom who was young, brave, and handsome, and they wanted him to be in love with their Tsarevna. That would have been easy enough, but the trouble was that the beautiful Tsarevna loved no one. Sometimes the Tsar mentioned to her this or that one. Always the same answer, “I do not love him.” The Tsaritzza tried, too, with no better result; “I do not like him.”

A day came when the Tsar Pea and his Tsaritzza Carrot seriously addressed their daughter on the subject of marriage and said, “Our beloved child, our very beautiful Tsarevna Baktriana, it is time for thee to choose a bridegroom. Envoys of all descriptions, from kings and tzars and princes, have worn our threshold, drunk dry all the cellars, and thou hast not yet found any one according to thy heart’s wish.”

The Tsarevna answered, “Sovereign, and thou, Tsaritzza, my dear mother, I feel sorry for you, and my wish is to obey your desire. So let fate decide who is destined to become my husband. I ask you to build a hall, a high hall with thirty-two circles, and above those circles a window. I will sit at that window and do you order all kinds of people, tsars, kings, tsarovitchi, korolevitchi, brave warriors, and handsome fellows, to come. The one who will jump through the thirty-two circles, reach my window and exchange with me golden rings, he it will be who is destined to become my husband, son and heir to you.”

The Tsar and Tsaritzza listened attentively to the words of their bright Tsarevna, and finally they said, “According to thy wish shall it be done.”

In no time the hall was ready, a very high hall adorned with Venetian velvets, with pearls for tassels, with golden designs, and thirty-two circles on both

sides of the window high above. Envoys went to the different kings and sovereigns, pigeons flew with orders to the subjects to gather the proud and the humble into the town of the Tsar Pea and his Tsaritzza Carrot. It was announced everywhere that the one who could jump through the circles, reach the window and exchange golden rings with the Tsarevna Baktriana, that man would be the lucky one, notwithstanding his rank—tsar or free Cossack, king or warrior, tsarevitch, koro-levitch, or fellow without any kinfolk or country.

The great day arrived. Crowds pressed to the field where stood the newly built hall, brilliant as a star. Up high at the window the tsarevna was sitting, adorned with precious stones, clad in velvet and pearls. The people below were roaring like an ocean. The Tzar with his Tzaritzza was sitting upon a throne. Around them were boyars, warriors, and counselors. The suitors on horseback, proud, handsome, and brave, whistle and ride round about, but looking at the high window their hearts drop. There were already several fellows who had tried. Each would take a long start, balance himself, spring, and fall back like a stone, a laughing stock for the witnesses.

The brothers of Ivanoushka the Simpleton were preparing themselves to go to the field also.

The Simpleton said to them, "Take me along with you."

"Thou fool," laughed the brothers; "stay at home and watch the chickens."

"All right," he answered, went to the chicken yard and lay down. But as soon as the brothers were away, our Ivanoushka the Simpleton walked to the wide fields and shouted with a mighty voice, "Arise, bay horse—they wind-swift steed, Appear before me in my need; Stand up as in the storm the weed!"

The glorious horse came running. Flames shone out of his eyes; out of his nostrils smoke came in clouds, and the horse asked with a man's voice, "What is thy wish?"

Ivanoushka the Simpleton crawled into the horse's left ear, transformed himself and reappeared at the right ear, such a handsome fellow that in no book is there written any description of him; no one has ever seen such a fellow. He jumped onto the horse and touched his iron sides with a silk whip. The horse became impatient, lifted himself above the ground, higher and higher above the dark woods below the traveling clouds. He swam over the large rivers, jumped over the small ones, as well as over hills and mountains. Ivanoushka the Simpleton arrived at the hall of the Tsarevna Baktriana, flew up like a hawk, passed through thirty circles, could not reach the last two, and went away like a whirlwind.

The people were shouting, "Take hold of him! Take hold of him!" The Tsar jumped to his feet, the Tsaritzza screamed. Every one was roaring in amazement.

The brothers of Ivanoushka came home and there was but one subject of conversation—what a splendid fellow they had seen! What a wonderful start to pass through the thirty circles! "Brothers, that fellow was I," said Ivanoushka the Simpleton, who had long since arrived.

“Keep still and do not fool us,” answered the brothers.

The next day the two brothers were going again to the tsarski show and Ivanoushka the Simpleton said again, “Take me along with you.”

“For thee, fool, this is thy place. Be quiet at home and scare sparrows from the pea field instead of the scarecrow.”

“All right,” answered the Simpleton, and he went to the field and began to scare the sparrows. But as soon as the brothers left home, Ivanoushka started to the wide field and shouted out loud with a mighty voice, “Arise, bay horse—thou wind-swift steed, Appear before me in my need; Stand up as in the storm the weed!”

And here came the horse, the earth trembling under his hoofs, the sparks flying around, his eyes like flames, and out of his nostrils smoke curling up. “For what dost thou wish me?” Ivanoushka the Simpleton crawled into the left ear of the horse, and when he appeared out of the right ear, oh, my! what a fellow he was! Even in fairy tales there are never such handsome fellows, to say nothing of everyday life.

Ivanoushka lifted himself on the iron back of his horse and touched him with a strong whip. The noble horse grew angry, made a jump, and went higher than the dark woods, a little below the traveling clouds. One jump, one mile is behind; a second jump, a river is behind; and a third jump and they were at the hall. Then the horse, with Ivanoushka on his back, flew like an eagle, high up into the air, passed the thirty-first circle, failed to reach the last one, and swept away like the wind.

The people shouted, “Take hold of him! Take hold of him!” The Tsar jumped to his feet, the Tsaritzza screamed, the princes and boyars opened their mouths.

The brothers of Ivanoushka the Simpleton came home. They were wondering at the fellow. Yes, an amazing fellow indeed! One circle only was unreached.

“Brothers, that fellow over there was I,” said Ivanoushka to them.

“Keep still in thy own place, thou fool,” was their sneering answer.

The third day the brothers were going again to the strange entertainment of the Tsar, and again Ivanoushka the Simpleton said to them, “Take me along with you.”

“Fool,” they laughed, “there is food to be given to the hogs; better go to them.”

“All right,” the younger brother answered, and quietly went to the back yard and gave food to the hogs. But as soon as his brothers had left home our Ivanoushka the Simpleton hurried to the wide field and shouted out loud, “Arise, bay horse—thou wind-swift steed, Appear before me in my need; Stand up as in the storm the weed!”

At once the horse came running, the earth trembled; where he stepped there appeared ponds, where his hoofs touched there were lakes, out of his eyes shone flames, out of his ears smoke came like a cloud.

“For what dost thou wish me?” the horse asked with a man’s voice.

Ivanoushka the Simpleton crawled into his right ear and jumped out of his left one, and a handsome fellow he was. A young girl could not even imagine such a one. Ivanoushka struck his horse, pulled the bridle tight, and lo! he flew high up in the air. The wind was left behind and even the swallow, the sweet, winged passenger, must not aspire to do the same. Our hero flew like a cloud high up into the sky, his silver-chained mail rattling, his fair curls floating in the wind. He arrived at the Tsarevna’s high hall, struck his horse once more, and oh! how the wild horse did jump!

Look there! The fellow reaches all the circles; he is near the window; he presses the beautiful Tsarevna with his strong arms, kisses her on the sugar lips, exchanges golden rings, and like a storm sweeps through the fields. There, there, he is crushing every one on his way! And the Tsarevna? Well, she did not object. She even adorned his forehead with a diamond star.

The people roared, “Take hold of him!” But the fellow had already disappeared and no traces were left behind.

The Tsar Pea lost his royal dignity. The Tsaritzza Carrot screamed louder than ever and the wise counselors only shook their wise heads and remained silent.

The brothers came home talking and discussing the wonderful matter.

“Indeed,” they shook their heads; “only think of it! The fellow succeeded and our Tsarevna has a bridegroom. But who is he? Where is he?”

“Brothers, the fellow is I,” said Ivanoushka the Simpleton, smiling.

“Keep still, I and I—,” and the brothers almost slapped him.

The matter proved to be quite serious this time, and the Tsar and Tsaritzza issued an order to surround the town with armed men whose duty it was to let every one enter, but not a soul go out. Every one had to appear at the royal palace and show his forehead. From early in the morning the crowds were gathering around the palace. Each forehead was inspected, but there was no star on any. Dinner time was approaching and in the palace they even forgot to cover the oak tables with white spreads. The brothers of Ivanoushka had also to show their foreheads and the Simpleton said to them, “Take me along with you.”

“Thy place is right here,” they answered, jokingly. “But say, what is the matter with thy head that thou hast covered it with cloths? Did somebody strike thee?”

“No, nobody struck me. I, myself, struck the door with my forehead. The door remained all right, but on my forehead there is a knob.”

The brothers laughed and went. Soon after them Ivanoushka left home and went straight to the window of the Tsarevna, where she sat leaning on the window sill and looking for her betrothed.

“There is our man,” shouted the guards, when the Simpleton appeared among them.

“Show thy forehead. Hast thou the star?” and they laughed.

Ivanoushka the Simpleton gave no heed to their bidding, but refused. The guards were shouting at him and the Tsarevna heard the noise and ordered the fellow to her presence. There was nothing to be done but to take off the cloths.

Behold! the star was shining in the middle of his forehead. The Tsarevna took Ivanoushka by the hand, brought him before Tsar Pea, and said, "He it is, my Tsar and father, who is destined to become my groom, thy son-in-law and heir."

It was too late to object. The Tsar ordered preparations for the bridal festivities, and our Ivanoushka the Simpleton was wedded to the Tsarevna Baktriana. The Tsar, the Tsaritzza, the young bride and groom, and their guests, feasted three days. There was fine eating and generous drinking. There were all kinds of amusements also. The brothers of Ivanoushka were created governors and each one received a village and a house.

The story is told in no time, but to live a life requires time and patience. The brothers of Ivanoushka the Simpleton were clever men, we know, and as soon as they became rich every one understood it at once, and they themselves became quite sure about it and began to pride themselves, to boast, and to brag. The humble ones did not dare look toward their homes, and even the boyars had to take off their fur caps on their porches.

Once several boyars [nobles] came to Tsar Pea and said, "Great Tsar, the brothers of thy son-in-law are bragging around that they know the place where grows an apple tree with silver leaves and golden apples, and they want to bring this apple tree to thee."

The Tsar immediately called the brothers before him and bade them bring at once the wonderful tree, the apple tree with silver leaves and golden apples. The brothers had ever so many excuses, but the Tsar would have his way. They were given fine horses out of the royal stables and went on their errand. Our friend, Ivanoushka the Simpleton, found somewhere a lame old horse, jumped on his back facing the tail, and also went. He went to the wide field, grasped the lame horse by the tail, threw him off roughly, and shouted, "You crows and magpies, come, come! There is lunch prepared for you."

This done he ordered his horse, his spirited courser, to appear, and as usual he crawled into one ear, jumped out the other ear and they went—where? Toward the east where grew the wonderful apple tree with silver leaves and golden apples. It grew near silver waters upon golden sand. When Ivanoushka reached the place he uprooted the tree and turned toward home. His ride was long and he felt tired. Before he arrived at his town Ivanoushka pitched his tent and lay down for a rest. Along the same road came his brothers. The two were proud no more, but rather depressed, not knowing what answer to give the Tsar. They perceived the tent with silver top and near by the wonderful apple tree. They came nearer and—"There is our Simpleton!" exclaimed the brothers. Then they awakened Ivanoushka and wanted to buy the apple tree. They were rich and offered three carts filled with silver.

“Well, brothers, this tree, this wonderful apple tree, is not for sale,” answered Ivanoushka, “but if you wish to obtain it you may. The price will not be too high, a toe from each right foot.”

The brothers thought the matter over and finally decided to give the desired price. Ivanoushka cut the toes off, gave them the apple tree, and the happy brothers brought it to the Tsar and there was no end to their bragging.

“Here, all-powerful Tsar,” they said. “We went far, and had many a trouble on our way, but thy wish is fulfilled.”

The Tsar Pea seemed pleased, ordered a feast, commanded tunes to be played and drums beaten, rewarded the two brothers of Ivanoushka the Simpleton, each one with a town, and praised them.

The boyars and warriors became furious.

“Why,” they said to the Tsar, “there is nothing wonderful in such an apple tree with golden apples and silver leaves. The brothers of thy son-in-law are bragging around that they will get thee a pig with golden bristles and silver tusks, and not alone the pig, but also her twelve little ones!”

The Tsar called the brothers before him and ordered them to bring the very pig with her golden bristles and silver tusks and her twelve little ones. The brothers’ excuses were not listened to and so they went. Once more the brothers were traveling on a difficult errand, looking for a golden-bristled pig with silver tusks and twelve little pigs.

At that time Ivanoushka the Simpleton made up his mind to take a trip somewhere. He put a saddle on a cow, jumped up on her back facing the tail, and left the town. He came to a field, grasped the cow by the horns, threw her far on the prairie and shouted, “Come, come, you gray wolves and red foxes! There is a dinner for you!”

Then he ordered his faithful horse, crawled into one ear, and jumped out of the other. Master and courser went on an errand, this time toward the south. One, two, three, and they were in dark woods. In these woods the wished-for pig was walking around, a golden-bristled pig with silver tusks. She was eating roots, and after her followed twelve little pigs.

Ivanoushka the Simpleton threw over the pig a silk rope with a running noose, gathered the little pigs into a basket and went home, but before he reached the town of the Tsar Pea he pitched a tent with a golden top and lay down for a rest. On the same road the brothers came along with gloomy faces, not knowing what to say to the Tsar. They saw the tent, and near by the very pig they were searching for, with golden bristles and silver tusks, was fastened with a silk rope; and in a basket were the twelve little pigs. The brothers looked into the tent. Ivanoushka again! They awakened him and wanted to trade for the pig; they were ready to give in exchange three carts loaded with precious stones.

“Brothers, my pig is not for trade,” said Ivanoushka, “but if you want her so much, well, one finger from each right hand will pay for her.”

The brothers thought over the case for a long while; they reasoned thus, “People live happily without brains, why not without fingers?”

So they allowed Ivanoushka to cut off their fingers, then took the pig to the Tsar, and their bragging had no end.

“Tsar Sovereign,” they said, “we went everywhere, beyond the blue sea, beyond the dark woods; we passed through deep sands, we suffered hunger and thirst; but thy wish is accomplished.”

The Tsar was glad to have such faithful servants. He gave a feast great among feasts, rewarded the brothers of Ivanoushka the Simpleton, created them big boyars and praised them.

The other boyars and different court people said to the Tsar, “There is nothing wonderful in such a pig. Golden bristles, silver tusks, yes, it is fine. But a pig remains a pig forever. The brothers of thy son-in-law are bragging now that they will steal for thee out of the stables of the fiery dragon a mare with golden mane and diamond hoofs.”

The Tsar at once called the brothers of Ivanoushka the Simpleton, and ordered the golden-maned mare with the diamond hoofs. The brothers swore that they never said such words, but the Tsar did not listen to their protests.

“Take as much gold as you want, take warriors as many as you wish, but bring me the beautiful mare with golden mane and diamond hoofs. If you do it my reward will be great; if not, your fate is to become peasants as before.”

The brothers went, two sad heroes. Their march was slow; where to go they did not know. Ivanoushka also jumped upon a stick and went leaping toward the field. Once in the wide, open field, he ordered his horse, crawled into one ear, came out of the other, and both started for a far-away country, for an island, a big island. On that island in an iron stable the fiery dragon was watchfully guarding his glory—the golden-maned mare with diamond hoofs, which was locked under seven locks behind seven heavy doors.

Our Ivanoushka journeyed and journeyed, how long we do not know, until at last he arrived at that island, struggled three days with the dragon and killed him on the fourth day. Then he began to tear down the locks. That took three days more. When he had done this he brought out the wonderful mare by the golden mane and turned homeward.

The road was long, and before he reached his town Ivanoushka, according to his habit, pitched his tent with a diamond top, and laid him down for rest. The brothers came along—gloomy they were, fearing the Tsar’s anger. Lo! they heard neighing; the earth trembled—it was the golden-maned mare! Though in the dusk of evening the brothers saw her golden mane shining like fire. They stopped, awakened Ivanoushka the Simpleton, and wanted to trade for the wonderful mare. They were willing to give him a bushel of precious stones each and promised even more.

Ivanoushka said, “Though my mare is not for trade, yet if you want her I’ll give her to you. And you, do you each give me your right ears.”

The brothers did not even argue, but let Ivanoushka cut off their ears, took hold of the bridle and went directly to the Tsar. They presented to him the golden-maned mare with diamond hoofs, and there was no end of bragging.

“We went beyond seas, beyond mountains,” the brothers said to the Tsar; “we fought the fiery dragon who bit off our ears and fingers; we had no fear, but one desire to serve thee faithfully; we shed our blood and lost our wealth.”

The Tsar Pea poured gold over them, created them the very highest men after himself, and planned such a feast that the royal cooks were tired out with cooking to feed all the people, and the cellars were fairly emptied.

The Tsar Pea was sitting on his throne, one brother on his right hand, the other brother on his left hand. The feast was going on; all seemed jolly, all were drinking, all were noisy as bees in a beehive. In the midst of it a young, brave fellow, Ivanoushka the Simpleton, entered the hall—the very fellow who had passed the thirty-two circles and reached the window of the beautiful Tsarevna Baktriana.

When the brothers noticed him, one almost choked himself with wine, the other was suffocating over a piece of swan. They looked at him, opened wide their eyes, and remained silent.

Ivanoushka the Simpleton bowed to his father-in-law and told the story as the story was. He told about the apple tree, the wonderful apple tree with silver leaves and golden apples; he told about the pig, the golden-bristled pig with silver tusks and her twelve little ones; and finally he told about the marvelous mare with a golden mane and diamond hoofs. He finished and laid out ears, fingers, and toes.

“It is the exchange I got,” said Ivanoushka.

Tsar Pea became furious, stamped his feet, ordered the two brothers to be driven away with brooms. One was sent to feed the pigs, another to watch the turkeys. The Tsar seated Ivanoushka beside himself, creating him the highest among the very high.

The feast lasted a very long time until all were tired of feasting.

Ivanoushka took control of the tsarstvo, ruling wisely and severely. After his father-in-law’s death he occupied his place. His subjects liked him; he had many children, and his beautiful Tsaritzka Baktriana remained beautiful forever.

TSAREVNA FROG

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: De Blumentahal, Verra Xenophontovna Kalamatiano. *Folktales from the Russian*. Great Neck, NY: Core Collection Books, Inc., 1903, 13–26.

Date: Unavailable

Original Source: Russia

National Origin: Russia

The following narrative combines the familiar theme of the bride trapped in a nonhuman form with the abducted princess and the external life token. Certain elements, such as a shape-shifter donning the skin of an animal to achieve transformation, are cross-culturally distributed. Others, however, such as the hut on chickens' feet as the habitation for Russian witches, are unique to the traditions of this region.

In an old, old Russian tsarstvo [the domain of a tsar], I do not know when, there lived a sovereign prince with the princess his wife. They had three sons, all of them young, and such brave fellows that no pen could describe them. The youngest had the name of Ivan Tsarevitch [Prince Ivan]. One day their father said to his sons, "My dear boys, take each of you an arrow, draw your strong bow and let your arrow fly; in whatever court it falls, in that court there will be a wife for you."

The arrow of the oldest Tsarevitch fell on a boyar-house [house of a noble] just in front of the terem where women live; the arrow of the second Tsarevitch flew to the red porch of a rich merchant, and on the porch there stood a sweet girl, the merchant's daughter. The youngest, the brave Tsarevitch Ivan, had the ill luck to send his arrow into the midst of a swamp, where it was caught by a croaking frog.

Ivan Tsarevitch came to his father, "How can I marry the frog?" complained the son. "Is she my equal? Certainly she is not."

"Never mind," replied his father, "you have to marry the frog, for such is evidently your destiny."

Thus the brothers were married: the oldest to a young boyarishnia, a nobleman's child; the second to the merchant's beautiful daughter, and the youngest, Tsarevitch Ivan, to a croaking frog.

After a while the sovereign prince called his three sons and said to them, "Have each of your wives bake a loaf of bread by tomorrow morning."

Ivan returned home. There was no smile on his face, and his brow was clouded.

"C-R-O-A-K! C-R-O-A-K! Dear husband of mine, Tsarevitch Ivan, why so sad?" gently asked the frog. "Was there anything disagreeable in the palace?"

"Disagreeable indeed," answered Ivan Tsarevitch; "the Tsar, my father, wants you to bake a loaf of white bread by tomorrow."

"Do not worry, Tsarevitch. Go to bed; the morning hour is a better adviser than the dark evening."

The Tsarevitch, taking his wife's advice, went to sleep. Then the frog threw off her frogskin and turned into a beautiful, sweet girl, Vassilissa by name. She now stepped out on the porch and called aloud, "Nurses and waitresses, come to me at once and prepare a loaf of white bread for tomorrow morning, a loaf exactly like those I used to eat in my royal father's palace."

In the morning Tsarevitch Ivan awoke with the crowing cocks, and you know the cocks and chickens are never late. Yet the loaf was already made, and so fine it was that nobody could even describe it, for only in fairyland one finds such marvelous loaves. It was adorned all about with pretty figures, with towns and fortresses on each side, and within it was white as snow and light as a feather.

The Tsar father was pleased and the Tsarevitch received his special thanks.

“Now there is another task,” said the Tsar smilingly. “Have each of your wives weave a rug by tomorrow.”

Tsarevitch Ivan came back to his home. There was no smile on his face and his brow was clouded.

“C-R-O-A-K! C-R-O-A-K! Dear Tsarevitch Ivan, my husband and master, why so troubled again? Was not father pleased?”

“How can I be otherwise? The Tsar, my father, has ordered a rug by tomorrow.”

“Do not worry, Tsarevitch. Go to bed; go to sleep. The morning hour will bring help.” Again the frog turned into Vassilissa, the wise maiden, and again she called aloud. “Dear nurses and faithful waitresses, come to me for new work. Weave a silk rug like the one I used to sit upon in the palace of the king, my father.”

Once said, quickly done. When the cocks began their early “cock-a-doodle-doo,” Tsarevitch Ivan awoke, and lo! there lay the most beautiful silk rug before him, a rug that no one could begin to describe. Threads of silver and gold were interwoven among bright-colored silken ones, and the rug was too beautiful for anything but to admire.

The Tsar father was pleased, thanked his son Ivan, and issued a new order. He now wished to see the three wives of his handsome sons, and they were to present their brides on the next day.

The Tsarevitch Ivan returned home. Cloudy was his brow, more cloudy than before.

“C-R-O-A-K! C-R-O-A-K! Tsarevitch, my dear husband and master, why so sad? Hast thou heard anything unpleasant at the palace?”

“Unpleasant enough, indeed! My father, the Tsar, ordered all of us to present our wives to him. Now tell me, how could I dare go with thee?”

“It is not so bad after all, and might be much worse,” answered the frog, gently croaking. “Thou shalt go alone and I will follow thee. When thou hearest a noise, a great noise, do not be afraid; simply say, ‘There is my miserable froggy coming in her miserable box.’”

The two elder brothers arrived first with their wives, beautiful, bright, and cheerful, and dressed in rich garments. Both the happy bridegrooms made fun of the Tsarevitch Ivan.

“Why alone, brother?” they laughingly said to him. “Why didst thou not bring thy wife along with thee? Was there no rag to cover her? Where couldst thou have gotten such a beauty? We are ready to wager that in all the swamps

in the dominion of our father it would be hard to find another one like her.” And they laughed and laughed.

Lo! What a noise! The palace trembled, the guests were all frightened.

Tsarevitch Ivan alone remained quiet and said, “No danger; it is my froggy coming in her box.”

To the red porch came flying a golden carriage drawn by six splendid white horses, and Vassilissa, beautiful beyond all description, gently reached her hand to her husband. He led her with him to the heavy oak tables, which were covered with snow-white linen and loaded with many wonderful dishes such as are known and eaten only in the land of fairies and never anywhere else. The guests were eating and chatting gaily.

Vassilissa drank some wine, and what was left in the tumbler she poured into her left sleeve. She ate some of the fried swan, and the bones she threw into her right sleeve. The wives of the two elder brothers watched her and did exactly the same.

When the long, hearty dinner was over, the guests began dancing and singing. The beautiful Vassilissa came forward, as bright as a star, bowed to her sovereign, bowed to the honorable guests and danced with her husband, the happy Tsarevitch Ivan.

While dancing, Vassilissa waved her left sleeve and a pretty lake appeared in the midst of the hall and cooled the air. She waved her right sleeve and white swans swam on the water. The Tsar, the guests, the servants, even the gray cat sitting in the corner, all were amazed and wondered at the beautiful Vassilissa. Her two sisters-in-law alone envied her. When their turn came to dance, they also waved their left sleeves as Vassilissa had done, and, oh, wonder! they sprinkled wine all around. They waved their right sleeves, and instead of swans the bones flew in the face of the Tsar father. The Tsar grew very angry and bade them leave the palace. In the meantime Ivan Tsarevitch watched a moment to slip away unseen. He ran home, found the frogskin, and burned it in the fire.

Vassilissa, when she came back, searched for the skin, and when she could not find it her beautiful face grew sad and her bright eyes filled with tears.

She said to Tsarevitch Ivan, her husband, “Oh, dear Tsarevitch, what hast thou done? There was but a short time left for me to wear the ugly frogskin. The moment was near when we could have been happy together forever. Now I must bid thee good-bye. Look for me in a far-away country to which no one knows the roads, at the palace of Kostshei the Deathless”; and Vassilissa turned into a white swan and flew away through the window.

Tsarevitch Ivan wept bitterly. Then he prayed to the almighty God, and making the sign of the cross northward, southward, eastward, and westward, he went on a mysterious journey. No one knows how long his journey was, but one day he met an old, old man. He bowed to the old man, who said, “Good-day, brave fellow. What art thou searching for, and whither art thou going?”

Tsarevitch Ivan answered sincerely, telling all about his misfortune without hiding anything.

“And why didst thou burn the frogskin? It was wrong to do so. Listen now to me. Vassilissa was born wiser than her own father, and as he envied his daughter’s wisdom he condemned her to be a frog for three long years. But I pity thee and want to help thee. Here is a magic ball. In whatever direction this ball rolls, follow without fear.”

Ivan Tsarevitch thanked the good old man, and followed his new guide, the ball. Long, very long, was his road. One day in a wide, flowery field he met a bear, a big Russian bear. Ivan Tsarevitch took his bow and was ready to shoot the bear.

“Do not kill me, kind Tsarevitch,” said the bear. “Who knows but that I may be useful to thee?” And Ivan did not shoot the bear.

Above in the sunny air there flew a duck, a lovely white duck. Again the Tsarevitch drew his bow to shoot it. But the duck said to him, “Do not kill me, good Tsarevitch. I certainly shall be useful to thee some day.”

And this time he obeyed the command of the duck and passed by. Continuing his way he saw a blinking hare. The Tsarevitch prepared an arrow to shoot it, but the gray, blinking hare said, “Do not kill me, brave Tsarevitch. I shall prove myself grateful to thee in a very short time.”

The Tsarevitch did not shoot the hare, but passed by. He walked farther and farther after the rolling ball, and came to the deep blue sea. On the sand there lay a fish. I do not remember the name of the fish, but it was a big fish, almost dying on the dry sand.

“O Tsarevitch Ivan!” prayed the fish, “have mercy upon me and push me back into the cool sea.”

The Tsarevitch did so, and walked along the shore. The ball, rolling all the time, brought Ivan to a hut, a queer, tiny hut standing on tiny hen’s feet.

“Izboushka! Izboushka!”—for so in Russia do they name small huts—“Izboushka, I want thee to turn thy front to me,” cried Ivan, and lo! the tiny hut turned its front at once. Ivan stepped in and saw a witch, one of the ugliest witches he could imagine.

“Ho! Ivan Tsarevitch! What brings thee here?” was his greeting from the witch. “O, thou old mischief!” shouted Ivan with anger. “Is it the way in holy Russia to ask questions before the tired guest gets something to eat, something to drink, and some hot water to wash the dust off?”

Baba Yaga, the witch, gave the Tsarevitch plenty to eat and drink, besides hot water to wash the dust off. Tsarevitch Ivan felt refreshed. Soon he became talkative, and related the wonderful story of his marriage. He told how he had lost his dear wife, and that his only desire was to find her.

“I know all about it,” answered the witch. “She is now at the palace of Kotshei the Deathless, and thou must understand that Kotshei is terrible. He watches her day and night and no one can ever conquer him. His death depends on a magic needle. That needle is within a hare; that hare is within a large trunk; that trunk is hidden in the branches of an old oak tree; and that oak tree is watched by Kotshei as closely as Vassilissa herself, which means closer than any treasure he has.”

Then the witch told Ivan Tsarevitch how and where to find the oak tree. Ivan hastily went to the place. But when he perceived the oak tree he was much discouraged, not knowing what to do or how to begin the work. Lo and behold! that old acquaintance of his, the Russian bear, came running along, approached the tree, uprooted it, and the trunk fell and broke. A hare jumped out of the trunk and began to run fast; but another hare, Ivan's friend, came running after, caught it and tore it to pieces. Out of the hare there flew a duck, a gray one which flew very high and was almost invisible, but the beautiful white duck followed the bird and struck its gray enemy, which lost an egg. That egg fell into the deep sea. Ivan meanwhile was anxiously watching his faithful friends helping him. But when the egg disappeared in the blue waters he could not help weeping. All of a sudden a big fish came swimming up, the same fish he had saved, and brought the egg in his mouth. How happy Ivan was when he took it! He broke it and found the needle inside, the magic needle upon which everything depended.

At the same moment Kostshei lost his strength and power forever. Ivan Tsarevitch entered his vast dominions, killed him with the magic needle, and in one of the palaces found his own dear wife, his beautiful Vassilissa. He took her home and they were very happy ever after.

THE WITCH AND HER SERVANTS

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Lang, Andrew. *The Yellow Fairy Book*. London: Longmans, Green and Company, 1894, 161–177.

Date: Unavailable

Original Source: Russia

National Origin: Russia

The following tale combines the success of the younger of three brothers—success by means of magic objects, disguised strangers, and grateful animals—with the abduction of maidens and tasks imposed by a witch. As a result, “The Witch and Her Servants” serves as a virtual encyclopedia of traditional **motifs**. Also relevant to the tale are Russian folk beliefs regarding the power of dreams and contagious magic (control by possessing something once belonging to an individual—in this case a lock of hair).

A long time ago there lived a King who had three sons; the eldest was called Szabo, the second Warza, and the youngest Iwanich. One beautiful spring morning the King was walking through his gardens with these three sons, gazing with admiration at the various fruit trees,

some of which were a mass of blossom, whilst others were bowed to the ground laden with rich fruit. During their wanderings they came unperceived on a piece of waste land where three splendid trees grew. The King looked on them for a moment, and then, shaking his head sadly, he passed on in silence.

The sons, who could not understand why he did this, asked him the reason of his dejection, and the King told them as follows. "These three trees, which I cannot see without sorrow, were planted by me on this spot when I was a youth of twenty. A celebrated magician, who had given the seed to my father, promised him that they would grow into the three finest trees the world had ever seen. My father did not live to see his words come true; but on his death-bed he bade me transplant them here, and to look after them with the greatest care, which I accordingly did. At last, after the lapse of five long years, I noticed some blossoms on the branches, and a few days later the most exquisite fruit my eyes had ever seen.

"I gave my head-gardener the strictest orders to watch the trees carefully, for the magician had warned my father that if one unripe fruit were plucked from the tree, all the rest would become rotten at once. When it was quite ripe the fruit would become a golden yellow.

Every day I gazed on the lovely fruit, which became gradually more and more tempting-looking, and it was all I could do not to break the magician's commands.

"One night I dreamt that the fruit was perfectly ripe; I ate some of it, and it was more delicious than anything I had ever tasted in real life. As soon as I awoke I sent for the gardener and asked him if the fruit on the three trees had not ripened in the night to perfection.

"But instead of replying, the gardener threw himself at my feet and swore that he was innocent. He said that he had watched by the trees all night, but in spite of it, and as if by magic, the beautiful trees had been robbed of all their fruit.

"Grieved as I was over the theft, I did not punish the gardener, of whose fidelity I was well assured, but I determined to pluck off all the fruit in the following year before it was ripe, as I had not much belief in the magician's warning.

"I carried out my intention, and had all the fruit picked off the tree, but when I tasted one of the apples it was bitter and unpleasant, and the next morning the rest of the fruit had all rotted away.

"After this I had the beautiful fruit of these trees carefully guarded by my most faithful servants; but every year, on this very night, the fruit was plucked and stolen by an invisible hand, and next morning not a single apple remained on the trees. For some time past I have given up even having the trees watched."

When the King had finished his story, Szabo, his eldest son, said to him, "Forgive me, father, if I say I think you are mistaken. I am sure there are many men in your kingdom who could protect these trees from the cunning arts of a thieving magician; I myself, who as your eldest son claim the first right to do so, will mount guard over the fruit this very night."

The King consented, and as soon as evening drew on Szabo climbed up on to one of the trees, determined to protect the fruit even if it cost him his life. So he kept watch half the night; but a little after midnight he was overcome by an irresistible drowsiness, and fell fast asleep. He did not awake till it was bright daylight, and all the fruit on the trees had vanished.

The following year Warza, the second brother, tried his luck, but with the same result. Then it came to the turn of the third and youngest son.

Iwanich was not the least discouraged by the failure of his elder brothers, though they were both much older and stronger than he was, and when night came climbed up the tree as they had done, The moon had risen, and with her soft light lit up the whole neighborhood, so that the observant Prince could distinguish the smallest object distinctly.

At midnight a gentle west wind shook the tree, and at the same moment a snow-white swan-like bird sank down gently on his breast. The Prince hastily seized the bird's wings in his hands, when, lo! to his astonishment he found he was holding in his arms not a bird but the most beautiful girl he had ever seen.

"You need not fear Militza," said the beautiful girl, looking at the Prince with friendly eyes. "An evil magician has not robbed you of your fruit, but he stole the seed from my mother, and thereby caused her death. When she was dying she bade me take the fruit, which you have no right to possess, from the trees every year as soon as it was ripe. This I would have done tonight too, if you had not seized me with such force, and so broken the spell I was under."

Iwanich, who had been prepared to meet a terrible magician and not a lovely girl, fell desperately in love with her. They spent the rest of the night in pleasant conversation, and when Militza wished to go away he begged her not to leave him.

"I would gladly stay with you longer," said Militza, "but a wicked witch once cut off a lock of my hair when I was asleep, which has put me in her power, and if morning were still to find me here she would do me some harm, and you, too, perhaps."

Having said these words, she drew a sparkling diamond ring from her finger, which she handed to the Prince, saying, "Keep this ring in memory of Militza, and think of her sometimes if you never see her again. But if your love is really true, come and find me in my own kingdom. I may not show you the way there, but this ring will guide you.

"If you have love and courage enough to undertake this journey, whenever you come to a crossroad always look at this diamond before you settle which way you are going to take. If it sparkles as brightly as ever go straight on, but if its luster is dimmed choose another path."

Then Militza bent over the Prince and kissed him on his forehead, and before he had time to say a word she vanished through the branches of the tree in a little white cloud.

Morning broke, and the Prince, still full of the wonderful apparition, left his perch and returned to the palace like one in a dream, without even knowing if the fruit had been taken or not; for his whole mind was absorbed by thoughts of Militza and how he was to find her. As soon as the head-gardener saw the Prince going towards the palace he ran to the trees, and when he saw them laden with ripe fruit he hastened to tell the King the joyful news. The King was beside himself for joy, and hurried at once to the garden and made the gardener pick him some of the fruit. He tasted it, and found the apple quite as luscious as it had been in his dream. He went at once to his son Iwanich, and after embracing him tenderly and heaping praises on him, he asked him how he had succeeded in protecting the costly fruit from the power of the magician.

This question placed Iwanich in a dilemma. But as he did not want the real story to be known, he said that about midnight a huge wasp had flown through the branches, and buzzed incessantly round him. He had warded it off with his sword, and at dawn, when he was becoming quite worn out, the wasp had vanished as suddenly as it had appeared.

The King, who never doubted the truth of this tale, bade his son go to rest at once and recover from the fatigues of the night; but he himself went and ordered many feasts to be held in honor of the preservation of the wonderful fruit.

The whole capital was in a stir, and everyone shared in the King's joy; the Prince alone took no part in the festivities.

While the King was at a banquet, Iwanich took some purses of gold, and mounting the quickest horse in the royal stable, he sped off like the wind without a single soul being any the wiser.

It was only on the next day that they missed him; the King was very distressed at his disappearance, and sent search-parties all over the kingdom to look for him, but in vain; and after six months they gave him up as dead, and in another six months they had forgotten all about him. But in the meantime the Prince, with the help of his ring, had had a most successful journey, and no evil had befallen him.

At the end of three months he came to the entrance of a huge forest, which looked as if it had never been trodden by human foot before, and which seemed to stretch out indefinitely. The Prince was about to enter the wood by a little path he had discovered, when he heard a voice shouting to him, "Hold, youth! Whither are you going?"

Iwanich turned round, and saw a tall, gaunt-looking man, clad in miserable rags, leaning on a crooked staff and seated at the foot of an oak tree, which was so much the same color as himself that it was little wonder the Prince had ridden past the tree without noticing him.

"Where else should I be going," he said, "than through the wood?"

"Through the wood?" said the old man in amazement. "It's easily seen that you have heard nothing of this forest, that you rush so blindly to meet your doom. Well, listen to me before you ride any further; let me tell you that this

wood hides in its depths a countless number of the fiercest tigers, hyenas, wolves, bears, and snakes, and all sorts of other monsters. If I were to cut you and your horse up into tiny morsels and throw them to the beasts, there wouldn't be one bit for each hundred of them. Take my advice, therefore, and if you wish to save your life follow some other path."

The Prince was rather taken aback by the old man's words, and considered for a minute what he should do; then looking at his ring, and perceiving that it sparkled as brightly as ever, he called out, "If this wood held even more terrible things than it does, I cannot help myself, for I must go through it."

Here he spurred his horse and rode on; but the old beggar screamed so loudly after him that the Prince turned round and rode back to the oak tree.

"I am really sorry for you," said the beggar, "but if you are quite determined to brave the dangers of the forest, let me at least give you a piece of advice which will help you against these monsters.

"Take this bagful of bread-crumbs and this live hare. I will make you a present of them both, as I am anxious to save your life; but you must leave your horse behind you, for it would stumble over the fallen trees or get entangled in the briars and thorns. When you have gone about a hundred yards into the wood the wild beasts will surround you. Then you must instantly seize your bag, and scatter the bread-crumbs among them. They will rush to eat them up greedily, and when you have scattered the last crumb you must lose no time in throwing the hare to them; as soon as the hare feels itself on the ground it will run away as quickly as possible, and the wild beasts will turn to pursue it. In this way you will be able to get through the wood unhurt."

Iwanich thanked the old man for his counsel, dismounted from his horse, and, taking the bag and the hare in his arms, he entered the forest. He had hardly lost sight of his gaunt grey friend when he heard growls and snarls in the thicket close to him, and before he had time to think he found himself surrounded by the most dreadful-looking creatures. On one side he saw the glittering eye of a cruel tiger, on the other the gleaming teeth of a great she-wolf; here a huge bear growled fiercely, and there a horrible snake coiled itself in the grass at his feet.

But Iwanich did not forget the old man's advice, and quickly put his hand into the bag and took out as many bread-crumbs as he could hold in his hand at a time. He threw them to the beasts, but soon the bag grew lighter and lighter, and the Prince began to feel a little frightened. And now the last crumb was gone, and the hungry beasts thronged round him, greedy for fresh prey. Then he seized the hare and threw it to them.

No sooner did the little creature feel itself on the ground than it lay back its ears and flew through the wood like an arrow from a bow, closely pursued by the wild beasts, and the Prince was left alone. He looked at his ring, and when he saw that it sparkled as brightly as ever he went straight on through the forest.

He hadn't gone very far when he saw a most extraordinary looking man coming towards him. He was not more than three feet high, his legs were quite

crooked, and all his body was covered with prickles like a hedgehog. Two lions walked with him, fastened to his side by the two ends of his long beard.

He stopped the Prince and asked him in a harsh voice, "Are you the man who has just fed my body-guard?"

Iwanich was so startled that he could hardly reply, but the little man continued, "I am most grateful to you for your kindness; what can I give you as a reward?"

"All I ask," replied Iwanich, "is, that I should be allowed to go through this wood in safety."

"Most certainly," answered the little man; "and for greater security I will give you one of my lions as a protector. But when you leave this wood and come near a palace which does not belong to my domain, let the lion go, in order that he may not fall into the hands of an enemy and be killed."

With these words he loosened the lion from his beard and bade the beast guard the youth carefully.

With this new protector Iwanich wandered on through the forest, and though he came upon a great many more wolves, hyenas, leopards, and other wild beasts, they always kept at a respectful distance when they saw what sort of an escort the Prince had with him.

Iwanich hurried through the wood as quickly as his legs would carry him, but, nevertheless, hour after hour went by and not a trace of a green field or a human habitation met his eyes. At length, towards evening, the mass of trees grew more transparent, and through the interlaced branches a wide plain was visible.

At the exit of the wood the lion stood still, and the Prince took leave of him, having first thanked him warmly for his kind protection. It had become quite dark, and Iwanich was forced to wait for daylight before continuing his journey.

He made himself a bed of grass and leaves, lit a fire of dry branches, and slept soundly till the next morning.

Then he got up and walked towards a beautiful white palace which he saw gleaming in the distance. In about an hour he reached the building, and opening the door he walked in. After wandering through many marble halls, he came to a huge staircase made of porphyry, leading down to a lovely garden.

The Prince burst into a shout of joy when he suddenly perceived Militza in the center of a group of girls who were weaving wreaths of flowers with which to deck their mistress.

As soon as Militza saw the Prince she ran up to him and embraced him tenderly; and after he had told her all his adventures, they went into the palace, where a sumptuous meal awaited them. Then the Princess called her court together, and introduced Iwanich to them as her future husband.

Preparations were at once made for the wedding, which was held soon after with great pomp and magnificence.

Three months of great happiness followed, when Militza received one day an invitation to visit her mother's sister.

Although the Princess was very unhappy at leaving her husband, she did not like to refuse the invitation, and, promising to return in seven days at the latest, she took a tender farewell of the Prince, and said, "Before I go I will hand you over all the keys of the castle. Go everywhere and do anything you like; only one thing I beg and beseech you, do not open the little iron door in the north tower, which is closed with seven locks and seven bolts; for if you do, we shall both suffer for it."

Iwanich promised what she asked, and Militza departed, repeating her promise to return in seven days.

When the Prince found himself alone he began to be tormented by pangs of curiosity as to what the room in the tower contained. For two days he resisted the temptation to go and look, but on the third he could stand it no longer, and taking a torch in his hand he hurried to the tower, and unfastened one lock after the other of the little iron door until it burst open.

What an unexpected sight met his gaze! The Prince perceived a small room black with smoke, lit up feebly by a fire from which issued long blue flames. Over the fire hung a huge cauldron full of boiling pitch, and fastened into the cauldron by iron chains stood a wretched man screaming with agony.

Iwanich was much horrified at the sight before him, and asked the man what terrible crime he had committed to be punished in this dreadful fashion.

"I will tell you everything," said the man in the cauldron; "but first relieve my torments a little, I implore you."

"And how can I do that?" asked the Prince.

"With a little water," replied the man; "only sprinkle a few drops over me and I shall feel better."

The Prince, moved by pity, without thinking what he was doing, ran to the courtyard of the castle, and filled a jug with water, which he poured over the man in the cauldron.

In a moment a most fearful crash was heard, as if all the pillars of the palace were giving way, and the palace itself, with towers and doors, windows and the cauldron, whirled round the bewildered Prince's head. This continued for a few minutes, and then everything vanished into thin air, and Iwanich found himself suddenly alone upon a desolate heath covered with rocks and stones.

The Prince, who now realized what his heedlessness had done, cursed too late his spirit of curiosity. In his despair he wandered on over the heath, never looking where he put his feet, and full of sorrowful thoughts. At last he saw a light in the distance, which came from a miserable-looking little hut.

The owner of it was none other than the kind-hearted gaunt grey beggar who had given the Prince the bag of bread-crumbs and the hare. Without recognizing Iwanich, he opened the door when he knocked and gave him shelter for the night.

On the following morning the Prince asked his host if he could get him any work to do, as he was quite unknown in the neighborhood, and had not enough money to take him home. "My son," replied the old man, "all this country round here is uninhabited; I myself have to wander to distant villages for my living, and even then I do not very often find enough to satisfy my hunger. But if you would like to take service with the old witch Corva, go straight up the little stream which flows below my hut for about three hours, and you will come to a sand-hill on the left-hand side; that is where she lives."

Iwanich thanked the gaunt grey beggar for his information, and went on his way.

After walking for about three hours the Prince came upon a dreary-looking grey stone wall; this was the back of the building and did not attract him; but when he came upon the front of the house he found it even less inviting, for the old witch had surrounded her dwelling with a fence of spikes, on every one of which a man's skull was stuck. In this horrible enclosure stood a small black house, which had only two grated windows, all covered with cobwebs, and a battered iron door.

The Prince knocked, and a rasping woman's voice told him to enter.

Iwanich opened the door, and found himself in a smoke-begrimed kitchen, in the presence of a hideous old woman who was warming her skinny hands at a fire. The Prince offered to become her servant, and the old hag told him she was badly in want of one, and he seemed to be just the person to suit her.

When Iwanich asked what his work, and how much his wages would be, the witch bade him follow her, and led the way through a narrow damp passage into a vault, which served as a stable. Here he perceived two pitch-black horses in a stall.

"You see before you," said the old woman, "a mare and her foal; you have nothing to do but to lead them out to the fields every day, and to see that neither of them runs away from you. If you look after them both for a whole year I will give you anything you like to ask; but if, on the other hand, you let either of the animals escape you, your last hour is come, and your head shall be stuck on the last spike of my fence. The other spikes, as you see, are already adorned, and the skulls are all those of different servants I have had who have failed to do what I demanded."

Iwanich, who thought he could not be much worse off than he was already, agreed to the witch's proposal.

At daybreak next morning he drove his horses to the field, and brought them back in the evening without their ever having attempted to break away from him. The witch stood at her door and received him kindly, and set a good meal before him.

So it continued for some time, and all went well with the Prince.

Early every morning he led the horses out to the fields, and brought them home safe and sound in the evening.

One day, while he was watching the horses, he came to the banks of a river, and saw a big fish, which through some mischance had been cast on the land, struggling hard to get back into the water.

Iwanich, who felt sorry for the poor creature, seized it in his arms and flung it into the stream. But no sooner did the fish find itself in the water again, than, to the Prince's amazement, it swam up to the bank and said, "My kind benefactor, how can I reward you for your goodness?"

"I desire nothing," answered the Prince. "I am quite content to have been able to be of some service to you."

"You must do me the favor," replied the fish, "to take a scale from my body, and keep it carefully. If you should ever need my help, throw it into the river, and I will come to your aid at once."

Iwanich bowed, loosened a scale from the body of the grateful beast, put it carefully away, and returned home.

A short time after this, when he was going early one morning to the usual grazing place with his horses, he noticed a flock of birds assembled together making a great noise and flying wildly backwards and forwards.

Full of curiosity, Iwanich hurried up to the spot, and saw that a large number of ravens had attacked an eagle, and although the eagle was big and powerful and was making a brave fight, it was overpowered at last by numbers, and had to give in.

But the Prince, who was sorry for the poor bird, seized the branch of a tree and hit out at the ravens with it; terrified at this unexpected onslaught they flew away, leaving many of their number dead or wounded on the battlefield.

As soon as the eagle saw itself free from its tormentors it plucked a feather from its wing, and, handing it to the Prince, said, "Here, my kind benefactor, take this feather as a proof of my gratitude; should you ever be in need of my help blow this feather into the air, and I will help you as much as is in my power."

Iwanich thanked the bird, and placing the feather beside the scale he drove the horses home.

Another day he had wandered farther than usual, and came close to a farmyard; the place pleased the Prince, and as there was plenty of good grass for the horses he determined to spend the day there. Just as he was sitting down under a tree he heard a cry close to him, and saw a fox which had been caught in a trap placed there by the farmer.

In vain did the poor beast try to free itself; then the good-natured Prince came once more to the rescue, and let the fox out of the trap.

The fox thanked him heartily, tore two hairs out of his bushy tail, and said, "Should you ever stand in need of my help throw these two hairs into the fire, and in a moment I shall be at your side ready to obey you."

Iwanich put the fox's hairs with the scale and the feather, and as it was getting dark he hastened home with his horses.

In the meantime his service was drawing near to an end, and in three more days the year was up, and he would be able to get his reward and leave the witch.

On the first evening of these last three days, when he came home and was eating his supper, he noticed the old woman stealing into the stables.

The Prince followed her secretly to see what she was going to do. He crouched down in the doorway and heard the wicked witch telling the horses to wait next morning till Iwanich was asleep, and then to go and hide themselves in the river, and to stay there till she told them to return; and if they didn't do as she told them the old woman threatened to beat them till they bled.

When Iwanich heard all this he went back to his room, determined that nothing should induce him to fall asleep next day. On the following morning he led the mare and foal to the fields as usual, but bound a cord round them both which he kept in his hand.

But after a few hours, by the magic arts of the old witch, he was overpowered by sleep, and the mare and foal escaped and did as they had been told to do. The Prince did not awake till late in the evening; and when he did, he found, to his horror, that the horses had disappeared. Filled with despair, he cursed the moment when he had entered the service of the cruel witch, and already he saw his head sticking up on the sharp spike beside the others.

Then he suddenly remembered the fish's scale, which, with the eagle's feather and the fox's hairs, he always carried about with him. He drew the scale from his pocket, and hurrying to the river he threw it in. In a minute the grateful fish swam towards the bank on which Iwanich was standing, and said, "What do you command, my friend and benefactor?"

The Prince replied, "I had to look after a mare and foal, and they have run away from me and have hidden themselves in the river; if you wish to save my life drive them back to the land."

"Wait a moment," answered the fish, "and I and my friends will soon drive them out of the water." With these words the creature disappeared into the depths of the stream.

Almost immediately a rushing hissing sound was heard in the waters, the waves dashed against the banks, the foam was tossed into the air, and the two horses leapt suddenly on to the dry land, trembling and shaking with fear. Iwanich sprang at once on to the mare's back, seized the foal by its bridle, and hastened home in the highest spirits.

When the witch saw the Prince bringing the horses home she could hardly conceal her wrath, and as soon as she had placed Iwanich's supper before him she stole away again to the stables. The Prince followed her, and heard her scolding the beasts harshly for not having hidden themselves better. She bade them wait next morning till Iwanich was asleep and then to hide themselves in the clouds, and to remain there till she called. If they did not do as she told them she would beat them till they bled.

The next morning, after Iwanich had led his horses to the fields, he fell once more into a magic sleep. The horses at once ran away and hid themselves in the clouds, which hung down from the mountains in soft billowy masses.

When the Prince awoke and found that both the mare and the foal had disappeared, he bethought him at once of the eagle, and taking the feather out of his pocket he blew it into the air.

In a moment the bird swooped down beside him and asked, "What do you wish me to do?"

"My mare and foal," replied the Prince, "have run away from me, and have hidden themselves in the clouds; if you wish to save my life, restore both animals to me."

"Wait a minute," answered the eagle; "with the help of my friends I will soon drive them back to you."

With these words the bird flew up into the air and disappeared among the clouds.

Almost directly Iwanich saw his two horses being driven towards him by a host of eagles of all sizes. He caught the mare and foal, and having thanked the eagle he drove them cheerfully home again.

The old witch was more disgusted than ever when she saw him appearing, and having set his supper before him she stole into the stables, and Iwanich heard her abusing the horses for not having hidden themselves better in the clouds. Then she bade them hide themselves next morning, as soon as Iwanich was asleep, in the King's hen-house, which stood on a lonely part of the heath, and to remain there till she called. If they failed to do as she told them she would certainly beat them this time till they bled.

On the following morning the Prince drove his horses as usual to the fields. After he had been overpowered by sleep, as on the former days, the mare and foal ran away and hid themselves in the royal hen house.

When the Prince awoke and found the horses gone he determined to appeal to the fox; so, lighting a fire, he threw the two hairs into it, and in a few moments the fox stood beside him and asked, "In what way can I serve you?"

"I wish to know," replied Iwanich, "where the King's hen-house is."

"Hardly an hour's walk from here," answered the fox, and offered to show the Prince the way to it.

While they were walking along the fox asked him what he wanted to do at the royal hen-house. The Prince told him of the misfortune that had befallen him, and of the necessity of recovering the mare and foal.

"That is no easy matter," replied the fox. "But wait a moment. I have an idea. Stand at the door of the hen-house, and wait there for your horses. In the meantime I will slip in among the hens through a hole in the wall and give them a good chase, so that the noise they make will arouse the royal hen-wives, and they will come to see what is the matter. When they see the horses

they will at once imagine them to be the cause of the disturbance, and will drive them out. Then you must lay hands on the mare and foal and catch them.”

All turned out exactly as the sly fox had foreseen. The Prince swung himself on the mare, seized the foal by its bridle, and hurried home.

While he was riding over the heath in the highest of spirits the mare suddenly said to her rider, “You are the first person who has ever succeeded in outwitting the old witch Corva, and now you may ask what reward you like for your service. If you promise never to betray me I will give you a piece of advice which you will do well to follow.”

The Prince promised never to betray her confidence, and the mare continued. “Ask nothing else as a reward than my foal, for it has not its like in the world, and is not to be bought for love or money; for it can go from one end of the earth to another in a few minutes. Of course the cunning Corva will do her best to dissuade you from taking the foal, and will tell you that it is both idle and sickly; but do not believe her, and stick to your point.”

Iwanich longed to possess such an animal, and promised the mare to follow her advice. This time Corva received him in the most friendly manner, and set a sumptuous repast before him. As soon as he had finished she asked him what reward he demanded for his year’s service.

“Nothing more nor less,” replied the Prince, “than the foal of your mare.”

The witch pretended to be much astonished at his request, and said that he deserved something much better than the foal, for the beast was lazy and nervous, blind in one eye, and, in short, was quite worthless.

But the Prince knew what he wanted, and when the old witch saw that he had made up his mind to have the foal, she said, “I am obliged to keep my promise and to hand you over the foal; and as I know who you are and what you want, I will tell you in what way the animal will be useful to you. The man in the cauldron of boiling pitch, whom you set free, is a mighty magician; through your curiosity and thoughtlessness Militza came into his power, and he has transported her and her castle and belongings into a distant country.

“You are the only person who can kill him; and in consequence he fears you to such an extent that he has set spies to watch you, and they report your movements to him daily.

“When you have reached him, beware of speaking a single word to him, or you will fall into the power of his friends. Seize him at once by the beard and dash him to the ground.”

Iwanich thanked the old witch, mounted his foal, put spurs to its sides, and they flew like lightning through the air.

Already it was growing dark, when Iwanich perceived some figures in the distance; they soon came up to them, and then the Prince saw that it was the magician and his friends who were driving through the air in a carriage drawn by owls.

When the magician found himself face to face with Iwanich, without hope of escape, he turned to him with false friendliness and said, "Thrice my kind benefactor!"

But the Prince, without saying a word, seized him at once by his beard and dashed him to the ground. At the same moment the foal sprang on the top of the magician and kicked and stamped on him with his hoofs till he died.

Then Iwanich found himself once more in the palace of his bride, and Mil-itza herself flew into his arms.

From this time forward they lived in undisturbed peace and happiness till the end of their lives.

The Mediterranean

GREECE

HOW THESEUS SLEW THE DEVOURERS OF MEN

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Kingsley, Charles. *The Heroes: Or, Greek Fairy Tales for My Children*. New York: R. H. Russell, Publisher, 1901, 146–175.

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National Origin: Greece

Located on the southern end of the Balkan Peninsula, Greece is a crossroads between Europe, Asia, and Africa. Historically, Greece has been heir to Classical Greek, Byzantine, and Ottoman civilizations. There has been mutual influence extending from and into the Middle East, North Africa, and Western Europe. According to Classical Greek **myth**, Theseus was the son of the mortal woman Aethra, wife of Aegeus, and Poseidon, god of the sea. When his wife became pregnant, Aegeus left her in her native city of Troezen and returned to Athens. Aegeus left his sandals and sword under a huge rock along with the challenge for his son to prove himself worthy by retrieving these tokens. In later life Theseus, became King of Athens, but in the following narrative, he has just learned the identity of his mortal father and has undertaken the journey to meet Aegeus. Rather than taking the safe sea route to Athens, Theseus goes by a dangerous land route that leads him to confront a series of monstrous outlaws. By defeating them, he cleanses the environment in the fashion of Heracles (or Hercules) the other **culture hero** to whom he compares himself. Following his reunion, he goes on to defeat the Minotaur, perhaps the best-known of his conquests.

So Theseus stood there alone, with his mind full of many hopes. And first, he thought of going down to the harbor and hiring a swift ship, and sailing across the bay to Athens; but even that seemed too slow for him, and he longed for wings to fly across the sea, and find his father. But after a while his heart began to fail him; and he sighed, and said within himself—“What if my father have other sons about him, whom he loves? What if he will not receive me? And what have I done that he should receive me? He has forgotten me ever since I was born: why should he welcome me now?”

Then he thought a long while sadly; and at the last he cried aloud, “Yes! I will make him love me; for I will prove myself worthy of his love. I will win honor and renown, and do such deeds that Ægeus shall be proud of me, though he had fifty other sons! Did not Heracles win himself honor, though he was oppressed, and the slave of Eurystheus? Did he not kill all robbers and evil beasts, and drain great lakes and marshes, breaking the hills through with his club? Therefore it was that all men honored him, because he rid them of their miseries, and made life pleasant to them and their children after them. Where can I go, to do as Heracles has done? Where can I find strange adventures, robbers, and monsters, and the children of hell, the enemies of men? I will go by land, and into the mountains, and round by the way of the Isthmus. Perhaps there I may hear of brave adventures, and do something which shall win my father’s love.”

So he went by land, and away into the mountains, with his father’s sword upon his thigh, till he came to the Spider mountains, which hang over Epidaurus and the sea, where the glens run downward from one peak in the midst, as the rays spread in the spider’s web. And he went up into the gloomy glens, between the furrowed marble walls, till the lowland grew blue beneath his feet, and the clouds drove damp about his head.

But he went up and up forever, through the spider’s web of glens, till he could see the narrow gulfs spread below him, north and south, and east and west; black cracks half-choked with mists, and above all a dreary down. But over that down he must go, for there was no road right or left; so he toiled on through bog and brake, till he came to a pile of stones.

And on the stones a man was sitting, wrapt in a bear-skin cloak. The head of the bear served him for a cap, and its teeth grinned white around his brows; and the feet were tied about his throat, and their claws shone white upon his chest. And when he saw Theseus he rose, and laughed till the glens rattled.

“And who art thou, fair fly, who hast walked into the spider’s web?” But Theseus walked on steadily, and made no answer: but he thought, “Is this some robber? and has an adventure come already to me?” But the strange man laughed louder than ever, and said—“Bold fly, know you not that these glens are the web from which no fly ever finds his way out again, and this down the spider’s house, and I the spider who sucks the flies? Come hither, and let me feast upon you; for it is of no use to run away, so cunning a web has my father

Hephaistos [blacksmith and “artificer” for the Greek gods] spread for me, when he made these clefts in the mountains, through which no man finds his way home.”

But Theseus came on steadily, and asked, “And what is your name among men, bold spider? and where are your spider’s fangs?”

Then the strange man laughed again, “My name is Periphetes, the son of Hephaistos and Anticleia the mountain nymph. But men call me Corynetes the club-bearer; and here is my spider’s fang.”

And he lifted from off the stones at his side a mighty club of bronze.

“This my father gave me, and forged it himself in the roots of the mountain; and with it I pound all proud flies till they give out their fatness and their sweetness. So give me up that gay sword of yours, and your mantle, and your golden sandals, lest I pound you, and by ill luck you die.”

But Theseus wrapt his mantle round his left arm quickly, in hard folds, from his shoulder to his hand, and drew his sword, and rushed upon the club-bearer, and the club-bearer rushed on him.

Thrice he struck at Theseus, and made him bend under the blows like a sapling; but Theseus guarded his head with his left arm, and the mantle which was wrapped around it. And thrice Theseus sprang upright after the blow, like a sapling when the storm is past; and he stabbed at the club-bearer with his sword, but the loose folds of the bear-skin saved him. Then Theseus grew mad, and closed with him, and caught him by the throat, and they fell and rolled over together; but when Theseus rose up from the ground the club-bearer lay still at his feet.

Then Theseus took his club and his bear-skin, and left him to the kites and crows, and went upon his journey down the glens on the farther slope, till he came to a broad green valley, and saw flocks and herds sleeping beneath the trees.

And by the side of a pleasant fountain, under the shade of rocks and trees, were nymphs and shepherds dancing; but no one piped to them while they danced.

And when they saw Theseus they shrieked; and the shepherds ran off, and drove away their flocks; while the nymphs dived into the fountain like coots, and vanished.

Theseus wondered and laughed, “What strange fancies have folks here who run away from strangers, and have no music when they dance!” But he was tired, and dusty, and thirsty; so he thought no more of them, but drank and bathed in the clear pool, and then lay down in the shade under a plane-tree, while the water sang him to sleep, as it tinkled down from stone to stone.

And when he woke he heard a whispering, and saw the nymphs peeping at him across the fountain from the dark mouth of a cave, where they sat on green cushions of moss. And one said, “Surely he is not Periphetes”; and another, “He looks like no robber, but a fair and gentle youth.”

Then Theseus smiled, and called them, “Fair nymphs, I am not Periphetes. He sleeps among the kites and crows: but I have brought away his bear-skin and his club.”

Then they leapt across the pool, and came to him, and called the shepherds back. And he told them how he had slain the club-bearer: and the shepherds kissed his feet and sang, "Now we shall feed our flocks in peace, and not be afraid to have music when we dance; for the cruel club-bearer has met his match, and he will listen for our pipes no more."

Then they brought him kid's flesh and wine, and the nymphs brought him honey from the rocks; and he ate, and drank, and slept again, while the nymphs and shepherds danced and sang. And when he woke, they begged him to stay; but he would not. "I have a great work to do," he said; "I must be away toward the Isthmus, that I may go to Athens."

But the shepherds said, "Will you go alone toward Athens? None travel that way now, except in armed troops."

"As for arms, I have enough, as you see. And as for troops, an honest man is good enough company for himself. Why should I not go alone toward Athens?"

"If you do, you must look warily about you on the Isthmus, lest you meet Sinis the robber, whom men call Pituocampes the pine-bender; for he bends down two pine trees, and binds all travelers hand and foot between them; and when he lets the trees go again their bodies are torn in sunder."

"And after that," said another, "you must go inland, and not dare to pass over the cliffs of Sciron; for on the left hand are the mountains, and on the right the sea, so that you have no escape, but must needs meet Sciron the robber, who will make you wash his feet; and while you are washing them he will kick you over the cliff, to the tortoise who lives below, and feeds upon the bodies of the dead."

And before Theseus could answer, another cried, "And after that is a worse danger still, unless you go inland always, and leave Eleusis far on your right. For in Eleusis rules Kerkuon the cruel king, the terror of all mortals, who killed his own daughter Alope in prison. But she was changed into a fair fountain; and her child he cast out upon the mountains; but the wild mares gave it milk. And now he challenges all comers to wrestle with him; for he is the best wrestler in all Attica, and overthrows all who come; and those whom he overthrows he murders miserably, and his palace-court is full of their bones."

Then Theseus frowned, and said, "This seems indeed an ill-ruled land, and adventures enough in it to be tried. But if I am the heir of it, I will rule it and right it, and here is my royal scepter." And he shook his club of bronze, while the nymphs and shepherds clung round him, and entreated him not to go.

But on he went, nevertheless, till he could see both the seas and the citadel of Corinth towering high above all the land. And he past swiftly along the Isthmus, for his heart burned to meet that cruel Sinis; and in a pine-wood at last he met him, where the Isthmus was narrowest and the road ran between high rocks. There he sat upon a stone by the wayside, with a young fir tree for a club across his knees, and a cord laid ready by his side; and over his head, upon the fir-tops, hung the bones of murdered men.

Then Theseus shouted to him, "Holla, thou valiant pine-bender, hast thou two fir trees left for me?"

And Sinis leapt to his feet, and answered, pointing to the bones above his head, "My larder has grown empty lately, so I have two fir trees ready for thee." And he rushed on Theseus, lifting his club, and Theseus rushed upon him.

Then they hammered together till the greenwoods rang: but the metal was tougher than the pine, and Sinis' club broke right across, as the bronze came down upon it. Then Theseus heaved up another mighty stroke, and smote Sinis down upon his face; and knelt upon his back, and bound him with his own cord, and said, "As thou hast done to others, so shall it be done to thee." Then he bent down two young fir trees, and bound Sinis between them, for all his struggling and his prayers; and let them go, and ended Sinis, and went on, leaving him to the hawks and crows.

Then he went over the hills toward Megara, keeping close along the Saronic Sea, till he came to the cliffs of Sciron, and the narrow path between the mountain and the sea.

And there he saw Sciron sitting by a fountain, at the edge of the cliff. On his knees was a mighty club; and he had barred the path with stones, so that every one must stop who came up. Then Theseus shouted to him, and said, "Holla, thou tortoise-feeder, do thy feet need washing today?"

And Sciron leapt to his feet, and answered, "My tortoise is empty and hungry, and my feet need washing today." And he stood before his barrier, and lifted up his club in both hands. Then Theseus rushed upon him; and sore was the battle upon the cliff; for when Sciron felt the weight of the bronze club, he dropt his own, and closed with Theseus, and tried to hurl him by main force over the cliff. But Theseus was a wary wrestler, and dropt his own club, and caught him by the throat and by the knee, and forced him back against the wall of stones, and crushed him up against them, till his breath was almost gone. And Sciron cried panting, "Loose me, and I will let thee pass." But Theseus answered, "I must not pass till I have made the rough way smooth"; and he forced him back against the wall till it fell, and Sciron rolled head over heels.

Then Theseus lifted him up all bruised, and said, "Come hither and wash my feet." And he drew his sword, and sat down by the well, and said, "Wash my feet, or I cut you piecemeal." And Sciron washed his feet trembling; and when it was done, Theseus rose, and cried, "As thou hast done to others, so shall it be done to thee. Go feed thy tortoise thyself"; and he kicked him over the cliff into the sea.

And whether the tortoise ate him, I know not; for some say that earth and sea both disdained to take his body, so foul it was with sin. So the sea cast it out upon the shore, and the shore cast it back into the sea, and at last the waves hurled it high into the air in anger; and it hung there long without a grave, till it was changed into a desolate rock, which stands there in the surge until this day.

This at least is true, which Pausanias tells, that in the royal porch at Athens he saw the figure of Theseus modeled in clay, and by him Sciron the robber,

falling headlong into the sea. Then he went a long day's journey, past Megara, into the Attic land, and high before him rose the snow-peaks of Cithæron, all cold above the black pine-woods, where haunt the Furies, and the raving Bacchæ, and the nymphs who drive men wild, far aloft upon the dreary mountains, where the storms howl all day long. And on his right hand was the sea always, and Salamis, with its island cliffs, and the sacred strait of the sea-fight, where afterwards the Persians fled before the Greeks. So he went all day until the evening, till he saw the Thriasian plain, and the sacred city of Eleusis, where the Earth-mother's temple stands. For there she met Triptolemus, when all the land lay waste, Demeter the kind Earth-mother, and in her hands a sheaf of corn. And she taught him to plough the fallows, and to yoke the lazy kine; and she taught him to sow the seed-fields, and to reap the golden grain; and sent him forth to teach all nations, and give corn to laboring men. So at Eleusis all men honor her, whosoever tills the land; her and Triptolemus her beloved, who gave corn to laboring men.

And he went along the plain into Eleusis, and stood in the market-place, and cried, "Where is Kerkuon, the king of the city? I must wrestle a fall with him today."

Then all the people crowded round him, and cried, "Fair youth, why will you die? Hasten out of the city, before the cruel king hears that a stranger is here."

But Theseus went up through the town, while the people wept and prayed, and through the gates of the palace yard, and through the piles of bones and skulls, till he came to the door of Kerkuon's hall, the terror of all mortal men.

And there he saw Kerkuon sitting at the table in the hall alone; and before him was a whole sheep roasted, and beside him a whole jar of wine. And Theseus stood and called him, "Holla, thou valiant wrestler, wilt thou wrestle a fall today?"

And Kerkuon looked up and laughed, and answered, "I will wrestle a fall today; but come in, for I am lonely and thou weary, and eat and drink before thou die."

Then Theseus went up boldly, and sat down before Kerkuon at the board; and he ate his fill of the sheep's flesh, and drank his fill of the wine; and Theseus ate enough for three men, but Kerkuon ate enough for seven.

But neither spoke a word to the other, though they looked across the table by stealth; and each said in his heart, "He has broad shoulders; but I trust mine are as broad as his."

At last, when the sheep was eaten and the jar of wine drained dry, King Kerkuon rose, and cried, "Let us wrestle a fall before we sleep."

So they tossed off all their garments, and went forth in the palace-yard; and Kerkuon bade strew fresh sand in an open space between the bones. And there the heroes stood face to face, while their eyes glared like wild bulls'; and all the people crowded at the gates to see what would befall.

And there they stood and wrestled, till the stars shone out above their heads; up and down and round, till the sand was stamped hard beneath their

feet. And their eyes flashed like stars in the darkness, and their breath went up like smoke in the night air; but neither took nor gave a footstep, and the people watched silent at the gates.

But at last Kerkuon grew angry, and caught Theseus round the neck, and shook him as a mastiff shakes a rat; but he could not shake him off his feet.

But Theseus was quick and wary, and clasped Kerkuon round the waist, and slipped his loin quickly underneath him, while he caught him by the wrist; and then he hove a mighty heave, a heave which would have stirred an oak, and lifted Kerkuon, and pitched him, right over his shoulder on the ground.

Then he leapt on him, and called, "Yield, or I kill thee!" but Kerkuon said no word; for his heart was burst within him, with the fall, and the meat, and the wine.

Then Theseus opened the gates, and called in all the people; and they cried, "You have slain our evil king; be you now our king, and rule us well."

"I will be your king in Eleusis, and I will rule you right and well; for this cause I have slain all evil-doers—Sinis, and Sciron, and this man last of all."

Then an aged man stepped forth, and said, "Young hero, hast thou slain Sinis? Beware then of Ægeus, king of Athens, to whom thou goest, for he is near of kin to Sinis."

"Then I have slain my own kinsman," said Theseus, "though well he deserved to die. Who will purge me from his death, for rightfully I slew him, unrighteous and accursed as he was?"

And the old man answered, "That will the heroes do, the sons of Phytalus, who dwell beneath the elm tree in Aphidnai, by the bank of silver Cephisus; for they know the mysteries of the Gods. Thither you shall go and be purified, and after you shall be our king."

So he took an oath of the people of Eleusis, that they would serve him as their king, and went away next morning across the Thriasian plain, and over the hills toward Aphidnai, that he might find the sons of Phytalus.

And as he was skirting the Vale of Cephisus, along the foot of lofty Parnes, a very tall and strong man came down to meet him, dressed in rich garments. On his arms were golden bracelets, and round his neck a collar of jewels; and he came forward, bowing courteously, and held out both his hands, and spoke, "Welcome, fair youth, to these mountains; happy am I to have met you! For what greater pleasure to a good man, than to entertain strangers? But I see that you are weary. Come up to my castle, and rest yourself awhile."

"I give you thanks," said Theseus; "but I am in haste to go up the valley, and to reach Aphidnai in the Vale of Cephisus."

"Alas! you have wandered far from the right way, and you cannot reach Aphidnai tonight, for there are many miles of mountain between you and it, and steep passes, and cliffs dangerous after nightfall. It is well for you that I met you; for my whole joy is to find strangers, and to feast them at my castle, and hear tales from them of foreign lands. Come up with me, and eat the best of

venison, and drink the rich red wine; and sleep upon my famous bed, of which all travelers say that they never saw the like. For whatsoever the stature of my guest, however tall or short, that bed fits him to a hair, and he sleeps on it as he never slept before." And he laid hold on Theseus' hands, and would not let him go.

Theseus wished to go forwards: but he was ashamed to seem churlish to so hospitable a man; and he was curious to see that wondrous bed; and beside, he was hungry and weary: yet he shrank from the man, he knew not why: for, though his voice was gentle and fawning, it was dry and husky like a toad's; and though his eyes were gentle, they were dull and cold like stones. But he consented, and went with the man up a glen which led from the road toward the peaks of Parnes, under the dark shadow of the cliffs.

And as they went up, the glen grew narrower, and the cliffs higher and darker, and beneath them a torrent roared, half seen between bare limestone crags. And around there was neither tree nor bush, while from the white peaks of Parnes the snow-blasts swept down the glen, cutting and chilling, till a horror fell on Theseus, as he looked round at that doleful place. And he asked at last, "Your castle stands, it seems, in a dreary region."

"Yes, but once within it, hospitality makes all things cheerful. But who are these?" and he looked back, and Theseus also; and far below, along the road which they had left, came a string of laden asses, and merchants walking by them, watching their ware.

"Ah, poor souls!" said the stranger. "Well for them that I looked back and saw them! And well for me too, for I shall have the more guests at my feast. Wait awhile till I go down and call them, and we will eat and drink together the livelong night. Happy am I, to whom Heaven sends so many guests at once!"

And he ran back down the hill, waving his hand and shouting to the merchants, while Theseus went slowly up the steep pass.

But as he went up he met an aged man, who had been gathering driftwood in the torrent-bed. He had laid down his faggot in the road, and was trying to lift it again to his shoulder. And when he saw Theseus, he called to him, and said, "O fair youth, help me up with my burden; for my limbs are stiff and weak with years."

Then Theseus lifted the burden on his back. And the old man blest him, and then looked earnestly upon him, and said, "Who are you, fair youth, and wherefore travel you this doleful road?"

"Who I am my parents know: but I travel this doleful road because I have been invited by a hospitable man, who promises to feast me, and to make me sleep upon I know not what wondrous bed."

Then the old man clapped his hands together and cried, "O house of Hades, man-devouring; will thy maw never be full? Know, fair youth, that you are going to torment and to death; for he who met you (I will requite your kindness by another) is a robber and a murderer of men. Whatsoever stranger he meets he

entices him hither to death; and as for this bed of which he speaks, truly it fits all comers, yet none ever rose alive off it save me.”

“Why?” asked Theseus, astonished.

“Because, if a man be too tall for it, he lops his limbs till they be short enough, and if he be too short, he stretches his limbs till they be long enough: but me only he spared, seven weary years ago; for I alone of all fitted his bed exactly, so he spared me, and made me his slave. And once I was a wealthy merchant, and dwelt in brazen-gated Thebes; but now I hew wood and draw water for him, the torment of all mortal men.”

Then Theseus said nothing; but he ground his teeth together.

“Escape, then,” said the old man, “for he will have no pity on thy youth. But yesterday he brought up hither a young man and a maiden, and fitted them upon his bed: and the young man’s hands and feet he cut off; but the maiden’s limbs he stretched until she died, and so both perished miserably—but I am tired of weeping over the slain. And therefore he is called Procrustes the stretcher, though his father called him Damastes. Flee from him: yet whither will you flee? The cliffs are steep, and who can climb them? And there is no other road.”

But Theseus laid his hand upon the old man’s mouth, and said, “There is no need to flee”; and he turned to go down the pass.

“Do not tell him that I have warned you, or he will kill me by some evil death”; and the old man screamed after him down the glen; but Theseus strode on in his wrath.

And he said to himself, “This is an ill-ruled land; when shall I have done ridding it of monsters?” And as he spoke, Procrustes came up the hill, and all the merchants with him, smiling and talking gaily. And when he saw Theseus, he cried, “Ah, fair young guest, have I kept you too long waiting?”

But Theseus answered, “The man who stretches his guests upon a bed and hews off their hands and feet, what shall be done to him, when right is done throughout the land?”

Then Procrustes’ countenance changed, and his cheeks grew as green as a lizard, and he felt for his sword in haste; but Theseus leapt on him, and cried, “Is this true, my host, or is it false?” and he clasped Procrustes’ round waist and elbow, so that he could not draw his sword.

“Is this true, my host, or is it false?” But Procrustes answered never a word.

Then Theseus flung him from him, and lifted up his dreadful club; and before Procrustes could strike him he had struck, and felled him to the ground.

And once again he struck him; and his evil soul fled forth, and went down to Hades squeaking, like a bat into the darkness of a cave.

Then Theseus stript him of his gold ornaments, and went up to his house, and found there great wealth and treasure, which he had stolen from the passers by. And he called the people of the country, whom Procrustes had spoiled a long time, and parted the spoil among them, and went down the mountains, and away.

And he went down the glens of Parnes, through mist, and cloud, and rain, down the slopes of oak, and lentisk, and arbutus, and fragrant bay, till he came to the Vale of Cephissus, and the pleasant town of Aphidnai, and the home of the Phytalid heroes, where they dwelt beneath a mighty elm.

And there they built an altar, and bade him bathe in Cephissus, and offer a yearling ram, and purified him from the blood of Sinis, and sent him away in peace.

And he went down the valley by Acharnai, and by the silver-swirling stream, while all the people blessed him, for the fame of his prowess had spread wide, till he saw the plain of Athens, and the hill where Athené dwells.

So Theseus went up through Athens, and all the people ran out to see him; for his fame had gone before him and every one knew of his mighty deeds. And all cried, "Here comes the hero who slew Sinis, and Phaia the wild sow of Crommyon, and conquered Kerkuon in wrestling, and slew Procrustes the pitiless." But Theseus went on sadly and steadfastly; for his heart yearned after his father; and he said, "How shall I deliver him from these leeches who suck his blood?"

So he went up the holy stairs, and into the Acropolis, where Ægeus' palace stood; and he went straight into Ægeus' hall, and stood upon the threshold, and looked round.

And there he saw his cousins sitting about the table, at the wine; many a son of Pallas, but no Ægeus among them. There they sat and feasted, and laughed, and passed the wine-cup round; while harpers harped, and slave girls sang, and the tumblers showed their tricks.

Loud laughed the sons of Pallas, and fast went the wine-cup round; but Theseus frowned, and said under his breath, "No wonder that the land is full of robbers, while such as these bear rule."

Then the Pallantids saw him, and called to him, half-drunk with wine, "Holla, tall stranger at the door, what is your will today?"

"I come hither to ask for hospitality."

"Then take it, and welcome. You look like a hero and a bold warrior; and we like such to drink with us."

"I ask no hospitality of you; I ask it of Ægeus the king, the master of this house."

At that some growled, and some laughed, and shouted, "Heyday! We are all masters here."

"Then I am master as much as the rest of you," said Theseus, and he strode past the table up the hall, and looked around for Ægeus; but he was nowhere to be seen.

The Pallantids looked at him, and then at each other, and each whispered to the man next him, "This is a forward fellow; he ought to be thrust out at the door." But each man's neighbor whispered in return, "His shoulders are broad; will you rise and put him out?" So they all sat still where they were.

Then Theseus called to the servants, and said, "Go tell King Ægeus, your master, that Theseus of Trœzene is here, and asks to be his guest awhile."

A servant ran and told Ægeus, where he sat in his chamber within, by Medeia the dark witch-woman, watching her eye and hand. And when Ægeus heard of Trœzene he turned pale and red again; and rose from his seat trembling, while Medeia watched him like a snake.

“What is Trœzene to you?” she asked.

But he said hastily, “Do you not know who this Theseus is? The hero who has cleared the country from all monsters; but that he came from Trœzene, I never heard before. I must go out and welcome him.”

So Ægeus came out into the hall; and when Theseus saw him, his heart leapt into his mouth, and he longed to fall on his neck and welcome him; but he controlled himself, and said, “My father may not wish for me, after all. I will try him before I discover myself”; and he bowed low before Ægeus, and said, “I have delivered the king’s realm from many monsters; therefore I am come to ask a reward of the king.”

And old Ægeus looked on him, and loved him, as what fond heart would not have done? But he only sighed, and said, “It is little that I can give you, noble lad, and nothing that is worthy of you; for surely you are no mortal man, or at least no mortal’s son.”

“All I ask,” said Theseus, “is to eat and drink at your table.”

“That I can give you,” said Ægeus, “if at least I am master in my own hall.”

Then he bade them put a seat for Theseus, and set before him the best of the feast; and Theseus sat and ate so much, that all the company wondered at him: but always he kept his club by his side.

But Medeia the dark witch-woman had been watching him all the while. She saw how Ægeus turned red and pale, when the lad said that he came from Trœzene. She saw, too, how his heart was opened toward Theseus; and how Theseus bore himself before all the sons of Pallas, like a lion among a pack of curs. And she said to herself, “This youth will be master here; perhaps he is nearer to Ægeus already than mere fancy. At least the Pallantids will have no chance by the side of such as he.”

Then she went back into her chamber modestly, while Theseus ate and drank; and all the servants whispered, “This, then, is the man who killed the monsters! How noble are his looks, and how huge his size! Ah, would that he were our master’s son!”

But presently Medeia came forth, decked in all her jewels, and her rich Eastern robes, and looking more beautiful than the day; so that all the guests could look at nothing else. And in her right hand she held a golden cup, and in her left a flask of gold; and she came up to Theseus, and spoke in a sweet, soft, winning voice, “Hail to the hero, the conqueror, the unconquered, the destroyer of all evil things! Drink, hero, of my charmed cup, which gives rest after every toil, which heals all wounds, and pours new life into the veins. Drink of my cup, for in it sparkles the wine of the East, and Nepenthe, the comfort of the Immortals.”

And as she spoke, she poured the flask into the cup; and the fragrance of the wine spread through the hall, like the scent of thyme and roses.

And Theseus looked up in her fair face, and into her deep dark eyes. And as he looked, he shrank and shuddered; for they were dry like the eyes of a snake. And he rose, and said, "The wine is rich and fragrant, and the wine-bearer as fair as the Immortals; but let her pledge me first herself in the cup, that the wine may be the sweeter from her lips."

Then Medeia turned pale, and stammered, "Forgive me, fair hero; but I am ill, and dare drink no wine."

And Theseus looked again into her eyes, and cried, "Thou shalt pledge me in that cup, or die." And he lifted up his brazen club, while all the guests looked on aghast.

Medeia shrieked a fearful shriek, and dashed the cup to the ground, and fled; and where the wine flowed over the marble pavement, the stone bubbled, and crumbled, and hissed, under the fierce venom of the draught.

But Medeia called her dragon chariot, and sprang into it and fled aloft, away over land and sea, and no man saw her more.

And Ægeus cried, "What hast thou done?"

But Theseus pointed to the stone. "I have rid the land of an enchantment: now I will rid it of one more."

And he came close to Ægeus, and drew from his bosom the sword and the sandals, and said the words which his mother bade him.

And Ægeus stepped back a pace, and looked at the lad till his eyes grew dim; and then he cast himself on his neck and wept, and Theseus wept on his neck, till they had no strength left to weep more.

Then Ægeus turned to all the people, and cried, "Behold my son, children of Cecrops, a better man than his father was before him."

Who, then, were mad but the Pallantids, though they had been mad enough before? And one shouted, "Shall we make room for an upstart, a pretender, who comes from we know not where?" And another, "If he be one, we are more than one; and the stronger can hold his own." And one shouted one thing, and one another; for they were hot and wild with wine: but all caught swords and lances off the wall, where the weapons hung around, and sprang forward to Theseus, and Theseus sprang forward to them.

And he cried, "Go in peace, if you will, my cousins; but if not, your blood be on your own heads." But they rushed at him; and then stopped short and railed him, as curs stop and bark when they rouse a lion from his lair.

But one hurled a lance from the rear rank, which passed close by Theseus' head; and at that Theseus rushed forward, and the fight began indeed. Twenty against one they fought, and yet Theseus beat them all; and those who were left fled down into the town, where the people set on them, and drove them out, till Theseus was left alone in the palace, with Ægeus his new-found father. But before nightfall all the town came up, with victims, and dances, and songs; and

they offered sacrifices to Athené, and rejoiced all the night long, because their king had found a noble son, and an heir to his royal house.

So Theseus stayed with his father all the winter; and when the spring equinox drew near, all the Athenians grew sad and silent, and Theseus saw it, and asked the reason; but no one would answer him a word.

Then he went to his father, and asked him: but Ægeus turned away his face and wept. "Do not ask, my son, beforehand, about evils which must happen: it is enough to have to face them when they come."

And when the spring equinox came, a herald came to Athens, and stood in the market, and cried, "O people and King of Athens, where is your yearly tribute?" Then a great lamentation arose throughout the city. But Theseus stood up to the herald, and cried, "And who are you, dog-faced, who dare demand tribute here? If I did not reverence your herald's staff, I would brain you with this club."

And the herald answered proudly, for he was a grave and ancient man, "Fair youth, I am not dog-faced or shameless; but I do my master's bidding, Minos, the King of hundred-cities Crete, the wisest of all kings on earth. And you must be surely a stranger here, or you would know why I come, and that I come by right."

"I am a stranger here. Tell me, then, why you come?"

"To fetch the tribute which King Ægeus promised to Minos, and confirmed his promise with an oath. For Minos conquered all this land, and Megara which lies to the east, when he came hither with a great fleet of ships, enraged about the murder of his son. For his son Androgeos came hither to the Panathenaic games, and overcame all the Greeks in the sports, so that the people honored him as a hero. But when Ægeus saw his valor, he envied him, and feared lest he should join the sons of Pallas, and take away the scepter from him. So he plotted against his life, and slew him basely, no man knows how or where. Some say that he waylaid him by Oinoe, on the road which goes to Thebes; and some that he sent him against the bull of Marathon, that the beast might kill him. But Ægeus says that the young men killed him from envy, because he had conquered them in the games. So Minos came hither and avenged him, and would not depart till this land had promised him tribute—seven youths and seven maidens every year, who go with me in a black-sailed ship, till they come to hundred-cities Crete."

And Theseus ground his teeth together, and said, "Wert thou not a herald I would kill thee, for saying such things of my father: but I will go to him, and know the truth." So he went to his father, and asked him; but he turned away his head and wept, and said, "Blood was shed in the land unjustly, and by blood it is avenged. Break not my heart by questions; it is enough to endure in silence."

Then Theseus groaned inwardly, and said, "I will go myself with these youths and maidens, and kill Minos upon his royal throne."

And Ægeus shrieked, and cried, "You shall not go, my son, the light of my old age, to whom alone I look to rule this people after I am dead and gone.

You shall not go, to die horribly, as those youths and maidens die; for Minos thrusts them into a labyrinth, which Daidalos made for him among the rocks,

Daidalos the renegade, the accursed, the pest of this his native land. From that labyrinth no one can escape, entangled in its winding ways, before they meet the Minotaur, the monster who feeds upon the flesh of men. There he devours them horribly, and they never see this land again.”

Then Theseus grew red, and his ears tingled, and his heart beat loud in his bosom. And he stood awhile like a tall stone pillar, on the cliffs above some hero's grave; and at last he spoke, “Therefore all the more I will go with them, and slay the accursed beast. Have I not slain all evil-doers and monsters, that I might free this land? Where are Periphetes, and Sinis, and Kerkuon, and Phaia the wild sow? Where are the fifty sons of Pallas? And this Minotaur shall go the road which they have gone, and Minos himself, if he dare stay me.”

“But how will you slay him, my son? For you must leave your club and your armor behind, and be cast to the monster, defenseless and naked like the rest.”

And Theseus said, “Are there no stones in that labyrinth; and have I not fists and teeth? Did I need my club to kill Kerkuon, the terror of all mortal men?”

Then Ægeus clung to his knees; but he would not hear; and at last he let him go, weeping bitterly, and said only this one word, “Promise me but this, if you return in peace, though that may hardly be: take down the black sail of the ship, (for I shall watch for it all day upon the cliffs,) and hoist instead a white sail, that I may know afar off that you are safe.”

And Theseus promised, and went out, and to the market-place where the herald stood, while they drew lots for the youths and maidens, who were to sail in that doleful crew. And the people stood wailing and weeping, as the lot fell on this one and on that: but Theseus strode into the midst, and cried, “Here is a youth who needs no lot. I myself will be one of the seven.”

And the herald asked in wonder, “Fair youth, know you whither you are going?”

And Theseus said, “I know. Let us go down to the black-sailed ship.”

So they went down to the black-sailed ship, seven maidens, and seven youths, and Theseus before them all, and the people following them lamenting. But Theseus whispered to his companions, “Have hope, for the monster is not immortal. Where are Periphetes, and Sinis, and Sciron, and all whom I have slain?” Then their hearts were comforted a little: but they wept as they went on board, and the cliffs of Sunium rang, and all the isles of the Ægean Sea, with the voice of their lamentation, as they sailed on toward their deaths in Crete.

ALCESTIS

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Menzies, Louisa. *Lives of the Greek Heroines*. London: George Bell and Sons, 1880, 14–31.

Date: Unavailable

Original Source: Greece

National Origin: Greece

This Greek **myth** provided the prototype for “Alcestis” (AT 899). The narrative also inspired a play by the Greek dramatist Euripides (480 B.C.E.–406 B.C.E.).

In ancient days, when the life of men upon earth was simple, and when war and the chase were the occupation of the young, and the words of the aged were hearkened to like the oracles of the gods, there reigned in Iolchos a haughty king—Pelias, the son of Kretheus and Tyro—whose court became famous among the neighbor princes for his four fair daughters, Peisidike, Pelopeia, Hippothoe, and Alcestis. Of all the four by far the loveliest was Alcestis, for she was not only beautiful in form and face like her sisters, but so sweet a soul dwelt in her that her natural beauty was made ten times greater by the light that streamed forth from within. The king, Pelias, loved all his daughters, but to Alcestis, the youngest, his heart clung with the tenderest affection, for she was the crown and comfort of his age, abundant in love and tender care for him; so that Pelias, unable to bear the thought of parting with her, declared that he would give her in marriage to no one who did not come to claim her in a chariot drawn by boars and lions.

Lovely as Alcestis was, this haughty mandate had the effect of keeping many a gallant chief away, for who was so wise or so strong as to tame the lion and make him run obedient to the rein as a yoke fellow to the tusked boar? But there was one who had gazed upon Alcestis until the thought of her was present to him night and day, and to want her seemed as bad as to want the light and air of heaven, Admetus, the son of Pheres, King of Pherae, who had stood by Meleager when he smote the Kalydonian boar, and had sailed with Jason into the Black Euxine in search of the golden fleece; but now he cared no longer for the chase or travel, all he wished for was to rest in his father’s house and rule his people, if only he could win Alcestis to be his wife. Day and night the thought of her troubled him, so that his sleep departed from him, and all the business and pleasure of his life seemed unprofitable and dull.

“O thou Far-darter,” he prayed, stretching out his hands to the sun-god [Apollo], when his first beams smote the earth, “thou who hast thyself sorrowed for thy lost Daphne, thou who sendest hope and joy to men, be thou my helper, and teach me how to obey the mandate of the haughty king, or thyself take away this life which is bitter to me!”

Thus he prayed in his chamber when there was none but Phoebus [an epithet of Apollo meaning “radiant one”] to hearken; thus he prayed at midday aloud in the temple, amid the savor of burnt sacrifices, and the son of Latina

heard him as he sat in the groves of his beloved Cynthus—heard him and pitied him. And he taught him how to win the noble nature of the lion to accept the guidance of his hand, and gave him a subtle charm to tame the fierce anger of the boar, so that the two princes of the forest submitted to be yoked to the polished chariot, and bore the son of Pheres on his happy journey through the flowery Thessalian land, obedient to his word and hand as well trained horses.

King Pelias was much amazed to be informed that a suitor had come to seek the princess Alcestis, driving in his chariot a lion and a boar; but when he came forth and beheld the brave Admetus, a neighbor prince and an honored friend, he was well content, and, dearly as he loved Alcestis, he gave her with a good grace to the wooer, who had proved his courage and his skill, and, what was better yet in the eyes of a loving father, whom the gods who live forever honored with their counsel and help.

The nuptials were celebrated with joy and feasting, and Pelias bade adieu to his beloved child whom he was never to behold again; for before a year was over the happiness of Admetus and Alcestis was broken by the terrible news that Medeia, the dark-browed wife whom Jason had brought home from Kolchis, having by her magic restored youth to Aeson, the father of Jason, had been entreated by the daughters of Pelias to bestow the same boon upon their father; but the cruel woman, having made the credulous girls slay their father, with a view to raising him again in all his youthful vigor, forsook them, and, mocking their agony, left them to weep in vain over the mangled corpse.

This bitter sorrow was for many years the only trouble that darkened the life of Alcestis; in all else she was blessed beyond the common lot of women. Admetus loved her as a husband, and he trusted her as a friend. Two happy, healthy children were the crown of their wedded lives, and in house and field all went well with them.

Now there came to Pherae a stranger, noble in face and bearing, but clad like a poor countryman, who begged of Admetus to give him shelter and employment among his flocks and herds for a season, during which a stern fate compelled him to live an exile from his home. Admetus was too noble to ask him any question, he knew that some calamity was the cause—some homicide, perhaps for in those stormy days, when weapons were forever in the hands of men, it was no strange thing for the life of a hero to be darkened by the slaughter of a friend or kinsman in sudden anger or even by mischance, and he would fain have made much of the stranger, and kept him in his own palace and at his own table; but he chose rather to dwell in the fields among the quiet cattle, and to hide the sorrow that was darkening his life from the eyes of men. Then all things prospered more than ever at Pherae, and such a splendid race of horses grew up in the royal pastures that men began to wonder at the strange shepherd, and to whisper to each other that never man nor hero had such creative power as to make out of common horses creatures so divine that, but for the lack of wings, they might have matched with Pegasus himself, and that the strains of

music that came from the fields where the shepherd dwelt were sweeter and purer than any music which mortal bard could make.

The strange shepherd was in good sooth no other than the mighty Phoebus himself, banished from Olympus for seven long years because he had slain the Cyclops who had forged the thunderbolt with which Jove had slain his dear son, Aesculapius; but although he went in and out among men in the guise of a servant, he had not ceased to commune with the heavenly beings. His brother, Hermes, especially—perhaps not without the will of Jove—came to him often as he sat among the sheep in the Thessalian valleys, and through him it came to the knowledge of Phoebus that a calamity overhung the house of Admetus, which even he could not turn aside. The Moirae [Fates] in their dark counsels had decreed the death of the King himself, the day, the very hour was appointed, and he must quit wife and house and lands for the sunless regions of the dead.

Then was Phoebus very sorrowful—as sorrowful as the immortals who know the present, the past, and the future can be—and he sought the Moirae in their sanctuary at Thebes, and there, with all his divine eloquence, he plied them that he might wrest from them deliverance for Admetus—at least, as long as he himself should sojourn upon earth. But the Moirae were stern; what had once passed their lips could not be recalled. Only this much did the power of the sun-god wring from them: that if another head from the house of Admetus—a head as royal as his—were yielded to Thanatos [Death] instead of his, the span of his life might be lengthened. With this favor Phoebus was fain at length to return, nor did the condition seem very hard to him, for in the house of Admetus still dwelt Pheres and Periklymene, father and mother of the king, old folk worn with age and weakness, who often seemed wearying for the Lethe stream, and who would surely vie with each other as to which should pass into the house of Hades for the sake of their son. But Phoebus, wise and all-seeing though he was, knew not yet how dull and timorous old age is, and the proposal, though made with all the god's wisdom, sounded harsh and cruel to the old folk. "I have yielded to my son the scepter of my fathers, ever imperishable," said Pheres, impatiently tapping the earth with his staff; "I have endowed him in my lifetime with cities and treasures is it not enough? Does he grudge me the few days I have to live?"

"I risked my life for him once," cried Periklymene, weeping; "nor did I grudge, as mothers often do who wear a queenly crown, to nourish him, a helpless infant, at my breast. Have I not loved him enough? How can he ask me, weak and ill as I am, to bear more pain for him? I must have a little peace before I die. Alas! Who knows what he shall meet in the dusky house of Hades?"

And the old people, in their displeasure, failed not to murmur to the queen Alcestis at the strange shepherd and at his unreasonable talk. They wist not that it was Phoebus, the mighty sun-god, who was dwelling with them in a lowly disguise. When Alcestis at length understood, amid their complaints, that great

and sudden evil was said to threaten her husband, her heart was consumed with anxiety. She hastened to seek the shepherd, and she found him under a laurel shade, crooning softly to himself a hymn to one beloved and dead. It was, indeed, to the spirit of his dear son, the hero Aesculapius, but this the queen knew not; only as she drew near, the tender grief of the singer, and the sweet, soft strains of the lyre caused her to stop and, full of trouble as she was, to hearken and to shed tears for a grief that was not her own. And so she stood silent and awe-struck, what was divine in her soul causing her to recognize the divinity in the poorly clad shepherd, until Phoebus saw her, and, ceasing from his song, he rose up and stood humbly before her, as it becomes a shepherd to stand before an honored queen.

“O wondrous stranger!” said Alcestis; “for I dare not call thee shepherd, though now thou dwellest for a while in the pastures of Admetus—what are these strange tidings that have troubled the minds of Pheres and Periklymene? Is it indeed divine truth that the life of the noble Admetus is in danger, and that he, young and gracious as he is, is threatened with destruction? Speak, friend, for I know that the days of thy prince are precious in thine eyes, and that thou wilt tell no idle tale to fright us.”

“Alas! madam, it is true.”

“And is there no escape, no possibility of delay?”

“None, for neither father nor mother will die for him.”

“If Pheres or Periklymene would have entered the house of Hades in his stead, might Admetus have lived?”

“Ay, madam; so much did Phoebus, who cares for Admetus, obtain from the Moirae.”

“Blessed be he of the silver bow!” exclaimed the queen. “Never shall his shrine want for garlands, or his altar for burnt sacrifice! But if the Moirae would have taken the life of the aged Pheres or the feeble Periklymene for that of the blameless Admetus, the evil cannot be past cure. I will die for him, and it cannot be but that Thanatos will receive my life instead of that of the poor old folk who are ready to drop like ripe grain into his hands.”

At these words of the queen a divine beauty shone like a halo from the face of the disguised god, but he controlled himself.

“Hast thou well considered what it is that thou proposest to thyself?” he said. “Thou art still young and fair, a mother of dear children; how wilt thou endure to pass from the warmth of life and love into the sunless tracts of those below?”

“This house would be cold and sunless to me if Admetus were away; besides, it is the bounden duty of the wife to suffer all things for her husband.”

“But to leave thy dear children to the will of an unjust stepmother?”

A sadness passed across the brow of Alcestis at these words of the god tempting her; but it was like the shadow of a summer cloud thrown on a great corn-field, which passes swiftly, leaving the golden grain brighter than before.

“Admetus will care for the children,” she said, “and if he give them a step-mother, the gods will put it into her heart to be gentle to them for the sake of my act; but be that as it may, but for Admetus, the children would never have lain in my bosom. It would be hard, indeed, if they should be a hindrance to his safety.”

“Noble art thou among women!” exclaimed the approving god. “Do what is in thine heart, and be a blessed name among the nations, even to the islands of the furthest west.”

When Admetus learnt, as he did from Phoebus himself, how his wife had chosen to give her life for his, he would gladly have borne the fate appointed for him by the Moirae, and have died at the due time; but the will of the goddesses and the love of Alcestis overbore all opposition, and with tortured heart he awaited the fatal day.

At length it dawned, and Phoebus himself shrunk away into the glades of Pelion at the presence of the dusky Thanatos, who came duly to claim his prize. A mortal weakness seized the failing queen; her spirit, obedient to the summons, followed the irresistible king, and her sweet body lay silent and cold in the arms of her weeping women.

Hardly was the parting agony over, while the funeral rites were preparing, lo! there came to the palace gates a traveler in sore need of food and rest, and according to the pious custom of those ancient days the need of the wayfarer was attended to before all else. Had he come at another time, how welcome would this traveler have been; for it was no other than the mighty Herakles on his way to Thrace, whither he had been sent by his tyrant Eurystheus to fetch the fire-breathing horses of Diomedes. Even as it was, in such honor did Admetus hold the hero, that he bade his attendants suspend their lamentations, and conduct the preparations for the funeral in a part of the palace where no sounds of woe would reach the great hall where the feast for the guest would be spread, and himself, with feigned cheerfulness, went to greet his friend. The kindly hero, however, was at once struck by the fact that Admetus had his hair clipped short in the fashion of a mourner, and he asked the reason.

Admetus replied that there was a funeral that day, which he would be obliged to attend. “The gods forbid,” cried Herakles, anxiously, “that any evil may have befallen either of thy children?”

“My children,” returned Admetus, “both live and are well.”

“If thou mournest for thy father,” questioned Herakles again, “he must be now well on in years.”

“My father and my mother are both alive, Herakles.”

“It cannot be Alcestis, thy wife?” exclaimed the hero in dismay.

Then Admetus put great force upon himself; for he knew how Herakles honored the noble Alcestis, and that if he knew what the sorrow was that brooded over his house, he would, weary as he was, trudge onward, with spent strength and sorrowing heart, rather than give any trouble in the house,

bereaved of its mistress. So he said that the dead was indeed a woman—a foreign woman—one who had dwelt long under his roof, and very dear to them all. Then Herakles would have gone onward to seek hospitality elsewhere, but this Admetus would not hear of. He conducted him into the great hall, and charging his steward and his principal attendants to supply him with all he could desire, himself withdrew for awhile to direct the funeral rites and give way to his natural sorrow.

Herakles had fasted long and traveled far, and sweet was the rest, and the bowl of warm water for his feet, and the tender hands of the careful old woman who chafed and dried them; but most sweet the steaming flesh of sheep and oxen, and the fine white bread, and the honey-sweet wine which crowned his bowl. Royally the lusty hero ate and drank, but there was one hindrance to his comfort, which pressed upon him more as his hunger and thirst began to be appeased.

Though Admetus had charged his people on no account to let Herakles see that they were in trouble, they were not able to control altogether their grief, and, indeed, were not a little concerned at what seemed to them want of proper respect to their dear mistress, whose gracious kindness had made their lives pleasant to them, and many a time and oft had turned aside their master's wrath. Now Herakles feared not man nor beast. He could slay a hydra or face a fire-breathing horse, but he could not endure a clouded countenance or a dull, unsympathetic manner, and considering the steward's grief out of bounds for an event so common as death—the death of a slave, however faithful and however honored—he bade him quaff a goblet of wine to rouse his dull spirits, and to crown his head with a chaplet of fresh leaves. "For," added he, cheerily, "wist thou not that we are all to die? Is it not common sense, then, to accept death with a good courage? If a man indulges in gloom and melancholy, life is not life, but a calamity."

"I know that right well," replied the steward, the tears standing in his eyes; "but it is not in the power of all the laughter and jollity in the world to drown the memory of the grief which now compasseth us about."

"A woman of a strange land is dead—so much the worse for her; but when your king and his house are well"

"Our king and his house!" exclaimed the steward, "Alas! Sir, you know not the grief under which we groan."

"Can it be that your lord has deceived me?" cried Herakles, in alarm.

"Admetus holds the rites of hospitality in such honor that he would sacrifice everything to them. It is, indeed, a woman of a strange country who dead, but no slave, alas!"

"Could it be," said Herakles, "that Admetus was really in bitter grief himself, yet hid it from me?"

"Yes, for he would not sadden thee. But seest thou not how our heads are shaven, and what black robes we wear? No common grief, no servile mourning this."

"Who, then, is dead?" impatiently exclaimed the hero.

“The wife of Admetus, guest-friend!” cried the steward; and he hid his face in his mantle, unable longer to control his tears.

“And yet ye received me and made me a feast?”

“Yes, for it was his will; he honors Zeus Zenius too much to thrust thee away.” “Poor prince! What a wife to lose!”

“Ay, sir, we are all undone; she was the light and comfort of the house.”

“I saw,” said Herakles, “that as he spoke to me his eyes were full of tears—I saw his mourning garments and his shaven head; but I believed what he told me of a foreign woman who was to be buried—a foreign woman indeed was the matchless Alcestis, but who so near and dear? A voice within me warned me that I should turn aside from the house, but I would not hearken to it. To think that I should have drunk and feasted in the house of a man so overwhelmed with sorrow! Tell me, man, tell me where he has buried her, that I too may mourn over her.”

Then the steward’s tongue was loosened and he told to Herakles the whole story of the fate that had threatened Admetus, and how the Moirae had been won to accept another life, as noble, instead of his, and how Alcestis, gaining knowledge of this, had given her own life for his, “as noble a life,” said the weeping steward, “as ever was lived upon this earth.” Herakles listened without a word to all the story, moved to the bottom of his great soul at the virtue of Alcestis, and stung with shame at his own dullness in not searching more deeply into the source of the sorrow in the house, and there entered into his heart a wonderful resolution, even to enter once more realms of Hades, whence he had already dragged three-headed Cerberus for Eurystheus to see, and wrest the newly flown spirit from the grasp of Thanatos. Such seemed to him the only fit compensation he could make to her or to Admetus for breaking upon them in their sorrow. So without more delay hastened to the tomb—now richly spread with honey cakes, and silent—and lay in wait until, as he expected Thanatos came to regale himself on the offerings; then he rushed out upon him, and grasping him in his arms would by no means let him go until he promised bring back the queen alive to the earth.

Admetus meanwhile was so overwhelmed with sorrow that he could not gather courage to return to his widowed home: the tender memories of his wedded life came back to him, and in his loneliness he envied her who was dead, thinking that he would gladly have leapt into the pit where her body was laid, and been covered up with her out of the sight of men.

While he still lingered outside the palace, he was surprised to behold the guest, whom he believed to be resting safely in his guest-chamber, approach him leading by the hand a veiled woman. Herakles at once and frankly reproached him for leaving him in ignorance of so momentous a truth as the death of his wife, since between friends all speech should be free and open; but he said that though he had just cause complaint against him, he would not add to his sorrow but would show him the trust he still placed in his friendship by giving into his

charge a lady, the captive of his spear, whom he had much reason to honor dearly. "Do thou, Admetus," he said, "take her under thy roof, while I go to this fierce Thracian, whose horses I must needs have; and well I wot that he will not give them to me without a struggle, in which either he or I must fall. Should he be the conqueror—which the gods avert!—I make thee a present of this fair prize, won not without strain of nerve and sinew! Let her well in thine house for my sake."

"Noble Herakles," replied Admetus, "forgive me that I hid my grief from thee. How could I let thee, wayworn and weary as thou wert, toil onward in search of food and rest, and so lose to my poor house the honor of sheltering once more the first of heroes? But as to this lady, I beg thee seek entertainment for her elsewhere; there are many in Pherae who would gladly pay her all honor, to be accounted thy guest-friend. As for me, the sight of a lady about the house would move me to endless weeping, my trouble is new and heavy upon me. Your prize is young and fair—one can see that even under her veil—she would need some kindly woman to care for and to guide her. Alas! Even now she reminds me of her who is dead. For the sake of all the gods, noble Herakles, take her from my sight. When I look at her my heart leaps and the fountains of my tears are broken up; for even so did Alcestis stand, so did she move!"

"Would that Jove would give thee back thy wife, poor friend!" said Herakles.

"A vain wish, noble son of Alkmene, seeing that the dead return not to dwell in their earthly homes."

Then Herakles strove to cheer him, telling him that the time would come when the thought of second nuptials would not be painful to him; at mention of which the soul of Admetus flamed out in anger. Then Herakles again pressed him to take the strange lady into his house, and Admetus was at length persuaded to take her by the hand to conduct her into the palace, that she might abide there until he should return to reclaim her. "But," said the son of Alkmene, "before thou dost lead her in, draw aside her veil, and behold if this stranger resemble not thine own wife in feature and in complexion, as well as in height and gait, and if great and abundant joy be not prepared for thee instead of overwhelming grief."

Scarce comprehending the words of Herakles, Admetus with a trembling hand drew aside the veil that hid the countenance of the stranger, and beheld, O miracle! the true face of his beloved wife, pale indeed, but smiling on him with incomparable love. Who can tell the joy of that hour when the dear wife and mother was given back in a manner so unlooked for, and the house of mourning was turned into a house of joy?

For three days—such test the infernal gods required—Alcestis uttered no sound; but when the rites to Proserpina were duly paid and the lustral sacrifices offered, she was again the tender wife and mother, the gracious queen and mistress, full of thought and care for all, from the royal Admetus to the poor slave,

who swept the chambers. Honor first to Him of the silver bow, the ever-present honor and protection of the house, honor and love to the much-enduring Herakles, and safe end to his hard labors!

Alcestis beheld her children, Eumelus and Perimele, grow up under her kindly care to be a noble man and woman; and when at length she passed away, full of years, her passage to the realms of Hades was swift and easy as the sleep of the wayfarer weary with long travel.

THE SEVEN-HEADED SERPENT

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

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Original Source: Greece

National Origin: Greece

“The Seven-Headed Serpent” modifies the basic structure of the familiar “Dragon-Slayer” (AT 300) **tale type**. As in “The Dragon Slayer,” the hero is assisted by a horse with whom he was born and kills the serpent by use of a magic sword. The motivation for the hero’s quest is provided by an episode based on “King of the Snakes” (AT 300B), and as in “The Three Stolen Princesses” (AT 301), the hero is engendered by his mother’s eating a piece of fruit (*Motif* F611.1.10). It is possible that the **motif** of the ship with black sails is inspired by the **myth** of Theseus (see “How Theseus Slew the Devourers of Men,” page 231). This tale is unusual in that the helpful agents are a convent of nuns and their abbess rather than the usual non-Christian supernatural figures of European folklore. The apple of conception and the serpent are tinged with Christian symbolism, also. Conspicuously absent from the tale is the common concluding episode of the hero’s marriage with a princess or female helper.

Once upon a time there was a king who determined to take a long voyage. He assembled his fleet and all the seamen, and set out. They went straight on night and day, until they came to an island which was covered with large trees, and under every tree lay a lion. As soon as the King had landed his men, the lions all rose up together and tried to devour them. After a long battle they managed to overcome the wild beasts, but the greater number of the men were killed. Those who remained alive now went on through the forest and found on the other side of it a beautiful garden, in which all the plants of the world flourished together.

There were also in the garden three springs: the first flowed with silver, the second with gold, and the third with pearls. The men unbuckled their knapsacks and filled them with those precious things. In the middle of the garden they found a large lake, and when they reached the edge of it the Lake began to speak, and said to them, "What men are you, and what brings you here? Are you come to visit our king?" But they were too much frightened to answer.

Then the Lake said, "You do well to be afraid, for it is at your peril that you are come hither. Our king, who has seven heads, is now asleep, but in a few minutes he will wake up and come to me to take his bath! Woe to anyone who meets him in the garden, for it is impossible to escape from him. This is what you must do if you wish to save your lives. Take off your clothes and spread them on the path which leads from here to the castle. The King will then glide over something soft, which he likes very much, and he will be so pleased with that that he will not devour you. He will give you some punishment, but then he will let you go."

The men did as the Lake advised them, and waited for a time. At noon the earth began to quake, and opened in many places, and out of the openings appeared lions, tigers, and other wild beasts, which surrounded the castle, and thousands and thousands of beasts came out of the castle following their king, the Seven-headed Serpent. The Serpent glided over the clothes which were spread for him, came to the Lake, and asked it who had strewed those soft things on the path? The Lake answered that it had been done by people who had come to do him homage. The King commanded that the men should be brought before him. They came humbly on their knees, and in a few words told him their story. Then he spoke to them with a mighty and terrible voice, and said, "Because you have dared to come here, I lay upon you the punishment. Every year you must bring me from among your people twelve youths and twelve maidens, that I may devour them. If you do not do this, I will destroy your whole nation."

Then he desired one of his beasts to show the men the way out of the garden, and dismissed them. They then left the island and went back to their own country, where they related what had happened to them. Soon the time came round when the king of the beasts would expect the youths and maidens to be brought to him. The King therefore issued a proclamation inviting twelve youths and twelve maidens to offer themselves up to save their country; and immediately many young people, far more than enough, hastened to do so. A new ship was built, and set with black sails, and in it the youths and maidens who were appointed for the king of the beasts embarked and set out for his country. When they arrived there they went at once to the Lake, and this time the lions did not stir, nor did the springs flow, and neither did the Lake speak. So they waited then, and it was not long before the earth quaked even more terribly than the first time. The Seven-headed Serpent came without his train of beasts, saw his prey waiting for him, and devoured it at one mouthful. Then the ship's crew returned home, and the same thing happened yearly until many years had passed.

Now the King of this unhappy country was growing old, and so was the Queen, and they had no children. One day the Queen was sitting at the window weeping bitterly because she was childless, and knew that the crown would therefore pass to strangers after the King's death. Suddenly a little old woman appeared before her, holding an apple in her hand, and said, "Why do you weep, my Queen, and what makes you so unhappy?"

"Alas, good mother," answered the Queen, "I am unhappy because I have no children."

"Is that what vexes you?" said the old woman. "Listen to me. I am a nun from the Spinning Convent, and my mother when she died left me this apple. Whoever eats this apple shall have a child."

The Queen gave money to the old woman, and bought the apple from her. Then she peeled it, ate it, and threw the rind out of the window, and it so happened that a mare that was running loose in the court below ate up the rind. After a time the Queen had a little boy, and the mare also had a male foal. The boy and the foal grew up together and loved each other like brothers. In course of time the King died, and so did the Queen, and their son, who was now nineteen years old, was left alone. One day, when he and his horse were talking together, the Horse said to him, "Listen to me, for I love you and wish for your good and that of the country. If you go on every year sending twelve youths and twelve maidens to the King of the Beasts, your country will very soon be ruined. Mount upon my back: I will take you to a woman who can direct you how to kill the Seven-headed Serpent."

Then the youth mounted his horse, who carried him far away to a mountain which was hollow, for in its side was a great underground cavern. In the cavern sat an old woman spinning. This was the cloister of the nuns, and the old woman was the Abbess. They all spent their time in spinning, and that is why the convent has this name. All round the walls of the cavern there were beds cut out of the solid rock, upon which the nuns slept, and in the middle a light was burning. It was the duty of the nuns to watch the light in turns, that it might never go out, and if anyone of them let it go out the others put her to death.

As soon as the King's son saw the old Abbess spinning he threw himself at her feet and entreated her to tell him how he could kill the Seven-headed Serpent.

She made the youth rise, embraced him, and said, "Know, my son, that it is I who sent the nun to your mother and caused you to be born, and with you the horse, with whose help you will be able to free the world from the monster. I will tell you what you have to do. Load your horse with cotton, and go by a secret passage which I will show you, which is hidden from the wild beasts, to the Serpent's palace. You will find the King asleep upon his bed, which is all hung round with bells, and over his bed you will see a sword hanging. With this sword only it is possible to kill the Serpent, because even if its blade breaks a new one will grow again for every head the monster has. Thus you will be able to cut off

all his seven heads. And this you must also do in order to deceive the King: you must slip into his bed-chamber very softly, and stop up all the bells which are round his bed with cotton. Then take down the sword gently, and quickly give the monster a blow on his tail with it. This will make him waken up, and if he catches sight of you he will seize you. But you must quickly cut off his first head, and then wait till the next one comes up. Then strike it off also, and so go on till you have cut off all his seven heads.”

The old Abbess then gave the Prince her blessing, and he set out upon his enterprise, arrived at the Serpent’s castle by following the secret passage which she had shown him, and by carefully attending to all her directions he happily succeeded in killing the monster. As soon as the wild beasts heard of their king’s death, they all hastened to the castle, but the youth had long since mounted his horse and was already far out of their reach. They pursued him as fast as they could, but they found it impossible to overtake him, and he reached home in safety. Thus he freed his country from this terrible oppression.

THE GOLDEN CRAB

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Lang, Andrew. *The Yellow Fairy Book*. London: Longmans, Green and Company, 1894, 26–31.

Date: Unavailable

Original Source: Schmidt, Bernard. “Prinz Krebs.” In *Griechische Märchen*.

National Origin: Greece

Unlike the previous Greek **ordinary folktale**, “The Seven-Headed Serpent” (page 253), “The Golden Crab” does not adopt Christianity as a vehicle for the miraculous deeds that transpire. Instead the core of this tale is a more straightforward **variant** of the **tale type** “The Search for the Lost Husband” (AT 425).

Once upon a time there was a fisherman who had a wife and three children. Every morning he used to go out fishing, and whatever fish he caught he sold to the King. One day, among the other fishes, he caught a golden crab. When he came home he put all the fishes together into a great dish, but he kept the Crab separate because it shone so beautifully, and placed it upon a high shelf in the cupboard. Now while the old woman, his wife, was cleaning the fish, and had tucked up her gown so that her feet were visible, she suddenly heard a voice, which said, “Let down, let down thy petticoat, That lets thy feet be seen.”

She turned round in surprise, and then she saw the little creature, the Golden Crab. "What! You can speak, can you, you ridiculous crab?" she said, for she was not quite pleased at the Crab's remarks. Then she took him up and placed him on a dish.

When her husband came home and they sat down to dinner, they presently heard the Crab's little voice saying, "Give me some too." They were all very much surprised, but they gave him something to eat. When the old man came to take away the plate which had contained the Crab's dinner, he found it full of gold, and as the same thing happened every day he soon became very fond of the Crab.

One day the Crab said to the fisherman's wife, "Go to the King and tell him I wish to marry his younger daughter."

The old woman went accordingly, and laid the matter before the King, who laughed a little at the notion of his daughter marrying a crab, but did not decline the proposal altogether, because he was a prudent monarch, and knew that the Crab was likely to be a prince in disguise. He said, therefore, to the fisherman's wife, "Go, old woman, and tell the Crab I will give him my daughter if by tomorrow morning he can build a wall in front of my castle much higher than my tower, upon which all the flowers of the world must grow and bloom."

The fisherman's wife went home and gave this message.

Then the Crab gave her a golden rod, and said, "Go and strike with this rod three times upon the ground on the place which the King showed you, and tomorrow morning the wall will be there."

The old woman did so and went away again.

The next morning, when the King awoke, what do you think he saw? The wall stood there before his eyes, exactly as he had bespoken it!

Then the old woman went back to the King and said to him, "Your Majesty's orders have been fulfilled."

"That is all very well," said the King, "but I cannot give away my daughter until there stands in front of my palace a garden in which there are three fountains, of which the first must play gold, the second diamonds, and the third brilliants."

So the old woman had to strike again three times upon the ground with the rod, and the next morning the garden was there. The King now gave his consent, and the wedding was fixed for the very next day.

Then the Crab said to the old fisherman, "Now take this rod; go and knock with it on a certain mountain; then a black man (a Moor) will come out and ask you what you wish for. Answer him thus, 'Your master, the King, has sent me to tell you that you must send him his golden garment that is like the sun.' Make him give you, besides, the queenly robes of gold and precious stones which are like the flowery meadows, and bring them both to me. And bring me also the golden cushion."

The old man went and did his errand. When he had brought the precious robes, the Crab put on the golden garment and then crept upon the golden

cushion, and in this way the fisherman carried him to the castle, where the Crab presented the other garment to his bride. Now the ceremony took place, and when the married pair were alone together the Crab made himself known to his young wife, and told her how he was the son of the greatest king in the world, and how he was enchanted, so that he became a crab by day and was a man only at night; and he could also change himself into an eagle as often as he wished. No sooner had he said this than he shook himself, and immediately became a handsome youth, but the next morning he was forced to creep back again into his crab-shell. And the same thing happened every day. But the Princess's affection for the Crab, and the polite attention with which she behaved to him, surprised the royal family very much. They suspected some secret, but though they spied and spied, they could not discover it. Thus a year passed away, and the Princess had a son, whom she called Benjamin. But her mother still thought the whole matter very strange. At last she said to the King that he ought to ask his daughter whether she would not like to have another husband instead of the Crab? But when the daughter was questioned she only answered, "I am married to the Crab, and him only will I have."

Then the King said to her, "I will appoint a tournament in your honor, and I will invite all the princes in the world to it, and if any one of them pleases you, you shall marry him."

In the evening the Princess told this to the Crab, who said to her, "Take this rod, go to the garden gate and knock with it, then a black man will come out and say to you, 'Why have you called me, and what do you require of me?' Answer him thus, 'Your master the King has sent me hither to tell you to send him his golden armor and his steed and the silver apple.' And bring them to me."

The Princess did so, and brought him what he desired.

The following evening the Prince dressed himself for the tournament. Before he went he said to his wife, "Now mind you do not say when you see me that I am the Crab. For if you do this evil will come of it. Place yourself at the window with your sisters; I will ride by and throw you the silver apple. Take it in your hand, but if they ask you who I am, say that you do not know." So saying, he kissed her, repeated his warning once more, and went away.

The Princess went with her sisters to the window and looked on at the tournament. Presently her husband rode by and threw the apple up to her. She caught it in her hand and went with it to her room, and by-and-by her husband came back to her. But her father was much surprised that she did not seem to care about any of the Princes; he therefore appointed a second tournament.

The Crab then gave his wife the same directions as before, only this time the apple which she received from the black man was of gold. But before the Prince went to the tournament he said to his wife, "Now I know you will betray me today."

But she swore to him that she would not tell who he was. He then repeated his warning and went away.

In the evening, while the Princess, with her mother and sisters, was standing at the window, the Prince suddenly galloped past on his steed and threw her the golden apple.

Then her mother flew into a passion, gave her a box on the ear, and cried out, "Does not even that prince please you, you fool?"

The Princess in her fright exclaimed, "That is the Crab himself!"

Her mother was still more angry because she had not been told sooner, ran into her daughter's room where the crab-shell was still lying, took it up and threw it into the fire. Then the poor Princess cried bitterly, but it was of no use; her husband did not come back.

Now we must leave the Princess and turn to the other persons in the story. One day an old man went to a stream to dip in a crust of bread which he was going to eat, when a dog came out of the water, snatched the bread from his hand, and ran away. The old man ran after him, but the dog reached a door, pushed it open, and ran in, the old man following him. He did not overtake the dog, but found himself above a staircase, which he descended. Then he saw before him a stately palace, and, entering, he found in a large hall a table set for twelve persons. He hid himself in the hall behind a great picture, that he might see what would happen. At noon he heard a great noise, so that he trembled with fear. When he took courage to look out from behind the picture, he saw twelve eagles flying in. At this sight his fear became still greater. The eagles flew to the basin of a fountain that was there and bathed themselves, when suddenly they were changed into twelve handsome youths. Now they seated themselves at the table, and one of them took up a goblet filled with wine, and said, "A health to my father!" And another said, "A health to my mother!" and so the healths went round.

Then one of them said, "A health to my dearest lady, Long may she live and well! But a curse on the cruel mother, That burnt my golden shell!"

And so saying he wept bitterly. Then the youths rose from the table, went back to the great stone fountain, turned themselves into eagles again, and flew away.

Then the old man went away too, returned to the light of day, and went home. Soon after he heard that the Princess was ill, and that the only thing that did her good was having stories told to her. He therefore went to the royal castle, obtained an audience of the Princess, and told her about the strange things he had seen in the underground palace. No sooner had he finished than the Princess asked him whether he could find the way to that palace.

"Yes," he answered, "certainly."

And now she desired him to guide her thither at once. The old man did so, and when they came to the palace he hid her behind the great picture and advised her to keep quite still, and he placed himself behind the picture also. Presently the eagles came flying in, and changed themselves into young men, and in a moment the Princess recognized her husband amongst them all, and

tried to come out of her hiding-place; but the old man held her back. The youths seated themselves at the table; and now the Prince said again, while he took up the cup of wine, "A health to my dearest lady, Long may she live and well! But a curse on the cruel mother That burnt my golden shell!"

Then the Princess could restrain herself no longer, but ran forward and threw her arms round her husband. And immediately he knew her again, and said, "Do you remember how I told you that day that you would betray me? Now you see that I spoke the truth. But all that bad time is past. Now listen to me: I must still remain enchanted for three months. Will you stay here with me till that time is over?"

So the Princess stayed with him, and said to the old man, "Go back to the castle and tell my parents that I am staying here."

Her parents were very much vexed when the old man came back and told them this, but as soon as the three months of the Prince's enchantment were over, he ceased to be an eagle and became once more a man, and they returned home together. And then they lived happily, and we who hear the story are happier still

ITALY

THE CRYSTAL CASKET

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Crane, Thomas Frederick. *Italian Popular Tales*. New York: Houghton, Mifflin and Co., 1885, 326–331.

Date: Unavailable

Original Source: Italy

National Origin: Italy

Italy includes not only the southern European Italian peninsula, but also the two large islands of Sardinia and Sicily located in the Mediterranean Sea between continental Africa and the European mainland. As a consequence, Italy exhibits considerable cultural diversity throughout its history. The following folktales, however, are drawn from **variants** of European tales collected from the Renaissance (late thirteenth century) to the nineteenth century. In the following variant of “Snow White” (AT 709), the heroine, Ermellina, is portrayed as bringing on many of her own difficulties. In addition, her animal benefactor, after rescuing her and transporting her to the castle of fairies, sets in motion the stepmother’s schemes for revenge. The tale differs profoundly from those versions of the tale popularized in contemporary media.

There was once a widower who had a daughter. This daughter was between ten and twelve years old. Her father sent her to school, and as she was all alone in the world commended her always to her teacher. Now, the teacher, seeing that the child had no mother, fell in love with the father, and kept saying to the girl, “Ask your father if he would like me for a wife.”

This she said to her every day, and at last the girl said, "Papa, the school-mistress is always asking me if you will marry her."

The father said, "Eh! My daughter, if I take another wife, you will have great troubles." But the girl persisted, and finally the father was persuaded to go one evening to the school-mistress' house. When she saw him she was well pleased, and they settled the marriage in a few days. Poor child! How bitterly she had to repent having found a stepmother so ungrateful and cruel to her! She sent her every day out on a terrace to water a pot of basil, and it was so dangerous that if she fell she would go into a large river.

One day there came by a large eagle, and said to her, "What are you doing her?" She was weeping because she saw how great the danger was of falling into the stream. The eagle said to her, "Get on my back, and I will carry you away, and you will be happier than with your new mamma."

After a long journey they reached a great plain, where they found a beautiful palace all of crystal; the eagle knocked at the door and said, "Open, my ladies, open! For I have brought you a pretty girl." When the people in the palace opened the door, and saw that lovely girl, they were amazed, and kissed and caressed her. Meanwhile the door was closed, and they remained peaceful and contended.

Let us return to the eagle, who thought she was doing a spite to the stepmother. One day the eagle flew away to the terrace where the stepmother was watering the basil. "Where is your daughter?" asked the eagle.

"Eh!" she replied, "perhaps she fell from this terrace and went into the river; I have not heard from her in ten days."

The eagle answered, "What a fool you are! I carried her away; seeing that you treated her so harshly I carried her away to my fairies, and she is very well." Then the eagle flew away.

The stepmother, filled with rage and jealousy, called a witch from the city, and said to her, "You see my daughter is alive, and is in the house of some fairies of an eagle which often comes upon my terrace; now you must do me the favor to find some way to kill this stepdaughter of mine, for I am afraid that some day or other she will return, and my husband, discovering this matter, will certainly kill me."

The witch answered, "Oh, you need not be afraid of that; leave it to me."

What did the witch do? She had made a little basketful of sweetmeats, in which she put a charm; then she wrote a letter, pretending that it was her father, who, having learned where she was, wished to make her this present, and the letter pretended that her father was so glad to hear that she was with the fairies.

Let us leave the witch who is arranging all this deception, and return to Ermellina (for so the young girl was named). The fairies had said to her, "See, Ermellina, we are going away, and shall be absent four days; now in this time take good care not to open the door to anyone, for some treachery is being prepared for you by your stepmother."

She promised to open the door to no one, “Do not be anxious, I am well off, and my stepmother has nothing to do with me.”

But it was not so. The fairies went away, and the next day when Ermellina was alone, she heard a knocking at the door, and said to herself, “Knock away! I don’t open to anyone.”

But meanwhile the blows redoubled, and curiosity forced her to look out of the window. What did she see? She saw one of the servant girls of her own home (for the witch had disguised herself as one of her father’s servants). “O my dear Ermellina,” she said, “your father is shedding tears of sorrow for you, because he really believed you were dead, but the eagle which carried you off came and told him the good news that you were here with the fairies. Meanwhile your father, not knowing what civility to show you, for he understands very well that you are in need of nothing, has thought to send you this little basket of sweetmeats.”

Ermellina had not yet opened the door; the servant begged her to come down and take the basket and the letter, but she said, “No, I wish nothing!” but finally, since women, and especially young girls, are fond of sweetmeats, she descended and opened the door.

When the witch had given her the basket, she said, “Eat this,” and broke off for her a piece of the sweetmeats which she had poisoned. When Ermellina took the first mouthful the old woman disappeared. Ermellina had scarcely time to close the door, when she fell down on the stairs.

When the fairies returned they knocked at the door, but no one opened it for them; then they perceived that there had been some treachery, and began to weep. Then the chief of the fairies said, “We must break open the door,” and so they did, and saw Ermellina dead on the stairs.

Her other friends who loved her so dearly begged the chief of the fairies to bring her to life, but she would not, “for,” she said, “she has disobeyed me.” But one and the other asked her until she consented; she opened Ermellina’s mouth, took out a piece of the sweetmeat which she had not yet swallowed, raised her up, and Ermellina came to life again.

We can imagine what a pleasure it was for her fiends; but the chief of the fairies reproved her for her disobedience, and she promised not to do so again.

Once more the fairies were obliged to depart. Their chief said, “Remember, Ermellina: The first time I cured you, but the second I will have nothing to do with you.”

Ermellina said they need not worry, that she would not open to anyone. But it was not so; for the eagle, thinking to increase her stepmother’s anger, told her again that Ermellina was alive. The stepmother denied it all to the eagle, but she summoned anew the witch, and told her that her stepdaughter was still alive, saying, “Either you will really kill her, or I will be avenged on you.”

The old woman, finding herself caught, told her to buy a very handsome dress, one of the handsomest she could find, and transformed herself into a

tailoress belonging to the family, took the dress, departed, went to poor Ermellina, knocked at the door and said, "Open, open, for I am your tailoress."

Ermellina looked out of the window and saw her tailoress; and was, in truth, a little confused (indeed, anyone would have been so).

The tailoress said, "Come down, I must fit a dress on you."

She replied, "No, no; for I have been deceived once."

"But I am not the old woman," replied the tailoress, "you know me, for I have always made your dresses."

Poor Ermellina was persuaded, and descended the stairs; the tailoress took to flight while Ermellina was yet buttoning up the dress, and disappeared. Ermellina closed the door, and was mounting the stairs; but it was not permitted her to go up, for she fell down dead.

Let us return to the fairies, who came home and knocked at the door; but what good did it do to knock! There was no longer anyone there. They began to weep. The chief of the fairies said, "I told you that she would betray me again; but now I will have nothing more to do with her."

So they broke open the door, and saw the poor girl with the beautiful dress on; but she was dead. They all wept, because they really loved her. But there was nothing to do; the chief struck her enchanted wand, and commanded a beautiful rich casket all covered with diamonds and other precious stones to appear; then the others made a beautiful garland of flowers and gold, put it on the young girl, and then laid her in the casket, which was so rich and beautiful that it was marvelous to behold. Then the old fairy struck her wand as usual and commanded a handsome horse, the like of which not even the king possessed. Then they took the casket, put it on the horse's back, and led him into the public square of the city, and the chief of the fairies said, "Go, and do not stop until you find someone who says to you, 'Stop, for pity's sake, for I have lost my horse for you.'"

Now let us leave the afflicted fairies, and turn our attention to the horse, which ran away at full speed. Who happened to pass at that moment? The son of a king (the name of this king is not known); and saw this horse with that wonder on its back. Then the king began to spur his horse, and rode him so hard that he killed him, and had to leave him dead in the road; but the king kept running after the other horse. The poor king could endure it no longer; he saw himself lost, and exclaimed, "Stop, for pity's sake, for I have lost my horse for you!"

Then the horse stopped (for those were the words). When the king saw that beautiful girl dead in the casket, he thought no more about his own horse, but took the other to the city. The king's mother knew that her son had gone hunting; when she saw him returning with this loaded horse, she did not know what to think. The son had no father, wherefore he was all powerful. He reached the palace, had the horse unloaded, and the casket carried to his chamber; then he called his mother and said, "Mother, I went hunting, but I have found a wife."

"But what is it? A doll? A dead woman?"

“Mother,” replied her son, “don’t trouble yourself about what it is, it is my wife.”

His mother began to laugh, and withdrew to her own room (what could she do, poor mother?).

Now this poor king no longer went hunting, took no diversion, did not even go to the table, but ate in his own room. By a fatality it happened that war was declared against him, and he was obliged to depart. He called his mother, and said, “Mother, I wish two careful chambermaids, whose business it shall be to guard this casket; for if on my return I find that anything has happened to my casket, I shall have the chambermaids killed.”

His mother, who loved him, said, “Go, my son, fear nothing, for I myself will watch over your casket.”

He wept several days at being obliged to abandon this treasure of his, but there was no help for it, he had to go. After his departure he did nothing but commend his wife (so he called her) to his mother in his letters.

Let us return to the mother, who no longer thought about the matter, not even to have the casket dusted; but all at once there came a letter which informed her that the king had been victorious, and should return to his palace in a few days. The mother called the chambermaids, and said to them, “Girls, we are ruined.”

They replied, “Why, Highness?”

“Because my son will be back in a few days, and how have we taken care of the doll?”

They answered, “True, true; now let us go and wash the doll’s face.”

They went to the king’s room and saw that the doll’s face and hands were covered with dust and fly specks, so they took a sponge and washed her face, but some drops of water fell on her dress and spotted it. The poor chambermaids began to weep, and went to the queen for advice.

The queen said, “Do you know what to do! Call a tailoress, and have a dress precisely like this bought, and take off this one before my son comes.”

They did so, and the chambermaids went to the room and began to unbutton the dress. The moment that they took off the first sleeve, Ermellina opened her eyes. The poor chambermaids sprang up in terror, but one of the most courageous said, “I am a woman, and so is this one; she will not eat me.”

To cut the matter short, she took off the dress, and when it was removed Ermellina began to get out of the casket to walk about and see where she was. The chambermaids fell on their knees before her and begged her to tell them who she was. She, poor girl, told them the whole story. Then she said, “I wish to know where I am.”

Then the chambermaids called the king’s mother to explain it to her. The mother did not fail to tell her everything, and she, poor girl, did nothing but weep penitently, thinking of what the fairies had done for her.

The king was on the point of arriving, and his mother said to the doll, “Come here; put on one of my best dresses.” In short, she arrayed her like a

queen. Then came her son. They shut the doll up in a small room, so that she could not be seen. The king came with great joy, with trumpets blowing, and banners flying for the victory. But he took no interest in all this, and ran at once to his room to see the doll; the chambermaids fell on their knees before him saying that the doll smelled so badly that they could not stay in the palace, and were obliged to bury her.

The king would not listen to this excuse, but at once called two of the palace servants to erect the gallows. His mother comforted him in vain, "My son, it was a dead woman."

"No, no, I will not listen to any reasons; dead or alive, you should have left it for me."

Finally, when his mother saw that he was in earnest about the gallows, she rang a little bell, and there came forth no longer the doll, but a very beautiful girl, whose like was never seen.

The king was amazed, and said, "What is this!"

Then his mother, the chambermaids, and Ermellina were obliged to tell him all that had happened.

He said, "Mother, since I adored her when dead, and called her my wife, now I mean her to be my wife in truth."

"Yes, my son," replied his mother, "do so, for I am willing."

They arranged the wedding, and in a few days were man and wife.

THE CRUMB IN THE BEARD

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Crane, Thomas Frederick. *Italian Popular Tales*. New York: Houghton, Mifflin and Co., 1885, 110–114.

Date: Unavailable

Original Source: Italy

National Origin: Italy

A **variant** of the tale included in Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm's folktale corpus as "King Thrushbeard" (AT 900, Grimm 52), "A Crumb in the Beard" focuses on the elaborate scheme devised by a handsome suitor to avenge a slight by an overly critical princess. In the process, she is both educated and wed.

There was once a king who had a daughter whose name was Stella. She was indescribably beautiful, but was so whimsical and hard to please that she drove her father to despair.

There had been princes and kings who had sought her in marriage, but she had found defects in them all and would have none of them. She kept advancing in years, and her father began to despair of knowing to whom he should leave his crown. So he summoned his council, and discussed the matter, and was advised to give a great banquet, to which he should invite all the princes and kings of the surrounding countries, for, as they said, there cannot fail to be among so many, someone who should please the princess, who was to hide behind a door, so that she could examine them all as she pleased.

When the king heard this advice, he gave the order necessary for the banquet, and then called his daughter, and said, "Listen, my little Stella, I have thought to do so and so, to see if I can find anyone to please you. Behold, my daughter, my hair is white, and I must have someone to leave my crown to."

Stella bowed her head, saying that she would take care to please him.

Princes and kings then began to arrive at the court, and when it was time for the banquet, they all seated themselves at the table. You can imagine what sort of a banquet that was, and how the hall was adorned: Gold and silver shone from all their necks. In the four corners of the room were four fountains, which continually sent forth wine and the most exquisite perfumes.

While the gentlemen were eating, Stella was behind a door, as has been said, and one of her maids, who was nearby, pointed out to her now this one, now that one. "See, your majesty, what a handsome youth that is there."

"Yes, but he has too large a nose."

"And the one near your father?"

"He has eyes that look like saucers."

"And that other at the head of the table?"

"He has too large a mouth. He looks as if he liked to eat."

In short, she found fault with all but one, who, she said, pleased her, but that he must be a very dirty fellow, for he had a crumb on his beard after eating. The youth heard her say this, and swore vengeance. You must know that he was the son of the King of the Green Hill, and the handsomest youth that could be seen.

When the banquet was finished and the guests had departed, the king called Stella and asked, "What news have you, my child?"

She replied, that the only one who pleased her was the one with the crumb in his beard, but that she believed him to be a dirty fellow and did not want him.

"Take care, my daughter, you will repent it," answered her father, and turned away.

You must know that Stella's chamber looked into a courtyard into which opened the shop of a baker. One night, while she was preparing to retire, she heard, in the room where they sifted the meal, someone singing so well and with so much grace that it went to her heart. She ran to the window and listened until he finished. Then she began to ask her maid who the person with the beautiful voice could be, saying she would like to know.

“Leave it to me, your majesty,” said the maid. “I will inform you tomorrow.”

Stella could not wait for the next day; and, indeed, early the next day she learned that the one who sang was the sifter. That evening she heard him sing again, and stood by the window until everything became quiet. But that voice had so touched her heart that she told her maid that the next day she would try and see who had that fine voice. In the morning she placed herself by the window, and soon saw the youth come forth. She was enchanted by his beauty as soon as she saw him, and fell desperately in love with him.

Now you must know that this was none other than the prince who was at the banquet, and whom Stella had called “dirty.” So he had disguised himself in such a way that she could not recognize him, and was meanwhile preparing his revenge. After he had seen her once or twice he began to take off his hat and salute her. She smiled at him, and appeared at the window every moment. Then they began to exchange words, and in the evening he sang under her window. In short, they began to make love in good earnest, and when he learned that she was free, he began to talk about marrying her. She consented at once, but asked him what he had to live on.

“I haven’t a penny,” said he. “The little I earn is hardly enough to feed me.”

Stella encouraged him, saying she would give him all the money and things he wanted.

To punish Stella for her pride, her father and the prince’s father had an understanding, and pretended not to know about this love affair, and let her carry away from the palace all she owned. During the day Stella did nothing but make a great bundle of clothes, of silver, and of money, and at night the disguised prince came under the balcony, and she threw it down to him. Things went on in this manner some time, and finally one evening he said to her, “Listen. The time has come to elope.”

Stella could not wait for the hour, and the next night she quietly tied a cord about her and let herself down from the window. The prince aided her to the ground, and then took her arm and hastened away. He led her a long way to another city, where he turned down a street and opened the first door he met. They went down a long passage. Finally they reached a little door, which he opened, and they found themselves in a hole of a place which had only one window, high up. The furniture consisted of a straw bed, a bench, and a dirty table. You can imagine that when Stella saw herself in this place she thought she should die.

When the prince saw her so amazed, he said, “What is the matter? Does the house not please you? Do you not know that I am a poor man? Have you been deceived?”

“What have you done with all the things I gave you?”

“Oh, I had many debts, and I have paid them, and then I have done with the rest what seemed good to me. You must make up your mind to work and

gain your bread as I have done. You must know that I am a porter of the king of this city, and I often go and work at the palace. Tomorrow, they have told me, the washing is to be done, so you must rise early and go with me there. I will set you to work with the other women, and when it is time for them to go home to dinner, you will say that you are not hungry, and while you are alone, steal two shirts, conceal them under your skirt, and carry them home to me.”

Poor Stella wept bitterly, saying it was impossible for her to do that.

But her husband replied, “Do what I say, or I shall beat you.”

The next morning her husband rose with the dawn, and made her get up, too. He had bought her a striped skirt and a pair of coarse shoes, which he made her put on, and then took her to the palace with him, conducted her to the laundry and left her, after he had introduced her as his wife, saying that she should remember what awaited her at home.

Meanwhile poor Stella did as her husband had commanded, and stole the shirts.

As she was leaving the palace, she met the king, who said, “Pretty girl, you are the porter’s wife, are you not?” Then he asked her what she had under her skirt, and shook her until the shirts dropped out, and the king cried, “See there! The porter’s wife is a thief. She has stolen some shirts.”

Poor Stella ran home in tears, and her husband followed her when he had put on his disguise again. When he reached home Stella told him all that had happened and begged him not to send her to the palace again. But he told her that the next day they were to bake, and she must go into the kitchen and help, and steal a piece of dough. Everything happened as on the previous day. Stella’s theft was discovered, and when her husband returned he found her crying like a condemned soul, and swearing that she had rather be killed than go the palace again. He told her, however, that the king’s son was to be married the next day, and that there was to be a great banquet, and she must go into the kitchen and wash the dishes. He added that when she had the chance she must steal a pot of broth and hide it about her so that no one should see it.

She had to do as she was told, and had scarcely concealed the pot when the king’s son came into the kitchen and told his wife she must come to the ball that had followed the banquet. She did not wish to go, but he took her by the arm and led her into the midst of the festival. Imagine how the poor woman felt at the ball, dressed as she was, and with the pot of broth! The king began to poke his sword at her in jest, until he hit the pot, and all the broth ran on the floor. Then all began to jeer her and laugh, until poor Stella fainted away from shame, and they had to go and get some vinegar to revive her.

At last the king’s mother came forward and said, “Enough. You have revenged yourself sufficiently.” Then turning to Stella, “Know that this is your mother, and that he has done this to correct your pride and to be avenged on you for calling him dirty.”

Then she took her by the arm and led her to another room, where her maids dressed her as a queen. Her father and mother then appeared and kissed

and embraced her. Her husband begged her pardon for what he had done, and they made peace and always lived in harmony. From that day on she was never haughty, and had learned to her cost that pride is the greatest fault.

CINDERELLA

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Crane, Thomas Frederick. *Italian Popular Tales*. New York: Houghton, Mifflin and Co., 1885, 42–47.

Date: Unavailable

Original Source: Italy

National Origin: Italy

This **variant** of the “Cinderella” tale (AT 510A) lacks the typical feature of the persecuting stepmother and stepsisters. Supernatural assistance is provided by a pet bird in a more benign version of the classic narrative.

Once upon a time there was a man who had three daughters. He was once ordered to go away to work, and said to them, “Since I am about making a journey, what do you want me to bring you when I return?”

One asked for a handsome dress; the other, a fine hat and a beautiful shawl. He said to the youngest, “And you, Cinderella, what do you want?” They called her Cinderella because she always sat in the chimney corner.

“You must buy me a little bird Verdeliò.”

“The simpleton! She does not know what to do with the bird! Instead of ordering a handsome dress, a fine shawl, she takes a bird. Who knows what she will do with it!”

“Silence!” she says. “It pleases me.”

The father went, and on his return brought the dress, hat, and shawl for the two sisters, and the little bird for Cinderella.

The father was employed at the court, and one day the king said to him, “I am going to give three balls; if you want to bring your daughters, do so; they will amuse themselves a little.”

“As you wish,” he replies, “thanks!” and accepts.

He went home and said, “What do you think, girls? His majesty wishes you to attend his ball.”

“There, you see, Cinderella, if you had only asked for a handsome dress! This evening we are going to the ball.”

She replied, “It matters nothing to me! You go; I am not coming.”

In the evening, when the time came, they adorned themselves, saying to Cinderella, "Come along, there will be room for you, too."

"I don't want to go; you go; I don't want to."

"But," said their father, "let us go, let us go! Dress and come along; let her stay."

When they had gone, she went to the bird and said, "O Bird Verdeliò, make me more beautiful than I am!"

She became clothed in a sea green dress, with so many diamonds that it blinded you to behold her. The bird made ready two purses of money, and said to her, "Take these two purses, enter your carriage, and away!"

She set out for the ball, and left the bird Verdeliò at home. She entered the ballroom. Scarcely had the gentlemen seen this beautiful lady (she dazzled them on all sides), when the king, just think of it, began to dance with her the whole evening. After he had danced with her all the evening, his majesty stopped, and she stood by her sisters. While she was at her sisters' side, she drew out her handkerchief, and a bracelet fell out.

"Oh, Signora," said the eldest sister, "you have dropped this."

"Keep it for yourself," she said.

"Oh, if Cinderella were only here, who knows what might not have happened to her?"

The king had given orders that when this lady went away they should find out where she lived. After she had remained a little she left the ball. You can imagine whether the servants were on the lookout! She entered her carriage and away! She perceives that she is followed, takes the money and begins to throw it out of the window of the carriage. The greedy servants, I tell you, seeing all that money, thought no more of her, but stopped to pick up the money. She returned home and went upstairs.

"O Bird Verdeliò, make me homelier than I am!" You ought to see how ugly, how horrid, she became, all ashes.

When the sisters returned, they cried, "Cin-der-ella!"

"Oh, leave her alone," said her father. "She is asleep now, leave her alone!"

But they went up and showed her the large and beautiful bracelet. "Do you see, you simpleton? You might have had it."

"It matters nothing to me."

Their father said, "Let us go to supper, you little geese."

Let us return to the king, who was awaiting his servants, who had not the courage to appear, but kept away. He calls them, "How did the matter go?"

They fall at his feet. "Thus and thus! She threw out so much money!"

"Wretches, you are nothing else," he said. "Were you afraid of not being rewarded? Well! tomorrow evening, attention, under pain of death."

The next evening the usual ball. The sisters say, "Will you come this evening, Cinderella?"

"Oh," she says, "don't bother me! I don't want to go."

Their father cries out to them, "How troublesome you are! Let her alone!"

So they began to adorn themselves more handsomely than the former evening, and departed. "Good-bye, Cinderella!"

When they had gone, Cinderella went to the bird and said, "Little Bird Verdeliò, make me more beautiful than I am!" Then she became clothed in sea green, embroidered with all the fish of the sea, mingled with diamonds more than you could believe.

The bird said, "Take these two bags of sand, and when you are followed, throw it out, and so they will be blinded."

She entered her carriage and set out for the ball. As soon as his majesty saw her he began to dance with her and danced as long as he could. After he had danced as long as he could (she did not grow weary, but he did), she placed herself near her sisters, drew out her handkerchief, and there fell out a beautiful necklace all made of coal.

The second sister said, "Signora, you have dropped this."

She replied, "Keep it for yourself."

"If Cinderella were here, who knows what might not happen to her! Tomorrow she must come!"

After a while she leaves the ball. The servants (just think, under pain of death!) were all on the alert, and followed her. She began to throw out all the sand, and they were blinded. She went home, dismounted, and went upstairs.

"Little Bird Verdeliò, make me homelier than I am!" She became frightfully homely.

When her sisters returned they began from below, "Cin-der-ella! if you only knew what that lady gave us!"

"It matters nothing to me!"

"Yes, yes! You would have had it!"

The father says, "Let us go to supper and let her alone; you are really silly!"

Let us return to his majesty, who was waiting for his servants to learn where she lived. Instead of that they were all brought back blinded, and had to be accompanied. "Rogue!" he exclaimed, "either this lady is some fairy or she must have some fairy who protects her."

The next day the sisters began, "Cinderella, you must go this evening! Listen; it is the last evening; you must come."

The father, "Oh let her alone! You are always teasing her!"

Then they went away and began to prepare for the ball. When they were all prepared, they went to the ball with their father.

When they had departed, Cinderella went to the bird, "Little Bird Verdeliò, make me more beautiful than I am!" Then she was dressed in all the colors of the heavens; all the comets, the stars, and moon on her dress, and the sun on her brow. She enters the ballroom. Who could look at her! For the sun alone they lower their eyes, and are all blinded. His majesty began to dance, but he could not look at her, because she dazzled him. He had already given orders to

his servants to be on the lookout, under pain of death, not to go on foot, but to mount their horses that evening.

After she had danced longer than on the previous evenings she placed herself by her father's side, drew out her handkerchief, and there fell out a snuffbox of gold, full of money.

"Signora, you have dropped this snuffbox."

"Keep it for yourself!"

Imagine that man. He opens it and sees it full of money. What a joy!

After she had remained a time she went home as usual. The servants followed her on horseback, quickly, at a distance from the carriage; but on horseback that was not much trouble.

She perceived that she had not prepared anything to throw that evening.

"Oh!" she cried. "What shall I do?" She left the carriage quickly, and in her haste lost one of her slippers. The servants picked it up, took the number of the house, and went away.

Cinderella went upstairs and said, "Little Bird Verdeliò, make me more homely than I am!"

The bird does not answer. After she had repeated it three or four times, it answered, "Rogue! I ought not to make you more homely, but ..." and she became homely and the bird continued, "What are you going to do now? You are discovered."

She began to weep in earnest. When her sisters returned they cried, "Cinder-ella!" You can imagine that she did not answer them this evening. "See what a beautiful snuffbox. If you had gone you might have had it."

"I do not care! Go away!"

Then their father called them to supper.

Let us now turn to the servants who went back with the slipper and the number of the house.

"Tomorrow," said his majesty, "as soon as it is day, go to that house, take a carriage, and bring that lady to the palace."

The servants took the slipper and went away. The next morning they knocked at the door.

Cinderella's father looked out and exclaimed, "Oh heavens! It is his majesty's carriage. What does it mean?" They open the door and the servants ascend. "What do you want of me?" asked the father.

"How many daughters have you?"

"Two."

"Well, show them to us."

The father made them come in there.

"Sit down," they said to one of them. They tried the slipper on her; it was ten times too large for her. The other one sat down; it was too small for her. "But tell me, good man, have you no other daughters? Take care to tell the truth! because majesty wishes it, under pain of death!"

“Gentlemen, there is another one, but I do not mention it. She is all in the ashes, the coals. If you should see her! I do not call her my daughter from shame.”

“We have not come for beauty, or for finery; we want to see the girl!”

Her sisters began to call her, “Cin-der-ella!” but she did not answer.

After a time she said, “What is the matter?”

“You must come down! There are some gentlemen who wish to see you.”

“I don’t want to come.”

“But you must come, you see!”

“Very well; tell them I will come in a moment.” She went to the little bird, “Ah little Bird Verdeliò, make me more beautiful than I am!” Then she was dressed as she had been the last evening, with the sun, and moon, and stars, and in addition, great chains all of gold everywhere about her.

The bird said, “Take me away with you! Put me in your bosom!” She puts the bird in her bosom and begins to descend the stairs.

“Do you hear her?” said the father. “Do you hear her? She is dragging with her the chains from the chimney corner. You can imagine how frightful she will look!”

When she reached the last step, and they saw her, “Ah!” they exclaimed, and recognized the lady of the ball. You can imagine how her father and sisters were vexed. They made her sit down, and tried on the slipper, and it fitted her. Then they made her enter the carriage, and took her to his majesty, who recognized the lady of the other evenings. And you can imagine that, all in love as her was, he said to her, “Will you really be my wife?”

You may believe she consents. She sends for her father and sisters, and makes them all come to the palace. They celebrate the marriage. Imagine what fine festivals were given at this wedding! The servants who had discovered where Cinderella lived were promoted to the highest positions in the palace as a reward.

KING PIG

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Sources: Straparola, Giovanni Francesco. *The Facetious Nights*, trans. W. G. Waters.

London: Privately printed for members of the Society of Bibliophiles, 1901, Volume I, 133–150; Ashliman, D. L. “King Pig.” *Folktexts: A Library of Folktales, Folklore, Fairy Tales and Mythology*. <http://www.pitt.edu/~dash/hog.html#straparola> (July 21, 2007).

Date: ca. 1550

Original Source: Italy

National Origin: Italy

Giovanni Francesco Straparola (1480–1557) based the work in which “King Pig” is included, *The Facetious Nights*, on Giovanni Boccaccio’s

(1313–1375) *Decameron*. Both were works in which a **frame** tale served to organize a series of individual narratives. Straparola made extensive use of folktales in the *Nights*. Therefore, his work may be compared to the Arabian classic *One Thousand and One Nights* (see “The Fisherman and the Jinn,” Volume 1, page 220 for a discussion of that work and an example of the tales included therein); *Twenty-Two Goblins* (see “The Prince’s Elopement,” Volume 2, page 184, and “The Father and Son Who Married Mother and Daughter,” Volume 2, page 191); and *Vikram and the Vampire* (see “A Man Deceives a Woman,” Volume 2, page 203, “Many Wise Fools,” Volume 2, page 221, and “The Vampire Puzzles Raja Vikram,” Volume 2, page 233). The following tale is a **variant** of “Hans my Hedgehog” (AT 441). Also see “Jack My Hedge Hog” for Andrew Lang’s version of this tale (page 85).

Fair ladies, if man were to spend a thousand years in rendering thanks to his creator for having made him in the form of a human and not of a brute beast, he could not speak gratitude enough. This reflection calls to mind the story of one who was born as a pig, but afterwards became a comely youth. Nevertheless, to his dying day he was known to the people over whom he ruled as King Pig.

You must know, dear ladies, that Galeotto, King of Anglia, was a man highly blest in worldly riches, and in his wife Ersilia, the daughter of Matthias, King of Hungary, a princess who, in virtue and beauty, outshone all the other ladies of the time. And Galeotto was a wise king, ruling his land so that no man could hear complaint against him. Though they had been several years married they had no child, wherefore they both of them were much aggrieved. While Ersilia was walking one day in her garden she felt suddenly weary, and remarking hard by a spot covered with fresh green turf, she went up to it and sat down thereon, and, overcome with weariness and soothed by the sweet singing of the birds in the green foliage, she fell asleep. And it chanced that while she slept there passed by three fairies who held mankind somewhat in scorn, and these, when they beheld the sleeping queen, halted, and gazing upon her beauty, took counsel together how they might protect her and throw a spell upon her.

When they were agreed, the first cried out, “I will that no man shall be able to harm her, and that, the next time she lie with her husband, she may be with child and bear a son who shall not have his equal in all the world for beauty.”

Then said the second, “I will that no one shall ever have power to offend her, and that the prince who shall be born of her shall be gifted with every virtue under the sun.”

And the third said, “And I will that she shall be the wisest among women, but that the son whom she shall conceive shall be born in the skin of a pig, with a pig’s ways and manners, and in this state he shall be constrained to abide till he shall have three times taken a woman to wife.”

As soon as the three fairies had flown away Ersilia awoke, and straightway arose and went back to the palace, taking with her the flowers she had plucked. Not many days had passed before she knew herself to be with child, and when the time of her delivery was come, she gave birth to a son with members like those of a pig and not of a human being.

When tidings of this prodigy came to the ears of the king and queen they lamented sore treatment, and the king, bearing in mind how good and wise his queen was, often felt moved to put this offspring of hers to death and cast it into the sea, in order that she might be spared the shame of having given birth to him. But when he debated in his mind and considered that this son, let him be what he might, was of his own begetting, he put aside the cruel purpose which he had been harboring, and, seized with pity and grief, he made up his mind that the son should be brought up and nurtured like a rational being and not as a brute beast.

The child, therefore, being nursed with the greatest care, would often be brought to the queen and put his little snout and his little paws in his mother's lap, and she, moved by natural affection, would caress him by stroking his bristly back with her hand, and embracing and kissing him as if he had been of human form. Then he would wag his tail and give other signs to show that he was conscious of his mother's affection.

The pigling, when he grew older, began to talk like a human being, and to wander abroad in the city, but whenever he came near to any mud or dirt he would always wallow therein, after the manner of pigs, and return all covered with filth. Then, when he approached the king and queen, he would rub his sides against their fair garments, defiling them with all manner of dirt, but because he was indeed their own son they bore it all.

One day he came home covered with mud and filth, as was his wont, and lay down on his mother's rich robe, and said in a grunting tone, "Mother, I wish to get married."

When the queen heard this, she replied, "Do not talk so foolishly. What maid would ever take you for a husband, and think you that any noble or knight would give his daughter to one so dirty and ill-savored as you?"

But he kept on grunting that he must have a wife of one sort or another. The queen, not knowing how to manage him in this matter, asked the king what they should do in their trouble, "Our son wishes to marry, but where shall we find anyone who will take him as a husband?"

Every day the pig would come back to his mother with the same demand, "I must have a wife, and I will never leave you in peace until you procure for me a certain maiden I have seen today, who pleases me greatly."

It happened that this maiden was a daughter of a poor woman who had three daughters. When the queen heard this, she had brought before her the poor woman and her eldest daughter, and said, "Good mother, you are poor and burdened with children. If you will agree to what I shall say to you, you will be

rich. I have this son who is, as you see, in form a pig, and I would fain marry him to your eldest daughter. Do not consider him, but think of the king and of me, and remember that your daughter will inherit this whole kingdom when the king and I shall be dead." When the young girl listened to the words of the queen she was greatly disturbed in her mind and blushed red for shame, and then said that on no account would she listen to the queen's proposition; but the poor mother besought her so pressingly that at last she yielded.

When the pig came home one day, all covered with dirt as usual, his mother said to him, "My son, we have found for you the wife you desire." And then she caused to be brought in the bride, who by this time had been robed in sumptuous regal attire, and presented her to the pig prince. When he saw how lovely and desirable she was he was filled with joy, and, all foul and dirty as he was, jumped round about her, endeavoring by his pawing and nuzzling to show some sign of his affection.

But she, when she found he was soiling her beautiful dress, thrust him aside; whereupon the pig said to her, "Why do you push me thus? Have I not had these garments made for you myself?"

Then she answered disdainfully, "No, neither you nor any other of the whole kingdom of hogs has done this thing."

And when the time for going to bed was come the young girl said to herself, "What am I to do with this foul beast? This very night, while he lies in his first sleep, I will kill him."

The pig prince, who was not far off, heard these words, but said nothing, and when the two retired to their chamber he got into the bed, stinking and dirty as he was, and defiled the sumptuous bed with his filthy paws and snout. He lay down by his spouse, who was not long in falling to sleep, and then he struck her with his sharp hoofs and drove them into her breast so that he killed her.

The next morning the queen went to visit her daughter-in-law, and to her great grief found that the pig had killed her; and when he came back from wandering about the city he said, in reply to the queen's bitter reproaches, that he had only wrought with his wife as she was minded to deal with him, and then withdrew in an ill humor.

Not many days had passed before the pig prince again began to beseech the queen to allow him to marry one of the other sisters, and because the queen at first would not listen to his petition he persisted in his purpose, and threatened to ruin everything in the place if he could not have her to wife. The queen, when she heard this, went to the king and told him everything, and he made answer that perhaps it would be wiser to kill their ill-fated offspring before he might work some fatal mischief in the city.

But the queen felt all the tenderness of a mother toward him, and loved him very dearly in spite of his brutal person, and could not endure the thought of being parted from him; so she summoned once more to the palace the poor

woman, together with her second daughter, and held a long discourse with her, begging her the while to give her daughter in marriage.

At last the girl assented to take the pig prince for a husband; but her fate was no happier than her sister's, for the bridegroom killed her, as he had killed his other bride, and then fled headlong from the palace.

When he came back dirty as usual and smelling so foully that no one could approach him, the king and queen censured him gravely for the outrage he had wrought; but again he cried out boldly that if he had not killed her she would have killed him.

As it had happened before, the pig in a very short time began to importune his mother again to let him have to wife the youngest sister, who was much more beautiful than either of the others; and when this request of his was refused steadily, he became more insistent than ever, and in the end began to threaten the queen's life in violent and bloodthirsty words, unless he should have given to him the young girl for his wife.

The queen, when she heard this shameful and unnatural speech, was well-nigh broken hearted and like to go out of her mind; but, putting all other considerations aside, she called for the poor woman and her third daughter, who was named Meldina, and thus addressed her, "Meldina, my child, I should be greatly pleased if you would take the pig prince for a husband; pay no regard to him, but to his father and to me; then, if you will be prudent and bear patiently with him, you may be the happiest woman in the world."

To this speech Meldina answered, with a grateful smile upon her face, that she was quite content to do as the queen bade her, and thanked her humbly for deigning to choose her as a daughter-in-law; for, seeing that she herself had nothing in the world, it was indeed great good fortune that she, a poor girl, should become the daughter-in-law of a potent sovereign. The queen, when she heard this modest and amiable reply, could not keep back her tears for the happiness she felt; but she feared all the time that the same fate might be in store for Meldina as her sisters.

When the new bride had been clothed in rich attire and decked with jewels, and was awaiting the bridegroom, the pig prince came in, filthier and more muddy than ever; but she spread out her rich gown and besought him to lie down by her side. Whereupon the queen bade her to thrust him away, but to this she would not consent, and spoke thus to the queen, "There are three wise sayings, gracious lady, which I remember to have heard. The first is that it is folly to waste time in searching for that which cannot be found. The second is that we should believe nothing we may hear, except those things which bear the marks of sense and reason. The third is that, when once you have got possession of some rare and precious treasure, prize it well and keep a firm hold upon it."

When the maiden had finished speaking, the pig prince, who had been wide awake and had heard all that she had said, got up, kissed her on the face and

neck and bosom and shoulders with his tongue, and she was not backward in returning his caresses; so that he was fired with a warm love for her.

As soon as the time for retiring for the night had come, the bride went to bed and awaited her unseemly spouse, and, as soon as he came, she raised the coverlet and bade him lie near to her and put his head upon the pillow, covering him carefully with the bedclothes and drawing the curtains so that he might feel no cold.

When morning had come the pig got up and ranged abroad to pasture, as was his wont, and very soon after the queen went to the bride's chamber, expecting to find that she had met with the same fate as her sisters; but when she saw her lying in the bed, all defiled with mud as it was, and looking pleased and contented, she thanked God for this favor, that her son had at last found a spouse according to his liking.

One day, soon after this, when the pig prince was conversing pleasantly with his wife, he said to her, "Meldina, my beloved wife, if I could be fully sure that you could keep a secret, I would now tell you one of mine; something I have kept hidden for many years. I know you to be very prudent and wise, and that you love me truly; so I wish to make you the sharer of my secret."

"You may safely tell it to me, if you will," said Meldina, "for I promise never to reveal it to anyone without your consent."

Whereupon, being now sure of his wife's discretion and fidelity, her straight-way shook off from his body the foul and dirty skin of the pig, and stood revealed as a handsome and well shaped young man, and all that night rested closely folded in the arms of his beloved wife. But he charged her solemnly to keep silence about this wonder she had seen, for the time had not yet come for his complete delivery from this misery. So when he left the bed he donned the dirty pig's hid once more. I leave you to imagine for yourselves how great was the great joy of Meldina when she discovered that, instead of a pig, she had gained a handsome and gallant young prince for a husband.

Not long after this she proved to with child, and when the time her delivery came she gave birth to a fair and shapely boy. The joy of the king and queen was unbounded, especially when they found that the newborn child had the form of a human being and not that of a beast. But the burden of the strange and weighty secret which her husband had confided to her pressed heavily upon Meldina, and one day she went to her mother-in-law and said, "Gracious queen, when first I married your son I believed I was married to a beast, but not I find that you have given me the comeliest, the worthiest, and the most gallant young man ever born into the world to be my husband. For know that when he comes into my chamber to lie by my side, he casts off his dirty hide and leaves it on the ground, and is changed into a graceful handsome youth. No one could believe this marvel save they saw it with their own eyes."

When the queen heard these words she deemed that her daughter-in-law must be jesting with her, but Meldina still persisted that what she said was true.

And when the queen demanded to know how she might witness with her own eyes the truth of this thing, Meldina replied, “Come to my chamber tonight, when we shall be in our first sleep; the door will be open, and you will find that what I tell you is the truth.”

That same night, when the looked-for time had come, and all were gone to rest, the queen let some torches be kindled and went, accompanied by the king, to the chamber of her son, and when she had entered she saw the pig’s skin lying on the floor in the corner of the room, and having gone to the bedside, found therein a handsome young man in whose arms Meldina was lying. And when they saw this, the delight of the king and queen was very great, and the king gave order that before anyone should leave the chamber the pig’s hide should be torn to shreds. So great was their joy over the recovery of their son that they well-nigh died thereof.

And King Galeotto, when he saw that he had so fine a son, and a grandchild likewise, laid aside his diadem and his royal robes, and advanced to his place his son, whom he let be crowned with the greatest pomp, and who was ever afterwards known as King Pig. Thus, to the great contentment of all the people, the young king began his reign, and he lived long and happily with Meldina his beloved wife.

HOW THE DEVIL MARRIED THREE SISTERS

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Crane, Thomas Frederick. *Italian Popular Tales*. New York: Houghton, Mifflin and Co., 1885, 78–81.

Date: Unavailable

Original Source: Italy

National Origin: Italy

As is the case in many tales of marriage to a demonic spouse, this **variant** of “Rescue by the Sister” (AT 311) describes punishment for too little curiosity regarding a potential mate’s background and too much curiosity regarding a forbidden room. The **motif** of rescue by a younger sibling is retained in the Italian tale, as well.

Once upon a time the devil was seized with a desire to marry. He therefore left Hell, took the form of a handsome young man, and built a fine large house. When it was completed and furnished in the most fashionable style he introduced himself to a family where there were three pretty daughters, and paid his addresses to the eldest of them. The handsome man

pleased the maiden, her parents were glad to see a daughter so well provided for, and it was not long before the wedding was celebrated.

When he had taken his bride home, he presented her with a very tastefully arranged bouquet, led her through all the rooms of the house, and finally to a closed door. "The whole house is at your disposal," said he, "only I must request one thing of you; that is, that you do not on any account open this door."

Of course the young wife promised faithfully; but equally, of course, she could scarcely wait for the moment to come when she might break her promise. When the devil had left the house the next morning, under pretence of going hunting, she ran hastily to the forbidden door, opened it, and saw a terrible abyss full of fire that shot up towards her, and singed the flowers on her bosom. When her husband came home and asked her whether she had kept her promise, she unhesitatingly said, "Yes." But he saw by the flowers that she was telling a lie, and said, "Now I will not put your curiosity to the test any longer. Come with me. I will show you myself what is behind the door." Thereupon he led her to the door, opened it, gave her such a push that she fell down into Hell, and shut the door again.

A few months after he wooed the next sister for his wife, and won her; but with her everything that had happened with the first wife was exactly repeated.

Finally he courted the third sister. She was a prudent maiden, and said to herself, "He has certainly murdered my two sisters; but then it is a splendid match for me, so I will try and see whether I cannot be more fortunate than they." And accordingly she consented. After the wedding the bridegroom gave her a beautiful bouquet, but forbade her, also, to open the door which he pointed out.

Not a whit less curious than her sisters, she, too, opened the forbidden door when the devil had gone hunting, but she had previously put her flowers in water. Then she saw behind the door the fatal abyss and her sisters therein. "Ah!" she exclaimed, "poor creature that I am; I thought I had married an ordinary man, and instead of that he is the devil! How can I get away from him?" She carefully pulled her two sisters out of Hell and hid them. When the devil came home he immediately looked at the bouquet, which she again wore on her bosom, and when he found the flowers so fresh he asked no questions; but reassured as to his secret, he now, for the first time, really loved her.

After a few days she asked him if he would carry three chests for her to her parents' house, without putting them down or resting on the way. "But," she added, "you must keep your word, for I shall be watching you."

The devil promised to do exactly as she wished. So the next morning she put one of her sisters in a chest, and laid it on her husband's shoulders. The devil, who is very strong, but also very lazy and unaccustomed to work, soon got tired of carrying the heavy chest, and wanted to rest before he was out of the street on which he lived; but his wife called out to him, "Don't put it down; I see you!"

The devil went reluctantly on with the chest until he had turned the corner, and then said to himself, "She cannot see me here; I will rest a little."

But scarcely had he begun to put the chest down when the sister inside cried out, "Don't put it down; I see you still!" Cursing, he dragged the chest on into another street, and was going to lay it down on a doorstep, but he again heard the voice, "Don't lay it down, you rascal; I see you still!"

"What kind of eyes must my wife have," he thought, "to see around corners as well as straight ahead, and through walls as if they were made of glass!" and thus thinking he arrived, all in a perspiration and quite tired out, at the house of his mother-in-law, to whom he hastily delivered the chest, and then hurried home to strengthen himself with a good breakfast.

The same thing was repeated the next day with the second chest. On the third day she herself was to be taken home in the chest. She therefore prepared a figure which she dressed in her own clothes, and placed on the balcony, under the pretext of being able to watch him better; slipped quickly into the chest, and had the maid put it on the devil's back. "The deuce!" said he; "this chest is a great deal heavier than the others; and today, when she is sitting on the balcony, I shall have so much the less chance to rest." So by dint of the greatest exertions he carried it, without stopping, to his mother-in-law, and then hastened home to breakfast, scolding, and with his back almost broken.

But quite contrary to custom, his wife did not come out to meet him, and there was no breakfast ready. "Margerita, where are you?" he cried, but received no answer. As he was running through the corridors, he at length looked out of a window and saw the figure on the balcony. "Margerita, have you gone to sleep? Come down. I am as tired as a dog, and as hungry as a wolf." But there was no reply. "If you do not come down instantly I will go up and bring you down," he cried, angrily; but Margerita did not stir. Enraged, he hastened up to the balcony, and gave her such a box on the ear that her head flew off, and he saw that the head was nothing but a milliner's form, and the body, a bundle of rags. Raging, he rushed down and rummaged through the whole house, but in vain; he found only his wife's empty jewel box. "Ha!" he cried; "she has been stolen from me and her jewels, too!" and he immediately ran to inform her parents of the misfortune.

But when he came near the house, to his great surprise he saw on the balcony above the door all three sisters, his wives, who were looking down on him with scornful laughter. Three wives at once terrified the devil so much that he took his flight with all possible speed. Since that time he has lost his taste for marrying.

The Nordic Countries

DENMARK

PETER OX

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Grundtvig, Sven. *Danish Fairy Tales*, trans. J. Grant Cramer. Boston: Four Seas Company, 1919, 9–14.

Date: Unavailable

Original Source: Denmark

National Origin: Denmark

Located north of Germany, Denmark is the southernmost country of the Nordic region. Before modernization in the nineteenth century, Denmark's economy was based on farming and maritime occupations. The rural setting of "Peter Ox" (AT 1675) reflects the traditional lifeways of the Danes. The following tale is classified, according to the classic Aarne-Thompson **genres**, as an **anecdote**. It builds its plot on the benevolent naiveté of a farm couple and the avarice of the local church sexton. In its initial stages the tale is reminiscent of "The Jackal as Schoolmaster" (AT 56C). Also see the San "The Lion and the Jackal," Volume 1, page 144, for an example of the latter **tale type**. The innocence and goodness of the farmer allows him to prosper by the conclusion of the tale, however.

There were once upon a time a peasant and his wife who lived in Jutland [a region of Denmark that is located on continental Europe], but they had no children. They often lamented that fact and were also sad to think that they had no relatives to whom to leave their farm and other possessions. So the years went by and they became richer and richer, but there was no one to inherit their wealth.

One year the farmer bought a fine calf which he called Peter, and it was really the finest animal that he had ever seen, and so clever that it seemed to understand nearly everything that one said to it. It was also very amusing and affectionate, so that the man and his wife soon became as fond of it as if it were their own child.

One day the farmer said to his wife, "Perhaps the sexton of our church could teach Peter to talk then we could not do better than to adopt him as our child, and he could then inherit all our property."

"Who can tell?" said the wife, "Our sexton is a learned man and perhaps he might be able to teach Peter to talk, for Peter is really very clever. Suppose you ask the sexton."

So the farmer went over to the sexton and asked him whether he did not believe that he could teach his calf to talk, because he wanted to make the animal his heir. The crafty sexton looked around to see that no one was near, and then said that he thought he could do so. "Only you must not tell anybody," he said, "for it must be a great secret, and the minister in particular must not know anything about it, or I might get into serious trouble as such things are strictly forbidden. Moreover it will cost a pretty penny as we shall need rare and expensive books." The farmer said that he did not mind, and handing the sexton a hundred dollars to buy books with, promised not to say a word about the arrangement to anyone.

That evening the man brought his calf to the sexton who promised to do his best. In about a week the farmer returned to see how his calf was getting on, but the sexton said that he did not dare let him see the animal, else Peter might become homesick and forget all that he had already learned. Otherwise he was making good progress, but the farmer must pay another hundred dollars, as Peter needed more books. The peasant happened to have the money with him, so he gave it to the sexton and went home filled with hope and pleasant anticipations.

At the end of another week the man again went to make inquiry about Peter, and was told by the sexton that he was doing fairly well. "Can he say anything?" asked the farmer.

"Yes, he can say 'ma'," answered the sexton.

"The poor animal is surely ill," said the peasant, "and he probably wants mead. I will go straight home and bring him a jug of it." So he fetched a jug of good, old mead and gave it to the sexton for Peter. The sexton, however, kept the mead and gave the calf some milk instead.

A week later the farmer came again to find out what Peter could say now. "He still refuses to say anything but 'ma'," said the sexton.

"Oh! he is a cunning rogue"; said the peasant, "so he wants more mead, does he? Well, I'll get him some more, as he likes it so much. But what progress has he made?"

"He is doing so well," answered the sexton, "that he needs another hundred dollars' worth of books, for he cannot learn anything more from those that he has now."

“Well then, if he needs them he shall have them.” So that same day the farmer brought another hundred dollars and a jug of good, old mead for Peter.

Now the peasant allowed a few weeks to elapse without calling on Peter, for he began to be afraid that each visit would cost him a hundred dollars. In the meantime the calf had become as fat as he would ever be, so the sexton killed him and sold the meat carefully at a distance from the village. Having done that he put on his black clothes and went to call on the farmer and his wife. As soon as he had bid them good day he asked them whether Peter had reached home safe and sound.

“Why no,” said the farmer, “he has not run away, has he?”

“I hope,” said the sexton, “that after all the trouble I have taken he has not been so tricky as to run away and to abuse my confidence so shamefully. For I have spent at least a hundred dollars of my own money to pay for books for him. Now Peter could say whatever he wanted, and he was telling me only yesterday that he was longing to see his dear parents. As I wanted to give him that pleasure, but feared that he would not be able to find his way home alone, I dressed myself and started out with him. We were hardly in the street when I suddenly remembered that I had left my stick at home, so I ran back to get it. When I came out of the house again, I found that Peter had run on alone. I thought, of course, that he had gone back to your house. If he is not there, I certainly do not know where he can be.”

Then the people began to weep and lament that Peter was lost, now especially when they might have had such pleasure with him, and after paying out so much money for his education. And the worst of it was that they were again without an heir. The sexton tried to comfort them and was also very sorry that Peter had deceived them so. But perhaps he had only lost his way, and the sexton promised that he would ask publicly in church next Sunday whether somebody had not seen the calf. Then he bade the farmer and his wife good-bye and went home and had some good roast veal for dinner.

One day the sexton read in the paper that a new merchant, named Peter Ox, had settled in the neighboring town. He put the paper into his pocket and went straight to the farmer and read this item of news to him. “One might almost believe,” he said, “that this is your calf.”

“Why yes,” said the farmer, “who else should it be?” Then his wife added, “Yes father, go at once to see him, for I feel sure that it can be no other than our dear Peter. But take along plenty of money for he probably needs it now that he has become a merchant.”

On the following morning the farmer put a bag of money on his shoulder, took with him some provisions, and started to walk to the town where the merchant lived. Early next morning he arrived there and went straight to the merchant’s house. The servants told the man that the merchant had not gotten up yet. “That does not make any difference for I am his father; just take me up to his room.”

So they took the peasant up to the bedroom where the merchant lay sound asleep. And as soon as the farmer saw him, he recognized Peter. There were the same thick neck and broad forehead and the same red hair, but otherwise he looked just like a human being. Then the man went to him and bade him good morning and said, "Well, Peter, you caused your mother and me great sorrow when you ran away as soon as you had learned something. But get up now and let me have a look at you and talk with you."

The merchant, of course, believed that he had a crazy man to deal with, so he thought it best to be careful. "Yes I will get up," he said, and jumped out of bed into his clothes as quickly as possible.

"Ah!" said the peasant, "now I see what a wise man our sexton was; he has brought it to pass that you are like any other man. If I were not absolutely certain of it, I should never dream that you were the calf of our red cow. Will you come home with me?" The merchant said that he could not as he had to attend to his business. "But you could take over my farm and I would retire. Nevertheless if you prefer to stay in business, I am willing. Do you need any money?"

"Well," said the merchant, "a man can always find use for money in his business."

"I thought so," said the farmer, "and besides you had nothing to start with, so I have brought you some money." And with that he poured out on the table the bright dollars that covered it entirely.

When the merchant saw what kind of a man his new found acquaintance was, he chatted with him in a very friendly manner and begged him to remain with him for a few days.

"Yes indeed," said the farmer, "but you must be sure to call me father from now on."

"But I have neither father nor mother living," answered Peter Ox.

"That I know perfectly well," the peasant replied, "for I sold your real father in Copenhagen last Michaelmas, and your mother died while calving. But my wife and I have adopted you as our child and you will be our heir, so you must call me father."

The merchant gladly agreed to that and kept the bag of money; and before leaving town the farmer made his will and bequeathed all his possessions to Peter after his death. Then the man went home and told his wife the whole story, and she was delighted to learn that the merchant Peter Ox was really their own calf.

"Now you must go straight over to the sexton and tell him what has happened"; she said, "and be sure to refund to him the hundred dollars that he paid out of his own pocket for Peter, for he has earned all that we have paid him, because of the joy that he has caused us in giving us such a son and heir."

Her husband was of the same opinion and went to call on the sexton, whom he thanked many times for his kindness and to whom he also gave two hundred dollars.

Then the farmer sold his farm, and he and his wife moved into the town where the merchant was, and lived with him happily until their death.

THE SUITOR

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Bay, J. Christian. *Danish Folk Tales*. New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1899, 23–27.

Date: Unavailable

Original Source: Denmark

National Origin: Denmark

The following tale draws on plots categorized in the Aarne-Thompson system as “Looking for a Wife.” Specifically, the suitor’s (Tom) first venture into courtship is unsatisfactory because of the potential brides’ speech impediments (AT 1457). His second prospect fails her bride test due to her laziness (AT 1453). His final attempt at finding a bride finds both the girl and her parents fretting over details of a wedding dress before the proposal has taken place (AT 1450).

There was once a handsome young fellow by the name of Tom. From an old, wealthy uncle he had inherited a fine farm, and being well established in life, he determined to seek a wife. As he was quite wealthy, he considered himself able to afford a little more than ordinary people in this direction, for the wives of wealthy men must always be prettier and wiser than those of the poor, as we all know.

So Tom wanted a wife who was handsome and industrious, wise and good, and of course it would not be out of the way if she possessed some property.

One day he rode over to a rich farmer who lived in the neighborhood and who had three daughters, all of whom were ready to be married at once. He had seen, although he had never talked with, them, and thought well of all three.

Now these girls, who were otherwise pretty and good, had one great fault: namely, that they could not talk distinctly. When Tom came riding into the yard the farmer received him kindly and conducted him into the room where the three girls sat spinning diligently.

They nodded kindly to him and smiled, but did not utter a sound, as their mother had strictly forbidden them to do so. The farmer led the talking, while his wife waited on them with good food and drinks. The girls spun, and looked at the young man at the table, and glanced at each other and at the ceiling and out of the windows, but none of them spoke.

At length the one happened to break her yarn. “My ‘arn bote!” exclaimed she.

“Tie it adain,” advised her sister.

“Mamma told us we say no’tin’, and now we t’ant teep ‘till!” broke in the third one. When Tom heard these grown girls talk like babies he hurried away, utterly shocked. A wife who could not speak distinctly he had no use for at all.

He proceeded to another farm, where they had a daughter who was said to be a very fine girl in all respects. Tom went into the house and saw her. If the first three ones had been too silent, this one talked, however, more fluently and volubly than any girl whom he had ever met. She talked like a house on fire, while her spinning wheel went more rapidly than any engine. “How long does it take you to use up such a head of flax?” asked the young man, pointing to the rock [distaff].

“Oh,” she said, “I use up a couple of them every day.”

While she left the room a few minutes to look after the servants, Tom seized a key from a drawer of a bureau in the room and stuffed it into the head of flax. When she returned they finished their conversation; whereupon he bid her parents and herself good-bye, promising to call again in a week.

On the appointed day Tom returned. The girl and her parents expected him to talk this time of his errand. When he came into the room the girl was busy with her rock, as before. She bid him welcome, and invited him to sit down.

“How unfortunate!” began she. “We have been missing the key of that bureau ever since you were here. We are unable to find it, and I cannot reach any of my things. It never happened before.”

On hearing this, Tom went over and pulled the key out of the head of flax. It was the same key, and, still worse, the very same head of flax that he had seen a week before. Thus he knew her word could not be depended upon; and bidding her good-bye he left at once, richer in experience than before.

Some time afterwards he heard of a girl who was very pretty and good, but especially wise and thoughtful in all practical matters. Her parents were said to be the same. Tom saddled his horse and rode over to see her.

The whole family was at home and received the young man very kindly. While the men drifted into a talk about the weather and crops, the women placed before them the best that the house could afford.

“Go into the cellar and fetch a bottle of wine,” said the woman to her daughter. The girl went into the cellar, but was so busy thinking what pattern she might choose for a wedding dress that she sat down on the floor, lost in reflection upon this important subject, and the wine was entirely forgotten. After she had left the room, the parents told Tom of their daughter’s many good qualities; how industrious she was, how thoughtful, and so on. The young man thought that she would be exactly such a wife as he wished. But as the girl did not appear with the wine, her mother went to see what had become of her.

When she came into the cellar and found her daughter sitting on the floor, she asked, “Why do you sit there, instead of bringing the wine?”

“Well,” was the answer, “I am thinking that if I marry Tom I must make a careful choice of the pattern for my wedding gown. The question is, what pattern would do best?”

“Yes, indeed,” answered her mother, “which pattern will be the most suitable?” She sat down by her daughter, pondering over this important question.

“I wonder what has become of them both!” at length exclaimed the man, referring to his wife and daughter. “I must look after them.”

He went into the cellar, and when he saw both women sitting on the floor he cried, “Why are you both sitting here? You have kept us waiting for over an hour!”

“We are thinking,” replied his wife, “of the pattern for the wedding gown. If she is to marry Tom, the gown must, of course, be a pretty one, and the choice of the right pattern is, indeed, an important matter.”

“To be sure!” answered her husband, seating himself on the floor beside them to consider the same subject.

As at length Tom grew tired of waiting, he went himself into the cellar to see if anything unusual had happened. He found the whole family sitting on the floor and looking extremely thoughtful.

“Why do you all sit here?” he asked. At length the farmer, aroused from his reverie, proceeded to relate the difficult question which had caught their attention.

“Yes, indeed,” answered Tom. “Which will be the most suitable pattern? You may think of that until I return, and in the meantime I will do the same. Good-bye to you!”

Mounting his horse, he rode home as rapidly as the steed would carry him, and if he has not found another and less thoughtful girl, he is yet a bachelor.

But the three people may yet be sitting on the cellar floor, thinking of the pattern for the bridal gown, for all that I know!

ICELAND

THE PROSE EDDA

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Sturluson, Snorri. *The Prose Edda*, trans. Arthur Gilchrist Brodeur. New York: The American Scandinavian Foundation, 1916, 3–12, 70–73.

Date: ca. 1200

Original Source: Iceland

National Origin: Iceland

Iceland, a country of northwestern Europe, consists of the island of Iceland and adjacent islets in the North Atlantic Ocean. In the late ninth century, Norwegian immigrants permanently settled on the island. Until the twentieth century, farming and maritime occupations provided the livelihood for the population. The following narrative is drawn from *The Prose Edda* written by Snorri Sturluson (1178–1241), an Icelandic historian, poet, and politician. The *Prose Edda* consists of a “Prologue” (given in its entirety below) that is Snorri’s attempt to explain the origins of Norse mythology by recourse to historical events. The second section, the “Gylfaginning” (“Tricking of Gylfi”) recounts the **myths** of Norse tradition (“The Death of Baldr” from the “Gylfaginning,” is given below). Section Three consists of the “Skáldskaparmál,” a dialogue between Ægir (Norse god of the sea) and Bragi (Norse god of poetry) that interweaves myth and poetic theory. The last section, the “Háttatal,” illustrates the verse forms of Old Norse poetry. Although Snorri was a Christian and his work was written two centuries after the introduction of Christianity to Iceland, he provides a classic source for Norse mythology in *The Prose Edda*.

In the Beginning

In the beginning God created heaven and earth and all those things which are in them; and last of all, two of human kind, Adam and Eve, from whom the races are descended. And their offspring multiplied among themselves and were scattered throughout the earth. But as time passed, the races of men became unlike in nature: some were good and believed on the right; but many more turned after the lusts of the world and slighted God's command. Wherefore, God drowned the world in a swelling of the sea, and all living things, save them alone that were in the ark with Noah. After Noah's flood eight of mankind remained alive, who peopled the earth; and the races descended from them. And it was even as before: when the earth was full of folk and inhabited of many, then all the multitude of mankind began to love greed, wealth, and worldly honor, but neglected the worship of God. Now accordingly it came to so evil a pass that they would not name God; and who then could tell their sons of God's mighty wonders? Thus it happened that they lost the name of God; and throughout the wideness of the world the man was not found who could distinguish in aught the trace of his Creator. But not the less did God bestow upon them the gifts of the earth: wealth and happiness, for their enjoyment in the world; He increased also their wisdom, so that they knew all earthly matters, and every phase of whatsoever they might see in the air and on the earth.

One thing they wondered and pondered over: what it might mean, that the earth and the beasts and the birds had one nature in some ways, and yet were unlike in manner of life. In this was their nature one: that the earth was cleft into lofty mountain-peaks, wherein water spurted up, and it was not needful to dig longer for water there than in the deep valleys; so it is also with beasts and birds: it is equally far to the blood in the head and the feet. Another quality of the earth is, that in each year grass and flowers grow upon the earth, and in the same year all that growth falls away and withers; it is even so with beasts and birds: hair and feathers grow and fall away each year. This is the third nature of the earth, that when it is opened and dug up, the grass grows straightway on the soil which is uppermost on the earth. Boulders and stones they likened to the teeth and bones of living beings. Thus they recognized that the earth was quick, and had life with some manner of nature of its own; and they understood that she was wondrous old in years and mighty in kind: she nourished all that lived, and she took to herself all that died.

Therefore they gave her a name, and traced the number of their generations from her. The same thing, moreover, they learned from their aged kinsmen: that many hundreds of years have been numbered since the same earth yet was, and the same sun and stars of the heavens; but the courses of these were unequal, some having a longer course, and some a shorter.

From things like these the thought stirred within them that there might be some governor of the stars of heaven: one who might order their courses after

his will; and that he must be very strong and full of might. This also they held to be true: that if he swayed the chief things of creation, he must have been before the stars of heaven; and they saw that if he ruled the courses of the heavenly bodies, he must also govern the shining of the sun, and the dews of the air, and the fruits of the earth, whatsoever grows upon it; and in like manner the winds of the air and the storms of the sea. They knew not yet where his kingdom was; but this they believed: that he ruled all things on earth and in the sky, the great stars also of the heaven, and the winds of the sea. Wherefore, not only to tell of this fittingly, but also that they might fasten it in memory, they gave names out of their own minds to all things. This belief of theirs has changed in many ways, according as the peoples drifted asunder and their tongues became severed one from another. But all things they discerned with the wisdom of the earth, for the understanding of the spirit was not given to them; this they perceived, that all things were fashioned of some essence.

II

The world was divided into three parts: from the south, extending into the west and bordering on the Mediterranean Sea, all this part was called Africa, the southern quarter of which is hot, so that it is parched with the sun. The second part, from west to north and bordering on the ocean, is called Európa or Eneá; its northern part is so cold that no grass grows upon it, and no man dwells there. From the north and all down over the eastern part, even to the south, is called Asia. In that region of the world is all fairness and pride, and the fruits of the earth's increase, gold and jewels. There also is the center of the earth; and even as the land there is lovelier and better in every way than in other places, so also were the sons of men there most favored with all goodly gifts: wisdom, and strength of the body, beauty, and all manner of knowledge.

III

Near the earth's center was made that goodliest of homes and haunts that ever have been, which is called Troy, even that which we call Turkland. This abode was much more gloriously made than others, and fashioned with more skill of craftsmanship in manifold wise, both in luxury and in the wealth which was there in abundance. There were twelve kingdoms and one High King, and many sovereignties belonged to each kingdom; in the stronghold were twelve chieftains.

These chieftains were in every manly part greatly above other men that have ever been in the world. One king among them was called Múnón or Mennón; and he was wedded to the daughter of the High King Priam, her who was called Tróán; they had a child named Trór, whom we call Thor. He was fostered in Thrace by a certain war-duke called Lórikus; but when he was ten winters old he took unto him the weapons of his father. He was as goodly to look upon, when he came among other men, as the ivory that is inlaid in oak; his

hair was fairer than gold. When he was twelve winters old he had his full measure of strength; then he lifted clear of the earth ten bear-skins all at one time; and then he slew Duke Lórikus, his foster-father, and with him his wife Lórá, or Glórá, and took into his own hands the realm of Thrace, which we call Thrúdheim. Then he went forth far and wide over the lands, and sought out every quarter of the earth, overcoming alone all berserks and giants, and one dragon, greatest of all dragons, and many beasts.

In the northern half of his kingdom he found the prophetess that is called Síbil, whom we call Sif, and wedded her. The lineage of Sif I cannot tell; she was fairest of all women, and her hair was like gold. Their son was Lóridi, who resembled his father; his son was Einridi, his son Vingethor, his son Vingener, his son Móda, his son Magi, his son Seskef, his son Bedvig, his son Athra (whom we call Annarr), his son Ítermann, his son Heremód, his son Skjaldun (whom we call Skjöld), his son Bjáf (whom we call Bjárr), his son Ját, his son Gudólfr, his son Finn, his son Fríallaf (whom we call Fridleifr); his son was he who is named Vóden, whom we call Odin: he was a man far-famed for wisdom and every accomplishment. His wife was Frígídá, whom we call Frigg.

IV

Odin had second sight, and his wife also; and from their foreknowledge he found that his name should be exalted in the northern part of the world and glorified above the fame of all other kings. Therefore, he made ready to journey out of Turkland, and was accompanied by a great multitude of people, young folk and old, men and women; and they had with them much goods of great price. And wherever they went over the lands of the earth, many glorious things were spoken of them, so that they were held more like gods than men. They made no end to their journeying till they were come north into the land that is now called Saxland; there Odin tarried for a long space, and took the land into his own hand, far and wide.

In that land Odin set up three of his sons for land-wardens. One was named Vegdeg: he was a mighty king and ruled over East Saxland; his son was Vitgils; his sons were Vitta, Heingistr's father, and Sigarr, father of Svebdeg, whom we call Svipdagr. The second son of Beldeg, whom we call Baldr: he had the land which is now called Westphalia. His son was Brandr, his son Frjódigar (whom we call Fródi), his son Freóvin, his son Uvigg, his son Gevis (whom we call Gave). Odin's third son is named Sigi, his son Rerir. These the forefathers ruled over what is now called Frankland; and thence is descended the house known as Völsungs. From all these are sprung many and great houses.

Then Odin began his way northward, and came into the land which they called Reidgothland; and in that land he took possession of all that pleased him. He set up over the land that son of his called Skjöldr, whose son was Fridleifr; and thence descends the house of the Skjöldungs: these are the kings of the

Danes. And what was then called Reidgothland is now called Jutland [an area of modern Denmark].

V

After that he went northward, where the land is called Sweden; the king there was named Gylfi. When the king learned of the coming of those men of Asia, who were called Æsir, he went to meet them, and made offer to them that Odin should have such power in his realm as he himself wielded. And such well-being followed ever upon their footsteps, that in whatsoever lands they dwelt were good seasons and peace; and all believed that they caused these things, for the lords of the land perceived that they were unlike other men whom they had seen, both in fairness and also in wisdom.

The fields and the choice lands in that place seemed fair to Odin, and he chose for himself the site of a city which is now called Sigtún. There he established chieftains in the fashion which had prevailed in Troy; he set up also twelve head-men to be doomsmen over the people and to judge the laws of the land; and he ordained also all laws as, there had been before, in Troy, and according to the customs of the Turks. After that he went into the north, until he was stopped by the sea, which men thought lay around all the lands of the earth; and there he set his son over this kingdom, which is now called Norway. This king was Sæmingr; the kings of Norway trace their lineage from him, and so do also the jarls [Scandinavian medieval nobleman] and the other mighty men, as is said in the *Háleygjatal*. Odin had with him one of his sons called Yngvi, who was king in Sweden after him; and those houses come from him that are named Ynglings. The Æsir took wives of the land for themselves, and some also for their sons; and these kindreds became many in number, so that throughout Saxland, and thence all over the region of the north, they spread out until their tongue, even the speech of the men of Asia, was the native tongue over all these lands. Therefore men think that they can perceive, from their forefathers' names which are written down, that those names belonged to this tongue, and that the Æsir brought the tongue hither into the northern region, into Norway and into Sweden, into Denmark and into Saxland. But in England there are ancient lists of land-names and place-names which may show that these names came from another tongue than this.

Death of Baldr

Hárr made answer, "The beginning of the story is this, that Baldr the Good [Norse god of innocence, beauty, joy, purity, and peace] dreamed great and perilous dreams touching his life. When he told these dreams to the Æsir, then they took counsel together: and this was their decision: to ask safety for Baldr from all kinds of dangers. And Frigg [supreme goddess of the Norse pantheon] took oaths to this purport, that fire and water should spare Baldr, likewise iron and metal of all kinds, stones, earth, trees, sicknesses, beasts, birds, venom, serpents.

And when that was done and made known, then it was a diversion of Baldr's and the Æsir, that he should stand up in the Thing [the assembly], and all the others should some shoot at him, some hew at him, some beat him with stones; but whatsoever was done hurt him not at all, and that seemed to them all a very worshipful thing.

“But when Loki Laufeyarson [trickster who was actually a giant but associated with the Æsir, the Norse gods] saw this, it pleased him ill that Baldr took no hurt. He went to Fensalir [Frigg's palace] to Frigg, and made himself into the likeness of a woman. Then Frigg asked if that woman knew what the Æsir did at the Thing. She said that all were shooting at Baldr, and moreover, that he took no hurt. Then said Frigg, ‘Neither weapons nor trees may hurt Baldr: I have taken oaths of them all.’ Then the woman asked, ‘Have all things taken oaths to spare Baldr?’ and Frigg answered, ‘There grows a tree-sprout alone westward of Valhall: it is called Mistletoe; I thought it too young to ask the oath of.’ Then straightway the woman turned away; but Loki took Mistletoe and pulled it up and went to the Thing.

“Hödr [Baldr's brother] stood outside the ring of men, because he was blind. Then spake Loki to him, ‘Why dost thou not shoot at Baldr?’ He answered, ‘Because I see not where Baldr is; and for this also, that I am weaponless.’ Then said Loki, ‘Do thou also after the manner of other men, and show Baldr honor as the other men do. I will direct thee where he stands; shoot at him with this wand.’ Hödr took Mistletoe and shot at Baldr, being guided by Loki: the shaft flew through Baldr, and he fell dead to the earth; and that was the greatest mischance that has ever befallen among gods and men.

“Then, when Baldr was fallen, words failed all the, Æsir, and their hands likewise to lay hold of him; each looked at the other, and all were of one mind as to him who had wrought the work, but none might take vengeance, so great a sanctuary was in that place. But when the Æsir tried to speak, then it befell first that weeping broke out, so that none might speak to the others with words concerning his grief. But Odin [supreme god of the Norse pantheon] bore that misfortune by so much the worst, as he had most perception of how great harm and loss for the Æsir were in the death of Baldr.

“Now when the gods had come to themselves, Frigg spake, and asked who there might be among the Æsir who would fain have for his own all her love and favor: let him ride the road to Hel [Norse goddess of the dead and daughter of Loki; also, Land of the Dead], and seek if he may find Baldr, and offer Hel a ransom if she will let Baldr come home to Ásgard. And he is named Hermódr the Bold, Odin's son, who undertook that embassy. Then Sleipnir was taken, Odin's steed, and led forward; and Hermódr mounted on that horse and galloped off.

“The Æsir took the body of Baldr and brought it to the sea. Hringhorni is the name of Baldr's ship: it was greatest of all ships; the gods would have launched it and made Baldr's pyre thereon, but the ship stirred not forward. Then word was sent to Jötunheim after that giantess who is called Hyrrokkin.

When she had come, riding a wolf and having a viper for bridle, then she leaped off the steed; and Odin called to four berserks [“beserkers,” Norse warriors who fought in an uncontrollable state of frenzy] to tend the steed; but they were not able to hold it until they had felled it. Then Hyrrokkin went to the prow of the boat and thrust it out at the first push, so that fire burst from the rollers, and all lands trembled. Thor became angry and clutched his hammer, and would straightway have broken her head, had not the gods prayed for peace for her.

“Then was the body of Baldr borne out on shipboard; and when his wife, Nanna the daughter of Nep, saw that, straightway her heart burst with grief, and she died; she was borne to the pyre, and fire was kindled. Then Thor stood by and hallowed the pyre with Mjöllnir [Thor’s hammer]; and before his feet ran a certain dwarf which was named Litri; Thor kicked at him with his foot and thrust him into the fire, and he burned. People of many races visited this burning: First is to be told of Odin, how Frigg and the Valkyrs went with him, and his ravens; but Freyr drove in his chariot with the boar called Gold-Mane, or Fearful-Tusk, and Heimdallr rode the horse called Gold-Top, and Freyja drove her cats. Thither came also much people of the Rime-Giants and the Hill-Giants. Odin laid on the pyre that gold ring which is called Draupnir; this quality attended it, that every ninth night there dropped from it eight gold rings of equal weight. Baldr’s horse was led to the bale-fire with all his trappings.”

THOR IN PERIL

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Mackenzie, Donald A. *Teutonic Myth and Legend*. London: Gresham Publications, 1912, 126–134.

Date: Unavailable

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National Origin: Iceland

The following episodes from Norse mythology depict the relationship between Loki (“Loke,” in this translation) the **trickster** and Thor the god of lightning and thunder. Thor’s hammer Mjölnir was made for him by a pair of dwarves Brok and Eitri, whose trade was the manufacture of magical objects for the gods. Thor threw his hammer to create lightning as he rode in his chariot pulled by a pair of goats, but the hammer returned to the iron glove he wore on his right hand. Thor’s hammer had served as his weapon in battles against the frost giants. For this reason, Thrym used it to barter with the god and Geirrod wanted him stripped of the weapon before confronting him. Loke uses his cunning and skill at shape-shifting both to aid and undermine Thor, according to

the trickster's self-interest. Ragnarok, alluded to in the second episode of "Thor in Peril," is the end of the universe in Norse mythology. After this apocalypse, a new utopia will rise from the sea. Yggdrasil is a giant ash tree that forms a framework that links the worlds of the Norse mythic cosmos.

Now there was a king of giants whose name was Thrym, and he desired to have Freyja, the beautiful Asa-goddess, for his bride. A deep plot he laid, nor did the gods become aware of it until a grievous misfortune befell Thor. He was returning with Loke from Jotun-heim, and together they lay down to sleep. In great wrath was the thunder-god [that is, Thor] when he awoke because he could find not his hammer, Mjolner. He grasped his red beard and shook it, and fear crept over him as he searched around and about, because without his hammer he was powerless to contend against the giants.

When the other awoke, Thor spoke to him, saying, "Listen to me, and I shall tell thee what is known not in heaven nor upon earth—Mjolner is stolen!"

Speedily they took flight towards high Asgard, and to the dwelling of Freyja went they. Thor spake abruptly, and said, "Wilt thou lend thy falcon-guise to me, for my hammer hath been stolen, and I would fain find it."

"Gladly shall I give it thee, O Thor," Freyja answered, "even although it were made of silver; yea, if it were of fine gold thou wouldst have it without delay."

To Loke gave Thor the falcon-guise, and he flew speedily from Asgard to the northern coasts of distant Jotun-heim. Nor did he pause or stay until he reached a high mountain on which sat Thrym, king of giants, twisting bands of gold for his dogs, and anon smoothing the gold mane of his horse.

When he beheld Loke in falcon-guise he said, "How fare the gods, and how fare the elves? Why dost thou come alone unto these shores?"

Loke answered, "Ill fares it with gods and ill fares it with the elves. Hast thou hidden the hammer of Thor?"

Thrym answered boldly and with gladness, "I have indeed done so. Nine miles below the ground have I buried Mjolner. Nor shall it ever be recovered or returned unto Thor until I am given the goddess Freyja for my bride."

Having spoken thus he smoothed leisurely the golden mane of his fleet-footed steed, and Loke flew back towards Asgard.

Thor awaited him on the battlements, and when the falcon drew nigh he cried, "Hast thou indeed performed thy mission, O Loke? Tell me what thou knowest ere thou dost descend. What is spoken by one who sits is often of small worth. He who reclines is prone to utter what is untrue."

Loke answered and said, "I have discovered all that needs be known. Thy hammer hath been stolen by Thrym, King of Jotuns, and he hath buried it nine miles down below the mountains. Nor will he deliver it to thee again until Freyja is given him to be his bride."

Then Thor and Loke went unto Freyja and told her what the giant had said. Impatient, indeed, was the thunder-god, for he feared that if it became known to the Frost-giants that his hammer was lost they would fall upon Asgard and overcome the gods.

“Right speedily thou must don thy bridal attire, O Freyja,” Thor exclaimed, “and together shall we hasten unto Jotun-heim.”

Freyja was filled with anger, and as she raged she broke her flashing necklace that gave her great beauty. “A love-sick maid, indeed, I would be,” she exclaimed, “ere I would hasten to King Thrym.”

To the high Thingstead [Assembly] of Asgard went Thor, and the gods assembled there to hold counsel one with another and decide how the hammer should be recovered. To the hall Vingolf went the goddesses, to consult regarding the fate of Freyja.

In the Thingstead, Heimdall, the wise Van, the shining god, spake with foreknowledge and cunning, and thus he advised, “Let Thor be dressed in the bridal robes of Freyja, and let him also don her sparkling necklace, which gives its wearer great beauty. In a woman’s dress let Thor go forth, with keys jingling at his waist. His hair must be pleated, and on his breast must be fixed great brooches.”

But Thor made protest, and declared that the gods would mock him if he were attired in woman’s dress. Ill-pleased was he with Heimdall’s words. “Be silent, Thor,” Loke exclaimed; “thou knowest well that if thy hammer is found not the Frost-giants will come speedily hither and build over Asgard a dome of ice.”

The other gods spake likewise, and Thor consented to be attired as a bride. When this was done, Loke was dressed, at his own desire, as a maid attendant, and together they went forth from Asgard in Thor’s sublime car. The mountains thundered and fire swept from the heavens over Midgard as Thor journeyed to Jotun-heim.

Thrym was sitting on the mountain top, and to the Jotuns about him he spoke, when he beheld Thor in female-guise coming nigh, saying, “Arise, O giants! Let the feast be spread, for Freyja comes hither to be my bride.”

Then were driven before him into his yard his red cows with golden horns, and his great black oxen.

“I have great wealth indeed,” the king exclaimed; “all that I desire is mine. I lack naught save Freyja.”

The feast was made ready, and at the board sat Thor, whom Thrym deemed to be Freyja, and Loke, who was “maid attendant.”

Thor had great hunger, and he ate an ox, eight salmon, and all the sweets which had been made ready for the giantesses. Then he drank three great barrels of ancient mead.

Wondering, Thrym sat and watched him. Then he cried, “Hath anyone ever beheld a bride so hungry? Never have I known a maid who ate as Freyja hath eaten, or a woman who ever drank so great a quantity of mead.”

Loke, the cunning one, fearing that Thor would be discovered, said, "For eight days hath Freyja fasted, so greatly did she long to come unto Jotun-heim."

Thrym was well pleased to hear what Loke said, and he rose and went towards Thor. He lifted the veil he wore and sought to kiss, but he shrank back suddenly. Indeed he retreated to the hall end, where he cried, "Why are the eyes of Freyja so bright and so fierce? They seem to glow like hot embers."

Then spake cunning Loke again, and said, "Alas! O Thrym, for eight nights Freyja hath slept not, for she longed to be here with thee in Jotun-heim. Thus are her eyes a-fire." Thrym's sister then entered, and she went towards Thor humbly and with due respect, and asked to be given golden bridal rings from his fingers.

"Thou shalt gift them to me," she said, "if thou desirest to have my friendship and my love."

But naught did she receive from the angry and impatient god of thunder.

Thrym then desired that the wedding ceremony should be held, but Loke asked that as proof of his friendship, and to complete the bargain the giant had made, Thor's hammer should be laid upon the maiden's lap.

Then did Thrym order that Mjolner be lifted from its hiding place deep in the bowels of the earth.

In Thor's heart there was great laughter when Thrym spoke thus, yet was his mind solemn, and he waited anxiously until Mjolner was laid upon his knees.

A servant came forward with it, and Thor clutched the handle right eagerly. Then he tore off the bridal veil from his face and the woman's dress from about his knees, and sprang upon King Thrym, whom he killed with a single blow. Around the feasting board he went, slaying the guests, nor one would he permit to escape from the hall, so fierce was he with long-restrained wrath.

Thrym's sister, who had begged from Thor the bridal rings, he slew with the others. A blow she received from the hammer instead of golden treasure.

Cunning Loke watched with pleasure the devastation accomplished by the fierce thunder-god as he raged round the hall and through the castle, wreaking his fierce vengeance on the whole clan of Thrym.

Then together hastened they to where the goats were bound at the home of Orvandel, nor did they pause to rest. Across the heavens was speedily driven the black sublime car. Swiftly o'er mountain and sea it went, blotting out the sparkling stars. Mountains thundered and the wide ocean trembled with fear as the car rolled on. The earth was filled with fire.

Thus did Thor return in triumph unto Asgard, because Mjolner was recovered and the King of Mountain Giants was slain.

But although Loke had served Thor well when his hammer was stolen by Thrym, there came a time when he brought the god of thunder nigh to great misfortune. It was in the days ere the winter war was waged between the Asa-gods and the sons of Ivalde, and the cunning artisans were yet friendly with the dwellers in Asgard.

Loke had gone forth in the falcon-guise of Freyja to pry round Jotun-heim, and especially the castle of King Geirrod, whose daughter he desired for a bride. He flew towards a window, and sat in it while he listened to the words that were being spoken, and surveyed the guests who were there. A servant beheld him with curious eyes, and perceived that he was not a real falcon. So, making cautious approach, he seized Loke and brought him before the king. The eyes of the falcon were still the cunning eyes of Loke, and he was recognized by Geirrod, who demanded ransom ere he would release him. In vain did Loke endeavor to escape. He flapped his wings, he pecked with his beak, but the servant held his claws securely.

Silent was he before Geirrod, and no answer would he make when he was addressed. So to punish him the giant locked him in a chest, in which he was kept for three months. Then was Loke taken forth, and ready indeed was he to speak. To Geirrod he confessed who he was, and the giant constrained him to promise, by swearing a binding oath, that he would bring Thor to Jotun-heim and unto that strong castle without his hammer or his belt or his iron gloves. For greatly sought the giant to have the thunder-god in his power.

Loke then flew back to Asgard, and with great cunning he addressed Thor, so that he secured his consent to visit the castle of Geirrod without taking with him his hammer and gloves and his strong belt. For Loke assured Thor that the castle stood on a green and level plain, and that they were invited to attend together a feast of friends.

Thor set forth, and Loke went with him. All day they traveled on their way until they came to the borders of Elivagar in Alf-heim, where dwelt the sons of Ivalde.

There dwelt also in that realm and in the midst of a deep wood a giantess who was friendly towards the gods. Her name was Grid. She was the mother of Odin's son Vidar, the Silent One, whose strength was so mighty that none save Thor was his equal. A great shoe he had; its sole was hard as iron, for it was formed of the cast-off leather scraps of every shoe that was ever made. This son of Grid was born to avenge his father's death. When Odin is slain at Ragnarok, then shall Vidar combat with the wolf Fenrer and tear its jaws asunder. Nor shall Surtur destroy him with his firebrands, for the wood-god perishes never in Nature's deep solitudes.

Now Grid, mother of Vidar, had power to work magic spells, and she possessed a magic rowan wand which was named Gridarvold. When she beheld Thor going unarmed towards Geirrod's castle, she warned him that the giant was as cunning and treacherous as a wolf-dog, and dangerous to meet without weapons. So to Thor she gave her magic staff, her belt of strength, and her iron gloves, and when he set out he took with him the sons of Ivalde. Together they traveled in safety until they came to Vimur, which is the greatest of the rivers Elivagar. The clouds drove heavily above them, and hailstones fell around. Wild and mountainous was the country which Loke had said was green and level. There were swift and treacherous eddies in the swollen waters.

But Thor put on the belt of strength which Grid had given him, and in his hand he took her magic staff. Rapidly did the river rise as he entered it with his men. From the mountains icy torrents poured down with increasing strength, and the sons of Ivalde were soon in great peril. They thrust their spears into the shingle as they tried to ford the river, and the clinking of the steel mingled with the sharp screams of the waters. When they were but halfway across a high wave burst out from a great mountain torrent, and the waters rose to Thor's shoulder. The others were swept down towards him; for, perceiving their peril and desiring to be a protection to them, he had chosen the deepest part through which to wade. Orvandel leapt upon Thor's shoulder, and there stood, bending his bow. Loke and the others clung to the belt of Grid, which was about Thor's body. Towards the bank the thunder-god labored, and when he came nigh to it he beheld, at the torrent's source a daughter of Geirrod, whose name was Gjalp. It was she who, standing high on the hillside, caused the river to increase so that Thor and his followers might be drowned. The angry god seized a boulder and flung it towards her. Sure was his aim, for it struck her heavily, so that her back was broken. Thus was the Hag overcome and the torrent stayed.

Then did Thor seize a rowan-tree branch which overhung the river, and with its aid he pulled himself up the bank. Thus had its origin the ancient proverb, "Thor's salvation, the rowan."

Up the steep mountain did the thunder-god climb with all his men. Against them came the giants who sought to destroy Ygdrasil, "the World-tree." Bravely fought Thor, and the arrows of Orvandel sped fast until the horde of giants were put to flight. Speedily did the heroes follow them. They pressed onward and reached Geirrod's castle amidst the clamor and the howling of the storm-giants and the giants that dwell within the caves of the mountains.

When Thor entered Geirrod's hall the giant king cast at him a red-hot flaming javelin from behind a great pillar of wood. But with Grid's iron gloves Thor caught it, and past Orvandel's head he flung it back, so that it went through the pillar and through Geirrod, who was slain; and it passed through the wall of his castle ere it sank deep into the earth.

Then loudly thundered the din of battle in Geirrod's hall, which was shaken to its foundations. With slings and boulders did the giants contend, but from Thor and his men they received their deathblows.

Thus was Geirrod and his clan overcome in dread conflict.

FROM "GISLI THE OUTLAW"

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Dasent, George Webb. *Gisli the Outlaw*. Edinburgh: Edmonston and Douglas, 1866, 1–19.

Date: ca. 1200 C.E.

Original Source: Iceland

National Origin: Iceland

The action of this saga of revenge, the toll blood feuds take on those involved, and the helplessness of individuals in the face of fate, is set in mid-tenth century Iceland and Norway. Harold Fairhair reigned as the first King of Norway from 850–933 C.E. The Bearsarks were warriors who forsook armor to wear bear skins (bear sarks) in battle and fought with furious intensity. The following chapters set the fate of Gisli in motion with the curse laid on his uncle Gisli the Elder for the theft of a sword and the murder of its owner.

The Thrall's Curse

At the end of the days of Harold Fairhair there was a mighty lord in Norway whose name was Thorkel Goldhelm, and he dwelt in Surnadale in North Mæren. He had a wedded wife, and three sons by her. The name of the eldest was Ari, the second was called Gisli, and the third Thorbjorn. They were all young men of promise. There was a man too, named Isi, who ruled over the Fjardarfolk. His daughter's name was Ingibjorga, and she was the fairest of women. Ari, Thorkel's son, asked her to wife, and she was wedded to him. He got a great dower with her, and amongst the rest that she brought with her from her home was a man named Kol: he was of high degree, but he had been taken captive in war, and was called a Thrall. So he came with Ingibjorga to Surnadale. Thorkel gave over to his son Ari a rich farm up in the dale, and there he set up his abode, and was looked on as a most rising man.

But now our story goes on to tell of a man named Bjorn, nicknamed Bjorn the Black. He was a Bearsark, and much given to duels. Twelve men went at his heel, and besides he was skilled in the black art, and no steel could touch his skin. No wonder he was unbeloved by the people, for he turned aside as he listed into the houses of men, and took a way their wives and daughters, and kept them with him as long as he liked. All raised an outcry when he came, and all were fain when he went away. Well, as soon as this Bjorn heard that Ari had brought home a fair wife with a rich dower, he thought he would have a finger in that pie. So he turned his steps thither with his crew, and reached the house at eventide. As soon as Ari and Bjorn met, Bjorn told him that he wanted to play the master in that house, and that Ingibjorga, the housewife, should be at his beck and call whenever he chose. As for Ari, he said he might please himself, go away or stay, so he let Bjorn have his will. But Ari said he would not go away, nor would he let him play the master there.

“Very well!” says Bjorn, “thou shalt have another choice. I will challenge thee to fight on the island, if thou darest, three days from this, and then we will

try whose Ingibjorga shall be; and he, too, shall take all the other's goods who wins the day. Now, mind, I will neither ransom myself with money, nor will I suffer any one else to ransom himself. One shall conquer and the other die."

Ari said he was willing enough to fight; so the Bearsarks went their way and busked them to battle. To make a long story short, they met on the island, and the end of their struggle was, that Ari fell; but the Bearsark was not wounded, for no steel would touch him.

Now Bjorn thought he had won wife, and land, and goods, and he gave out that he meant to go at even to Ari's house to claim his own. Then Gisli, Ari's brother, answered and said, "It will soon be all over with me and mine if this disgrace comes to pass, that this ruffian tramples us under foot. But this shall never be, for I will challenge thee at once to battle tomorrow morning. I would far rather fall on the island than bear this shame."

"Well and good," says Bjorn; "thou and thy kith and kin shall all fall one after the other, if ye dare to fight with me."

After that they parted, and Gisli went home to the house that Ari had owned. Now the tidings were told of what had happened on the island, and of Ari's death, and all thought that a great blow to the house. But Gisli goes to Ingibjorga, and tells her of Ari's fall, and how he had challenged Bjorn to the island, and how they were to fight the very next morning.

"That is a bootless undertaking," said Ingibjorga, "and I fear it will not turn out well for thee, unless thou hast other help to lean on."

"Ah!" said Gisli, "then I beg that thou and all else who are likeliest to yield help will do their best that victory may seem more hopeful than it now looks."

"Know this," says Ingibjorga, "that I was not so very fond of Ari that I would not rather have had thee. There is a man," She said, "who, methinks, is likeliest to be able to help in this matter, so that it may be well with thee."

"Who is that?" asks Gisli.

"It is Kol, my foster-father," was the answer; "for I ween he has a sword that is said to be better than most others, though he seems to set little store by it, for he calls it his 'Chopper'; but whoever wields that sword wins the day."

So they sent for Kol, and he came to meet Gisli and Ingibjorga.

"Hast thou ever a good sword?" asked Gisli.

"My sword is no great treasure," answers Kol; "but yet there are many things in the churl's cot which are not in the king grange."

"Wilt thou not lend me the sword for my duel with Bjorn?" said Gisli.

"Ah!" said Kol, "then will happen what ever happens with those things that are treasures—you will never wish to give it up. But for all that, I tell thee now that this sword will bite whatever its blow falls on, be it iron or aught else; nor can its edge be deadened by spells, for it was forged by the Dwarves, and its name is 'Graysteel.' And now make up thy mind that I shall take it very ill if I do not get the sword back. when I claim it."

“It were most unfair,” says Gisli, “that thou shouldst not get back the sword after I have had the use of it in my need.”

Now Gisli takes the sword, and the night glides away, Next morn, ere they went from home to the duel, Thorbjorn called out to Gisli his brother, and said, “Which of us twain now shall fight with the Bearsark today, and which of us shall slaughter the calf?”

“My counsel,” said Gisli, “is, that thou shalt slaughter the calf while I and Bjorn try our strength.” He did not choose the easiest task.

So they set off to the island, and Gisli and Bjorn stood face to face on it. Then Gisli bade Bjorn strike the first blow. “No one has ever made me that offer before,” said Bjorn; “indeed no one has ever challenged me before this day save thou.” So Bjorn made a blow at Gisli, but Gisli threw his shield before him, and the sword hewed off from the shield all that it smote from below the handle. Then Gisli smote at Bjorn in his turn, and the stroke fell on the tail of the shield and shore it right off, and then passed on and struck off his leg below the knee. One other stroke he dealt him and took off his head. Then he and his men turned on Bjorn’s followers, and some are slain and some chased away into the woods.

After that Gisli goes home and got good fame for this feat, and then he took the farm as his heritage after Ari his brother; and he got Ingibjorga also to wife, for he would not let a good woman go out of the family. And time rolls on, but he did not give up the good sword, nor had Kol ever asked for it.

One day they two met out of doors, and Gisli had “Graysteel” in his hand, and Kol had an axe. Kol asked whether he thought the sword had stood him in good stead, and Gisli was full of its praises. “Well now” said Kol, “I should like to have it back if thou thinkest it has done thee good service in thy need.”

“Wilt thou sell it?” says Gisli.

“No,” says Kol.

“I will give thee thy freedom and goods, so that thou mayest fare whither thou wilt with other men.”

“I will not sell it,” says Kol.

“Then I will give thee thy freedom, and lease or give thee land, and besides I will give thee sheep and cattle and goods as much as thou needest.”

“I will not sell it a whit more for that,” says Kol.

“Indeed,” says Gisli, “thou art too willful to cling to it thus. Put thine own price on it—any sum thou chooseth in money—and be sure I will not stand at trifles if thou wilt come to terms in some way. Besides, I will give thee thy freedom and a becoming match if thou hast any liking for any one.”

“There is no use talking about it,” says Kol; “I will not sell it whatsoever thou offerest. But now it just comes to what I feared at first, when I said it was not sure whether thou wouldest be ready to give the sword up if thou knewest what virtue was in it.”

"And I too"; says Gisli, "will say what will happen. Good will befall neither of us, for I have not the heart to give up the sword, and it shall never come into any other man's hand than mine if I may have my will."

Then Kol lifts up his axe, while Gisli brandished "Graysteel" and each smote at the other. Kol's blow fell on Gisli's head, so that it sank into the brain, but the sword fell on Kol's head, and did not bite; but still the blow was so stoutly dealt that the skull was shattered and the sword broke asunder. Then Kol said, "It had been better now that I had got back my sword when I asked for it; and yet this is but the beginning of the ill-luck which it will bring on thy kith and kin." Thus both of them lost their lives.

Kolbein's Killing

Now after that Ingibjorga longed to get away from Surnadale, and went home to her father with her goods. As for Thorbjorn, he looked about for a wife, and went east across the Keel to Fressey, and wooed a woman named Iserda, and got her. After that he went back home to Surnadale and set up housekeeping with his father. Thorkel Goldhelm lived but a little while afterwards ere he fell sick and died, and Thorbjorn took all the heritage after his father. He was afterwards called Thorbjorn Soursop, and he dwelt at Stock in Surnadale. He and Iserda had children. Their eldest son was Thorkel, the second Gisli, and the third Ari, but he was sent at once to be fostered at Fressey, and he is little heard of in this story. Their daughter's name was Thordisa. She was their eldest child. Thorkel was a tall man and fair of face, of huge strength, and the greatest dandy. Gisli was swarthy of hue, and as tall as the tallest: 'twas hard to tell how strong he was. He was a man who could turn his hand to anything, and was ever at work—mild of temper too. Their sister Thordisa was a fair woman to look on, high-minded, and rather hard of heart. She was a dashing, forward woman.

At that time there were two young men in Surnadale, whose names were Bard and Kolbein. They were both well-to-do, and though they were not akin, they had each a little before lost their father on a cruise to England. Hella was the name of Bard's house, and Granskeid was where Kolbein dwelt. They were much about the same age as Thorbjorn's sons, and they were all full of mirth and frolic. This was just about the time when Hacon Athelstane's foster-child was King of Norway.

Well, we must go on to say that this Kolbein, of whom we have spoken, grew very fond of coming to Thorbjorn's house, and when there thought it best sport of all to talk with Thordisa. Before long other folk began to talk about this; and so much was said about it that it came to her father's ears, and he thought he saw it all as clear as day. Then Thorbjorn spoke to his sons, and bade them find a cure for this. Gisli said it was easy enough to cure things in which there was no harm.

"If we are to speak, don't say things which seem as though you wanted to pick a quarrel."

"I see," said Thorbjorn, "that this has got wind far too widely, and that it will be out of our power to smother it. Nevertheless, too, it seems much more likely that thou and thy brother are cravens, with little or no feeling of honor."

Gisli went on to say, "Don't fret thyself, father, about his coming. I will speak to him to stop his visits hither."

"Ah!" cried out Thorbjorn, "thou art likelier to go and beg and pray him not to come hither, and be so eager as even to thank him for so doing, and to show thyself a dastard in every way, and after all to do nothing if he does not listen to thy words!"

Now Gisli goes away, and he and his father stayed their talk; but the very next time that Kolbein came thither, Gisli went with him on his way home when he left, and spoke to him, and says he will not suffer him to come thither any longer; "for my father frets himself about thy visits: for folks say that thou beguilest my sister Thordisa, and that is not at all to my father's mind. As for me, I will do all I can, if thou dost as I wish, to bring mirth and sport into thy house."

"What's the good"; said Kolbein, "of talking of things which thou knowest can never be? I know not whether is more irksome to me, thy father's fretfulness, or the thought of giving way to his wish. 'Verily the words of the weak are little worth'."

"That is not the way to take it," answers Gisli. "The end of this will be, that at last when it comes to the push I will set most store by my father's will. Me thought now it was worth trying whether thou wouldest do this for my word's sake; then thou mightest have asked as much from me another time; but I am afraid that we shall not like it, if thou art bent on being cross-grained."

To that Kolbein said little, and so they parted. Then Gisli went home, and so things rested for a while, and Kolbein's visits were somewhat fewer and farther between than they had been. At last he thinks it dull at home, and goes oftener to Thorbjorn's house. So one day when he had come thither Gisli sat in the hall and smithied, and his father and his brother and sister were there too. Thorkel was the cheeriest towards Kolbein; and these three—Thorkel, and Thordisa, and Kolbein—all sat on the cross-bench. But when the day was far spent, and evening fell, they rose up and went out. Thorbjorn and Gisli were left behind in the hall, and Thorbjorn began to say, "Thy begging and praying has not been worth much; for both thy undertaking was girlish, and indeed I can scarce say whether I am to reckon thee and thy brother as my sons or my daughters. 'Tis hard to learn, when one is old, that one has sons who have no more manly thoughts than women had in olden times, and ye two are utterly unlike my brothers Gisli and Ari."

"Thou hast no need," answered Gisli, "to take it so much to heart; for no one can say how a man will behave till he is tried."

With this Gisli could not bear to listen longer to his father's gibes, and went out. Just then Thorkel and Kolbein were going out at the gate, and Thordisa had turned back for the hall. Gisli went out after them, and so they all walked

along together. Again Gisli besought Kolbein to cease his visits, but Kolbein said he weened that no good would come of that. Then Gisli said, "So you set small store by my words, and now we shall lay down our companionship in a worse way than I thought."

"I don't see how I can help that," said Kolbein.

"Why," said Gisli, "one of two things must happen: either that thou settest some store by my words, or if thou dost not, then I will forsake all the friendship that has been between us."

"Thou must settle that as thou pleasest," says Kolbein; "but for all that I cannot find it in my heart to break off my visits."

At that Gisli drew his sword and smote at him, and that one stroke was more than enough for Kolbein.

Thorkel was very vexed at the deed, but Gisli bade his brother be soothed. "Let us change swords," he said; "and take thou that with the keenest edge." This he said, mocking; but Thorkel was soothed, and sate down by Kolbein.

Then Gisli went home to his father's hall, and Thorbjorn asked, "Well, how has thy begging and praying sped?"

"Well," says Gisli, "I think I may say that it has well sped; because we settled ere we parted just now that Kolbein should cease his visits, that they might not anger thee."

"That can only be," said Thorbjorn, "if he be dead."

"Then be all the better pleased," says Gisli, "that thy will hath been done in this matter."

"Good luck to thy hand," said Thorbjorn. "Maybe after all that I have not daughters alone to my children."

The Burning of the Old House

As for Thorkel, who had been Kolbein's greatest friend, he could not bear to be at home, nor would he change swords with Gisli, but went his way to a man called Dueling Skeggi, in the isle of Saxa. He was near akin to Kolbein, and in his house Thorkel stayed. In a little while Thorkel egged Skeggi on to avenge his kinsman, and at the same time to woo his sister Thordisa. So they went to Stock—for that was the name of Thorbjorn's farm—twenty of them together; and when they came to the house, Skeggi began to talk of King Thorbjorn's son-in-law, and of having Thordisa to wife. But Thorbjorn would not hear of the match. The story went that Bard, Kolbein's friend, had settled it all with Thordisa; and, at any rate, Skeggi made up his mind that Bard was to blame for the loss of the match. So he set off to find Bard, and challenged him to fight on the isle of Saxa. Bard said he would be sure to come; he was not worthy to have Thordisa if he did not dare to fight for her with Skeggi. So Thorkel and Skeggi set out for Saxa with twenty-one men in all, and waited for the day fixed for the duel. But when three nights had come and gone, Gisli went to find Bard, and

asks whether he were ready for the combat. Bard says, Yes; and asked whether, if he fought, he should have the match.

“Twill be time to talk of that afterwards,” says Gisli.

“Well,” says Bard, “methinks I had better not fight with Skeggi.”

“Out on thee for a dastard!” says Gisli; “but though thou broughtest us all to shame, still for all that I will go myself.”

Now Gisli goes to the isle with eleven men. Meantime Skeggi had come to the isle and staked out the lists for Bard, and laid down the law of the combat, and after all saw neither him nor any one to fight on the isle in his stead. There was a man named Fox, who was Skeggi’s Smith; and Skeggi bade Fox to carve likenesses of Gisli and Bard, “And see,” he said, “that one stands just behind the back of the other, and this laughingstock shall stand for aye to put them to shame.”

These words Gisli heard in the wood, and called out, “Thy house-carles shall have other handier work to do. Here behold a man who dares to do battle with thee!”

Then they stepped on the isle and fought, and each bore his own shield before him. Skeggi had a sword called “Warflame,” and with it he smote at Gisli till the blade sang again, and Skeggi chanted:

Warflame fierce flickered,
Flaring on Saxa.

But Gisli smote back at him with his battle-axe, and took off the tail of his shield, and Skeggi’s leg along with it; and as he smote he chanted:

Grimly grinned Ogremaw,
Gaping at Skeggi.

As for Skeggi, he ransomed himself from the island, and went ever after on a wooden leg. But Thorkel went home with his brother Gisli, and now their friendship was pretty good, and Gisli was thought to have grown a great man by these dealings.

That same winter Einar and Sigurd, the sons of Skeggi, set off from their house at Flydroneess, with nigh forty men, and marched till they came in the night to Surnadale. They went first to Bard’s house at Hella, and seized all the doors. Two choices were given him: the first, that he should lose his life; the other, that he should go with them against Thorbjorn and his sons. Bard said there were no ties between him and Thorbjorn and his sons. “I set most store on my life,” he says; “as for the other choice, I think nothing of doing it.”

So he set out with them, and ten men followed him. They were then in all fifty men. They come unawares on Thorbjorn’s house at Stock. His men were so arranged that some of them were in the hall and some in the store-room. This

store-room Gisli had built some years before, and made it in such wise that every plank had been cut asunder, and a loose panel left in the middle, and on the outside they were all fitted together, while within they were held by iron bolts and bars, and yet on the outside the planks looked as if they were all one piece. The weather that night was in this wise: the air was thick, and the wind sharp; and the blast stood right on to the store-room. Einar and Sigurd heaped a pile of wood both before the hall and the store-room, and set fire to them. But when those in the store-room were ware of this, they threw open the outer door. By the entry stood two large pails or casks of whey, and they took the whey in goat-skins and threw it on the fire, and quenched it thrice. But the foe made the pile up again a little way from the door on either side, and then the fire soon began to catch the beams of the house.

The heads of the household were all in that store-room—Thorbjorn, and Thorkel, and Gisli, and Isgerda, and Thordisa. Then Gisli stole away from the doorway to the gable-end, and pushed back the bolts, and thrust out a plank. After that he passed out there, and all the others after him. No men were on the watch there, for they were all guarding the door to see that none came out; but no man was ware of what was happening. Gisli and his kindred followed the smoke away from the house, and so got to the woods, and when they got so far they, turned and looked back, and saw that the hall and the whole homestead were ablaze. Then Gisli chaunted—

Flames flare fierce o'er roof and rafter,
 High the hubbub, loud the laughter;
 Hist with croak, and bark with howl,
 Ravens flit and gray wolves prowl:
 Father mine, for lesser matter
 Erst I fleshed my maiden steel
 Hear me swear amid this clatter,
 Soon our foes my sword shall feel.

Now these are there in the waste, but their house burns to cold ashes. Those brothers, Einar and Sigurd, never left the spot till they made up their minds that Thorbjorn and his sons, and all his household, had been burnt inside. They were thirty souls who were burnt inside the hall. So wherever those brothers went they told this story, that Thorbjorn was dead and all his household. But Gisli and his kindred never showed themselves till the others were well away.

Then they got force together by stealth, and afterwards they fare by night to Bard's house, and set fire to the homestead, and burnt it up, and the men who were inside it. When they had done that deed, they went back and set about rebuilding their house. All at once Gisli took himself off, and no man knew what had become of him; but when spring came he came with it.

Then they set to work and sold their lands secretly, but their goods and chattels they carried off. Now it was plain that Thorbjorn and his sons meant to change their abode and leave Norway; and that was why Gisli had gone away, that he might be busy building their ship. And all this was done so silently that few knew they had broken up their household before they had gone on ship-board, thirty men told, besides women. After that they hold on their course for the sea, and lay to in a haven under the lee of an island, and meant to wait there for a fair wind.

One day when the weather was good Gisli and his brother got into their boats. Ten men stayed behind with their ship, and ten got into each of the boats; but Thorbjorn stayed by the ship. Gisli and his brother row north along the land, and steer for Flydroness; for Gisli says he wishes to look those brothers up ere he leaves Norway for good and all. But when they got to Flydroness they hear that Einar and Sigurd had gone from home to gather King Hacon's dues. So Gisli and his men turned after them, and lay in wait for them in the path which they knew they must take. Those brothers were fifteen in all, and so they met, and there was a hard light. The end of it was that Einar and Sigurd fell, and all their followers. Gisli slew five men and Thorkel three. When the fight was over, Gisli says he has got an errand to do up at the farm. And Gisli went up to the farm, and into the hall, and sees where Skeggi lies, and comes on him, and hews off his head. They sacked the house, and behaved as much like enemies as they could, and took all they could carry with them. After that they row to their ships, and landed on the island, and made a great sacrifice, and vowed vows for a fair wind, and the wind comes. So they put to sea, and have Iceland in their mind's eye.

SAMI

HOW SOME WILD ANIMALS BECAME TAME ONES

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Lang, Andrew. *The Brown Fairy Book*. London: Longmans, Green and Company, 1904, 197–201.

Date: Unavailable

Original Source: Poestion, J. C. *Lappländische Märchen*.

National Origin: Sami

The Sami are the indigenous cultures of the Nordic region of Finland, Norway, Russia, and Sweden. Historically, the Sami subsisted by fishing, trapping, hunting, and herding. They have been particularly associated with reindeer herding. Shamanism continues to play a role in the Sami belief system, and references to shamans (usually labeled “wise men” or “wise women”) abound in their oral tradition. Sami lifestyle and belief shares common traits with other circumpolar culture areas such as Siberia and native North America. Although the following **animal tale** describes the transition from feral to domestic of animal species that are central to Sami culture, the narrative functions more as a **fable** that warns against ignoring good advice rather than as a **myth** of origin.

Once upon a time there lived a miller who was so rich that, when he was going to be married, he asked to the feast not only his own friends but also the wild animals who dwelt in the hills and woods round about. The chief of the bears, the wolves, the foxes, the horses, the cows, the goats, the sheep, and the reindeer, all received invitations; and as they were not accustomed to weddings they were greatly pleased and flattered, and sent back messages in the politest language that they would certainly be there.

The first to start on the morning of the wedding-day was the bear, who always liked to be punctual; and, besides, he had a long way to go, and his hair, being so thick and rough, needed a good brushing before it was fit to be seen at a party. However, he took care to awaken very early, and set off down the road with a light heart. Before he had walked very far he met a boy who came whistling along, hitting at the tops of the flowers with a stick.

“Where are you going?” said he, looking at the bear in surprise, for he was an old acquaintance, and not generally so smart.

“Oh, just to the miller’s marriage,” answered the bear carelessly. “Of course, I would much rather stay at home, but the miller was so anxious I should be there that I really could not refuse.”

“Don’t go, don’t go!” cried the boy. “If you do you will never come back! You have got the most beautiful skin in the world—just the kind that everyone is wanting, and they will be sure to kill you and strip you of it.”

“I had not thought of that,” said the bear, whose face turned white, only nobody could see it. “If you are certain that they would be so wicked—but perhaps you are jealous because nobody has invited you?”

“Oh, nonsense!” replied the boy angrily, “do as you see. It is your skin, and not mine; I don’t care what becomes of it!” And he walked quickly on with his head in the air.

The bear waited until he was out of sight, and then followed him slowly, for he felt in his heart that the boy’s advice was good, though he was too proud to say so.

The boy soon grew tired of walking along the road, and turned off into the woods, where there were bushes he could jump and streams he could wade; but he had not gone far before he met the wolf.

“Where are you going?” asked he, for it was not the first time he had seen him.

“Oh, just to the miller’s marriage,” answered the wolf, as the bear had done before him. “It is rather tiresome, of course—weddings are always so stupid; but still one must be good-natured!”

“Don’t go!” said the boy again. “Your skin is so thick and warm, and winter is not far off now. They will kill you, and strip it from you.”

The wolf’s jaw dropped in astonishment and terror. “Do you really think that would happen?” he gasped.

“Yes, to be sure, I do,” answered the boy. “But it is your affair, not mine. So good-morning,” and on he went. The wolf stood still for a few minutes, for he was trembling all over, and then crept quietly back to his cave.

Next the boy met the fox, whose lovely coat of silvery grey was shining in the sun.

“You look very fine!” said the boy, stopping to admire him, “are you going to the miller’s wedding too?”

“Yes,” answered the fox; “it is a long journey to take for such a thing as that, but you know what the miller’s friends are like—so dull and heavy! It is only kind to go and amuse them a little.”

“You poor fellow,” said the boy pityingly. “Take my advice and stay at home. If you once enter the miller’s gate his dogs will tear you in pieces.”

“Ah, well, such things have occurred, I know,” replied the fox gravely. And without saying any more he trotted off the way he had come.

His tail had scarcely disappeared, when a great noise of crashing branches was heard, and up bounded the horse, his black skin glistening like satin.

“Good-morning,” he called to the boy as he galloped past, “I can’t wait to talk to you now. I have promised the miller to be present at his wedding-feast, and they won’t sit down till I come.”

“Stop! stop!” cried the boy after him, and there was something in his voice that made the horse pull up. “What is the matter?” asked he.

“You don’t know what you are doing,” said the boy. “If once you go there you will never gallop through these woods any more. You are stronger than many men, but they will catch you and put ropes round you, and you will have to work and to serve them all the days of your life.”

The horse threw back his head at these words, and laughed scornfully.

“Yes, I am stronger than many men,” answered he, “and all the ropes in the world would not hold me. Let them bind me as fast as they will, I can always break loose, and return to the forest and freedom.”

And with this proud speech he gave a whisk of his long tail, and galloped away faster than before.

But when he reached the miller’s house everything happened as the boy had said. While he was looking at the guests and thinking how much handsomer and stronger he was than any of them, a rope was suddenly flung over his head, and he was thrown down and a bit thrust between his teeth. Then, in spite of his struggles, he was dragged to a stable, and shut up for several days without any food, till his spirit was broken and his coat had lost its gloss. After that he was harnessed to a plough, and had plenty of time to remember all he had lost through not listening to the counsel of the boy.

When the horse had turned a deaf ear to his words the boy wandered idly along, sometimes gathering wild strawberries from a bank, and sometimes plucking wild cherries from a tree, till he reached a clearing in the middle of the forest. Crossing this open space was a beautiful milk-white cow with a wreath of flowers round her neck.

“Good-morning,” she said pleasantly, as she came up to the place where the boy was standing.

“Good-morning,” he returned. “Where are you going in such a hurry?”

“To the miller’s wedding; I am rather late already, for the wreath took such a long time to make, so I can’t stop.”

“Don’t go,” said the boy earnestly; “when once they have tasted your milk they will never let you leave them, and you will have to serve them all the days of your life.”

“Oh, nonsense; what do you know about it?” answered the cow, who always thought she was wiser than other people. “Why, I can run twice as fast as any of them! I should like to see anybody try to keep me against my will.” And, without even a polite bow, she went on her way, feeling very much offended.

But everything turned out just as the boy had said. The company had all heard of the fame of the cow’s milk, and persuaded her to give them some, and then her doom was sealed. A crowd gathered round her, and held her horns so that she could not use them, and, like the horse, she was shut in the stable, and only let out in the mornings, when a long rope was tied round her head, and she was fastened to a stake in a grassy meadow.

And so it happened to the goat and to the sheep.

Last of all came the reindeer, looking as he always did, as if some serious business was on hand.

“Where are you going?” asked the boy, who by this time was tired of wild cherries, and was thinking of his dinner.

“I am invited to the wedding,” answered the reindeer, “and the miller has begged me on no account to fail him.”

“O fool!” cried the boy, “have you no sense at all? Don’t you know that when you get there they will hold you fast, for neither beast nor bird is as strong or as swift as you?”

“That is exactly why I am quite safe,” replied the reindeer. “I am so strong that no one can bind me, and so swift that not even an arrow can catch me. So, good-bye for the present, you will soon see me back.”

But none of the animals that went to the miller’s wedding ever came back. And because they were self-willed and conceited, and would not listen to good advice, they and their children have been the servants of men to this very day.

HOW THE STALOS WERE TRICKED

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Lang, Andrew. *The Orange Fairy Book*. London: Longmans, Green and Company, 1904, 319–328.

Date: Unavailable

Original Source: Poestion, J. C. *Lappländische Märchen*.

National Origin: Sami

The Stalo (or Staalö) is a massive anthropomorphic being who always carries with it a bag of silver and a knife. The Staalö is accompanied by a dog. Tales often depict the Staalö challenging humans to a duel, but losing because of its stupidity. In most tales involving this antagonist, human **tricksters** repeatedly take advantage of the Staalö’s dull wits. In

some tales, the Stalo takes a human wife. The cannibalism mentioned in the following tale is not a necessary attribute of the ogre, however.

“Mother, I have seen such a wonderful man,” said a little boy one day, as he entered a hut in Lapland, bearing in his arms the bundle of sticks he had been sent out to gather.

“Have you, my son; and what was he like?” asked the mother, as she took off the child’s sheepskin coat and shook it on the doorstep.

“Well, I was tired of stooping for the sticks, and was leaning against a tree to rest, when I heard a noise of ‘sh-’sh, among the dead leaves. I thought perhaps it was a wolf, so I stood very still. But soon there came past a tall man—oh! twice as tall as father—with a long red beard and a red tunic fastened with a silver girdle, from which hung a silver-handled knife. Behind him followed a great dog, which looked stronger than any wolf, or even a bear. But why are you so pale, mother?”

“It was the Stalo,” replied she, her voice trembling; “Stalo the man-eater! You did well to hide, or you might never had come back. But, remember that, though he is so tall and strong, he is very stupid, and many a Lapp has escaped from his clutches by playing him some clever trick.”

Not long after the mother and son had held this talk, it began to be whispered in the forest that the children of an old man called Patto had vanished one by one, no one knew whither. The unhappy father searched the country for miles round without being able to find as much as a shoe or a handkerchief, to show him where they had passed, but at length a little boy came with news that he had seen the Stalo hiding behind a well, near which the children used to play. The boy had waited behind a clump of bushes to see what would happen, and by-and-by he noticed that the Stalo had laid a cunning trap in the path to the well, and that anybody who fell over it would roll into the water and drown there.

And, as he watched, Patto’s youngest daughter ran gaily down the path, till her foot caught in the strings that were stretched across the steepest place. She slipped and fell, and in another instant had rolled into the water within reach of the Stalo.

As soon as Patto heard this tale his heart was filled with rage, and he vowed to have his revenge. So he straightway took an old fur coat from the hook where it hung, and putting it on went out into the forest. When he reached the path that led to the well he looked hastily round to be sure that no one was watching him, then laid himself down as if he had been caught in the snare and had rolled into the well, though he took care to keep his head out of the water. Very soon he heard a ‘sh-’sh of the leaves, and there was the Stalo pushing his way through the undergrowth to see what chance he had of a dinner. At the first glimpse of Patto’s head in the well he laughed loudly, crying, “Ha! ha! This time

it is the old ass! I wonder how he will taste?" And drawing Patto out of the well, he flung him across his shoulders and carried him home. Then he tied a cord round him and hung him over the fire to roast, while he finished a box that he was making before the door of the hut, which he meant to hold Patto's flesh when it was cooked. In a very short time the box was so nearly done that it only wanted a little more chipping out with an axe; but this part of the work was easier accomplished indoors, and he called to one of his sons who were lounging inside to bring him the tool.

The young man looked everywhere, but he could not find the axe, for the very good reason that Patto had managed to pick it up and hide it in his clothes.

"Stupid fellow! What is the use of you?" grumbled his father angrily; and he bade first one and then another of his sons to fetch him the tool, but they had no better success than their brother.

"I must come myself, I suppose!" said Stalo, putting aside the box. But, meanwhile, Patto had slipped from the hook and concealed himself behind the door, so that, as Stalo stepped in, his prisoner raised the axe, and with one blow the ogre's head was rolling on the ground. His sons were so frightened at the sight that they all ran away.

And in this manner Patto avenged his dead children.

But though Stalo was dead, his three sons were still living, and not very far off either. They had gone to their mother, who was tending some reindeer on the pastures, and told her that by some magic, they knew not what, their father's head had rolled from his body, and they had been so afraid that something dreadful would happen to them that they had come to take refuge with her. The ogress said nothing. Long ago she had found out how stupid her sons were, so she just sent them out to milk the reindeer, while she returned to the other house to bury her husband's body.

Now, three days' journey from the hut on the pastures two brothers Sodno dwelt in a small cottage with their sister Lyma, who tended a large herd of reindeer while they were out hunting. Of late it had been whispered from one to another that the three young Stalos were to be seen on the pastures, but the Sodno brothers did not disturb themselves, the danger seemed too far away.

Unluckily, however, one day, when Lyma was left by herself in the hut, the three Stalos came down and carried her and the reindeer off to their own cottage. The country was very lonely, and perhaps no one would have known in which direction she had gone had not the girl managed to tie a ball of thread to the handle of a door at the back of the cottage and let it trail behind her. Of course the ball was not long enough to go all the way, but it lay on the edge of a snowy track which led straight to the Stalos' house.

When the brothers returned from their hunting they found both the hut and the sheds empty. Loudly they cried, "Lyma! Lyma!" But no voice answered them; and they fell to searching all about, lest perchance their sister might have

dropped some clue to guide them. At length their eyes dropped on the thread which lay on the snow, and they set out to follow it.

On and on they went, and when at length the thread stopped the brothers knew that another day's journey would bring them to the Stalos' dwelling. Of course they did not dare to approach it openly, for the Stalos had the strength of giants, and besides, there were three of them; so the two Sodnos climbed into a big bushy tree which overhung a well.

"Perhaps our sister may be sent to draw water here," they said to each other.

But it was not till the moon had risen that the sister came, and as she let down her bucket into the well, the leaves seemed to whisper, "Lyma! Lyma!"

The girl started and looked up, but could see nothing, and in a moment the voice came again.

"Be careful—take no notice, fill your buckets, but listen carefully all the while, and we will tell you what to do so that you may escape yourself and set free the reindeer also." So Lyma bent over the well lower than before, and seemed busier than ever.

"You know," said her brother, "that when a Stalo finds that anything has been dropped into his food he will not eat a morsel, but throws it to his dogs. Now, after the pot has been hanging some time over the fire, and the broth is nearly cooked, just rake up the log of wood so that some of the ashes fly into the pot. The Stalo will soon notice this, and will call you to give all the food to the dogs; but, instead, you must bring it straight to us, as it is three days since we have eaten or drunk. That is all you need do for the present."

Then Lyma took up her buckets and carried them into the house, and did as her brothers had told her. They were so hungry that they ate the food up greedily without speaking, but when there was nothing left in the pot, the eldest one said, "Listen carefully to what I have to tell you. After the eldest Stalo has cooked and eaten a fresh supper, he will go to bed and sleep so soundly that not even a witch could wake him. You can hear him snoring a mile off, and then you must go into his room and pull off the iron mantle that covers him, and put it on the fire till it is almost red hot. When that is done, come to us and we will give you further directions."

"I will obey you in everything, dear brothers," answered Lyma; and so she did. It had happened that on this very evening the Stalos had driven in some of the reindeer from the pasture, and had tied them up to the wall of the house so that they might be handy to kill for next day's dinner. The two Sodnos had seen what they were doing, and where the beasts were secured; so, at midnight, when all was still, they crept down from their tree and seized the reindeer by the horns which were locked together. The animals were frightened, and began to neigh and kick, as if they were fighting together, and the noise became so great that even the eldest Stalo was awakened by it, and that was a thing which had never occurred before. Raising himself in his bed, he called to his youngest brother to go out and separate the reindeer or they would certainly kill themselves.

The young Stalo did as he was bid, and left the house; but no sooner was he out of the door than he was stabbed to the heart by one of the Sodnos, and fell without a groan. Then they went back to worry the reindeer, and the noise became as great as ever, and a second time the Stalo awoke.

“The boy does not seem to be able to part the beasts,” he cried to his second brother; “go and help him, or I shall never get to sleep.” So the brother went, and in an instant was struck dead as he left the house by the sword of the eldest Sodno. The Stalo waited in bed a little longer for things to get quiet, but as the clatter of the reindeer’s horns was as bad as ever, he rose angrily from his bed muttering to himself, “It is extraordinary that they cannot unlock themselves; but as no one else seems able to help them I suppose I must go and do it.”

Rubbing his eyes, he stood up on the floor and stretched his great arms and gave a yawn which shook the walls. The Sodnos heard it below, and posted themselves, one at the big door and one at the little door at the back, for they did not know what their enemy would come out at. The Stalo put out his hand to take his iron mantle from the bed, where it always lay, but the mantle was not there. He wondered where it could be, and who could have moved it, and after searching through all the rooms, he found it hanging over the kitchen fire. But the first touch burnt him so badly that he let it alone, and went with nothing, except a stick in his hand, through the back door.

The young Sodno was standing ready for him, and as the Stalo passed the threshold struck him such a blow on the head that he rolled over with a crash and never stirred again. The two Sodnos did not trouble about him, but quickly stripped the younger Stalos of their clothes, in which they dressed themselves. Then they sat still till the dawn should break and they could find out from the Stalos’ mother where the treasure was hidden.

With the first rays of the sun the young Sodno went upstairs and entered the old woman’s room. She was already up and dressed, and sitting by the window knitting, and the young man crept in softly and crouched down on the floor, laying his head on her lap. For a while he kept silence, then he whispered gently:

“Tell me, dear mother, where did my eldest brother conceal his riches?”

“What a strange question! Surely you must know,” answered she.

“No, I have forgotten; my memory is so bad.”

“He dug a hole under the doorstep and placed it there,” said she. And there was another pause.

By-and-by the Sodno asked again, “And where may my second brother’s money be?”

“Don’t you know that either?” cried the mother in surprise.

“Oh, yes; I did once. But since I fell upon my head I can remember nothing.”

“It is behind the oven,” answered she. And again was silence.

“Mother, dear mother,” said the young man at last, “I am almost afraid to ask you; but I really have grown so stupid of late. Where did I hide my own money?”

But at this question the old woman flew into a passion, and vowed that if she could find a rod she would bring his memory back to him. Luckily, no rod was within her reach, and the Sodno managed, after a little, to coax her back into good humor, and at length she told him that the youngest Stalo had buried his treasure under the very place where she was sitting.

“Dear mother,” said Lyma, who had come in unseen, and was kneeling in front of the fire. “Dear mother, do you know who it is you have been talking with?”

The old woman started, but answered quietly, “It is a Sodno, I suppose?”

“You have guessed right,” replied Lyma.

The mother of the Stalos looked round for her iron cane, which she always used to kill her victims, but it was not there, for Lyma had put it in the fire.

“Where is my iron cane?” asked the old woman.

“There!” answered Lyma, pointing to the flames.

The old woman sprang forwards and seized it, but her clothes caught fire, and in a few minutes she was burned to ashes.

So the Sodno brothers found the treasure, and they carried it, and their sister and the reindeer, to their own home, and were the richest men in all Lapland.

ANDRAS BAIVE

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Lang, Andrew. *The Orange Fairy Book*. London: Longmans, Green and Company, 1904, 329–334.

Date: Unavailable

Original Source: Poestion, J. C. *Lappländische Märchen*.

National Origin: Sami

Vadso, the setting of this narrative, is a city in northeast Norway. Among the Nordic peoples, the Sami have long had a reputation for the practice of magic. That ability comes to the fore in this tale. The bailiff's ability to change his appearance first into a Staalo, then river wreckage, and then a range of other phenomena reveals that he was a “wiseman” (the title commonly bestowed on shamans by the Sami). Andras, in turn, battles him with his own magic. “How the Stalos Were Tricked” (page 316) provides additional information on these supernatural beings.

Once upon a time there lived in Lapland a man, a bailiff, who was so very strong and swift of foot that nobody in his native town of Vadso could come near him if they were running races in the summer

evenings. The people of Vadso were very proud of their champion, and thought that there was no one like him in the world, till, by-and-by, it came to their ears that there dwelt among the mountains a Lapp, Andras Baive by name, who was said by his friends to be even stronger and swifter than the bailiff. Of course not a creature in Vadso believed that, and declared that if it made the mountaineers happier to talk such nonsense, why, let them!

The winter was long and cold, and the thoughts of the villagers were much busier with wolves than with Andras Baive, when suddenly, on a frosty day, he made his appearance in the little town of Vadso. The bailiff was delighted at this chance of trying his strength, and at once went out to seek Andras and to coax him into giving proof of his vigor. As he walked along his eyes fell upon a big eight-oared boat that lay upon the shore, and his face shone with pleasure.

"That is the very thing," laughed he, "I will make him jump over that boat." Andras was quite ready to accept the challenge, and they soon settled the terms of the wager. He who could jump over the boat without so much as touching it with his heel was to be the winner, and would get a large sum of money as the prize. So, followed by many of the villagers, the two men walked down to the sea.

An old fisherman was chosen to stand near the boat to watch fair play, and to hold the stakes, and Andras, as the stranger was told to jump first. Going back to the flag which had been stuck into the sand to mark the starting place, he ran forward, with his head well thrown back, and cleared the boat with a mighty bound. The lookers-on cheered him, and indeed he well deserve it; but they waited anxiously all the same to see what the bailiff would do. On he came, taller than Andras by several inches, but heavier of build. He too sprang high and well, but as he came down his heel just grazed the edge of the boat. Dead silence reigned amidst the townfolk, but Andras only laughed and said carelessly, "Just a little too short, bailiff; next time you must do better than that."

The bailiff turned red with anger at his rival's scornful words, and answered quickly, "Next time you will have something harder to do." And turning his back on his friends, he went sulkily home. Andras, putting the money he had earned in his pocket, went home also.

The following spring Andras happened to be driving his reindeer along a great fiord to the west of Vadso. A boy who had met him hastened to tell the bailiff that his enemy was only a few miles off; and the bailiff, disguising himself as a Stalo, or ogre, called his son and his dog and rowed away across the fiord to the place where the boy had met Andras.

Now the mountaineer was lazily walking along the sands, thinking of the new hut that he was building with the money that he had won on the day of his lucky jump. He wandered on, his eyes fixed on the sands, so that he did not see the bailiff drive his boat behind a rock, while he changed himself into a heap of wreckage which floated in on the waves. A stumble over a stone recalled Andras to himself, and looking up he beheld the mass of wreckage. "Dear me! I may

find some use for that," he said; and hastened down to the sea, waiting till he could lay hold of some stray rope which might float towards him. Suddenly—he could not have told why—a nameless fear seized upon him, and he fled away from the shore as if for his life. As he ran he heard the sound of a pipe, such as only ogres of the Stalo kind were wont to use; and there flashed into his mind what the bailiff had said when they jumped the boat, "Next time you will have something harder to do." So it was no wreckage after all that he had seen, but the bailiff himself.

It happened that in the long summer nights up in the mountain, where the sun never set, and it was very difficult to get to sleep, Andras had spent many hours in the study of magic, and this stood him in good stead now. The instant he heard the Stalo music he wished himself to become the feet of a reindeer, and in this guise he galloped like the wind for several miles. Then he stopped to take breath and find out what his enemy was doing. Nothing he could see, but to his ears the notes of a pipe floated over the plain, and ever, as he listened, it drew nearer.

A cold shiver shook Andras, and this time he wished himself the feet of a reindeer calf. For when a reindeer calf has reached the age at which he begins first to lose his hair he is so swift that neither beast nor bird can come near him. A reindeer calf is the swiftest of all things living. Yes; but not so swift as a Stalo, as Andras found out when he stopped to rest, and heard the pipe playing!

For a moment his heart sank, and he gave himself up for dead, till he remembered that, not far off, were two little lakes joined together by a short though very broad river. In the middle of the river lay a stone that was always covered by water, except in dry seasons, and as the winter rains had been very heavy, he felt quite sure that not even the top of it could be seen. The next minute, if anyone had been looking that way, he would have beheld a small reindeer calf speeding northwards, and by-and-by giving a great spring, which landed him in the midst of the stream. But, instead of sinking to the bottom, he paused a second to steady himself, then gave a second spring which landed him on the further shore. He next ran on to a little hill where he saw down and began to neigh loudly, so that the Stalo might know exactly where he was.

"Ah! There you are," cried the Stalo, appearing on the opposite bank; "for a moment I really thought I had lost you."

"No such luck," answered Andras, shaking his head sorrowfully. By this time he had taken his own shape again.

"Well, but I don't see how I am to get to you!" said the Stalo, looking up and down.

"Jump over, as I did," answered Andras; "it is quite easy."

"But I could not jump this river; and I don't know how you did," replied the Stalo.

"I should be ashamed to say such things," exclaimed Andras. "Do you mean to tell me that a jump, which the weakest Lapp boy would make nothing of, is beyond your strength?"

The Stalo grew red and angry when he heard these words, just as Andras meant him to do. He bounded into the air and fell straight into the river. Not that that would have mattered, for he was a good swimmer; but Andras drew out the bow and arrows which every Lapp carries, and took aim at him. His aim was good, but the Stalo sprang so high into the air that the arrow flew between his feet. A second shot, directed at his forehead, fared no better, for this time the Stalo jumped so high to the other side that the arrow passed between his finger and thumb. Then Andras aimed his third arrow a little over the Stalo's head, and when he sprang up, just an instant too soon, it hit him between the ribs.

Mortally wounded as he was, the Stalo was not yet dead, and managed to swim to the shore. Stretching himself on the sand, he said slowly to Andras, "Promise that you will give me an honorable burial, and when my body is laid in the grave go in my boat across the fiord, and take whatever you find in my house which belongs to me. My dog you must kill, but spare my son, Andras."

Then he died; and Andras sailed in his boat away across the fiord and found the dog and boy. The dog, a fierce, wicked-looking creature, he slew with one blow from his fist, for it is well known that if a Stalo's dog licks the blood that flows from his dead master's wounds the Stalo comes to life again. That is why no REAL Stalo is ever seen without his dog; but the bailiff, being only half a Stalo, had forgotten him, when he went to the little lakes in search of Andras. Next, Andras put all the gold and jewels which he found in the boat into his pockets, and bidding the boy get in, pushed it off from the shore, leaving the little craft to drift as it would, while he himself ran home.

With the treasure he possessed he was able to buy a great herd of reindeer; and he soon married a rich wife, whose parents would not have him as a son-in-law when he was poor, and the two lived happy forever after.

SISTER OF THE SUN

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Lang, Andrew. *The Brown Fairy Book*. London: Longmans, Green and Company, 1904, 215–232.

Date: Unavailable

Original Source: Poestion, J. C. *Lappländische Märchen*.

National Origin: Sami

In contrast to tales such as "How the Stalos Were Tricked" (page 316) or "Andras Baive" (page 321) that are highly contextualized in the Sami culture and physical environment, the following **ordinary folktale** cannot be characterized as unique to the group from which it was collected. Instead, there are familiar structural elements, such as the recurrence of similar episodes three times, and cross-culturally occurring **tale types**,

such as “The Judge Appropriates the Object of Dispute” (AT 926D). While the fox does serve as a **trickster** in other Sami narratives (see, for example, “The Fox and the Lapp,” page 334), the fox or its relatives (for example, coyote) acts in a similar capacity in many traditions.

A long time ago there lived a young prince whose favorite playfellow was the son of the gardener who lived in the grounds of the palace. The king would have preferred his choosing a friend from the pages who were brought up at court; but the prince would have nothing to say to them, and as he was a spoilt child, and allowed his way in all things, and the gardener’s boy was quiet and well-behaved, he was suffered to be in the palace, morning, noon, and night.

The game the children loved the best was a match at archery, for the king had given them two bows exactly alike, and they would spend whole days in trying to see which could shoot the highest. This is always very dangerous, and it was a great wonder they did not put their eyes out; but somehow or other they managed to escape.

One morning, when the prince had done his lessons, he ran out to call his friend, and they both hurried off to the lawn which was their usual playground. They took their bows out of the little hut where their toys were kept, and began to see which could shoot the highest. At last they happened to let fly their arrows both together, and when they fell to earth again the tail feather of a golden hen was found sticking in one. Now the question began to arise whose was the lucky arrow, for they were both alike, and look as closely as you would you could see no difference between them. The prince declared that the arrow was his, and the gardener’s boy was quite sure it was HIS—and on this occasion he was perfectly right; but, as they could not decide the matter, they went straight to the king.

When the king had heard the story, he decided that the feather belonged to his son; but the other boy would not listen to this and claimed the feather for himself. At length the king’s patience gave way, and he said angrily, “Very well; if you are so sure that the feather is yours, yours it shall be; only you will have to seek till you find a golden hen with a feather missing from her tail. And if you fail to find her your head will be the forfeit.”

The boy had need of all his courage to listen silently to the king’s words. He had no idea where the golden hen might be, or even, if he discovered that, how he was to get to her. But there was nothing for it but to do the king’s bidding, and he felt that the sooner he left the palace the better. So he went home and put some food into a bag, and then set forth, hoping that some accident might show him which path to take.

After walking for several hours he met a fox, who seemed inclined to be friendly, and the boy was so glad to have anyone to talk to that he sat down and entered into conversation.

“Where are you going?” asked the fox.

“I have got to find a golden hen who has lost a feather out of her tail,” answered the boy; “but I don’t know where she lives or how I shall catch her!”

“Oh, I can show you the way!” said the fox, who was really very good-natured. “Far towards the east, in that direction, lives a beautiful maiden who is called ‘The Sister of the Sun.’ She has three golden hens in her house. Perhaps the feather belongs to one of them.”

The boy was delighted at this news, and they walked on all day together, the fox in front, and the boy behind. When evening came they lay down to sleep, and put the knapsack under their heads for a pillow.

Suddenly, about midnight, the fox gave a low whine, and drew nearer to his bedfellow. “Cousin,” he whispered very low, “there is someone coming who will take the knapsack away from me. Look over there!” And the boy, peeping through the bushes, saw a man.

“Oh, I don’t think he will rob us!” said the boy; and when the man drew near, he told them his story, which so much interested the stranger that he asked leave to travel with them, as he might be of some use. So when the sun rose they set out again, the fox in front as before, the man and boy following.

After some hours they reached the castle of the Sister of the Sun, who kept the golden hens among her treasures. They halted before the gate and took counsel as to which of them should go in and see the lady herself.

“I think it would be best for me to enter and steal the hens,” said the fox; but this did not please the boy at all.

“No, it is my business, so it is right that I should go,” answered he.

“You will find it a very difficult matter to get hold of the hens,” replied the fox.

“Oh, nothing is likely to happen to me,” returned the boy.

“Well, go then,” said the fox, “but be careful not to make any mistake. Steal only the hen which has the feather missing from her tail, and leave the others alone.”

The man listened, but did not interfere, and the boy entered the court of the palace. He soon spied the three hens strutting proudly about, though they were really anxiously wondering if there were not some grains lying on the ground that they might be glad to eat. And as the last one passed by him, he saw she had one feather missing from her tail.

At this sight the youth darted forward and seized the hen by the neck so that she could not struggle. Then, tucking her comfortably under his arm, he made straight for the gate. Unluckily, just as he was about to go through it he looked back and caught a glimpse of wonderful splendors from an open door of the palace. “After all, there is no hurry,” he said to himself; “I may as well see something now I AM here,” and turned back, forgetting all about the hen, which escaped from under his arm, and ran to join her sisters.

He was so much fascinated by the sight of all the beautiful things which peeped through the door that he scarcely noticed that he had lost the prize he

had won; and he did not remember there was such a thing as a hen in the world when he beheld the Sister of the Sun sleeping on a bed before him.

For some time he stood staring; then he came to himself with a start, and feeling that he had no business there, softly stole away, and was fortunate enough to recapture the hen, which he took with him to the gate. On the threshold he stopped again. "Why should I not look at the Sister of the Sun?" he thought to himself; "she is asleep, and will never know." And he turned back for the second time and entered the chamber, while the hen wriggled herself free as before. When he had gazed his fill he went out into the courtyard and picked up his hen who was seeking for corn. As he drew near the gate he paused. "Why did I not give her a kiss?" he said to himself; "I shall never kiss any woman so beautiful." And he wrung his hands with regret, so that the hen fell to the ground and ran away.

"But I can do it still!" he cried with delight, and he rushed back to the chamber and kissed the sleeping maiden on the forehead. But, alas! When he came out again he found that the hen had grown so shy that she would not let him come near her. And, worse than that, her sisters began to cluck so loud that the Sister of the Sun was awakened by the noise. She jumped up in haste from her bed, and going to the door she said to the boy, "You shall never, never, have my hen till you bring me back my sister who was carried off by a giant to his castle, which is a long way off."

Slowly and sadly the youth left the palace and told his story to his friends, who were waiting outside the gate, how he had actually held the hen three times in his arms and had lost her.

"I knew that we should not get off so easily," said the fox, shaking his head; "but there is no more time to waste. Let us set off at once in search of the sister. Luckily, I know the way." They walked on for many days, till at length the fox, who, as usual, was going first, stopped suddenly.

"The giant's castle is not far now," he said, "but when we reach it you two must remain outside while I go and fetch the princess. Directly I bring her out you must both catch hold of her tight, and get away as fast as you can; while I return to the castle and talk to the giants—for there are many of them—so that they may not notice the escape of the princess."

A few minutes later they arrived at the castle, and the fox, who had often been there before, slipped in without difficulty. There were several giants, both young and old, in the hall, and they were all dancing round the princess. As soon as they saw the fox they cried out, "Come and dance too, old fox; it is a long time since we have seen you."

So the fox stood up, and did his steps with the best of them; but after a while he stopped and said, "I know a charming new dance that I should like to show you; but it can only be done by two people. If the princess will honor me for a few minutes, you will soon see how it is done."

“Ah, that is delightful; we want something new,” answered they, and placed the princess between the outstretched arms of the fox. In one instant he had knocked over the great stand of lights that lighted the hall, and in the darkness had borne the princess to the gate. His comrades seized hold of her, as they had been bidden, and the fox was back again in the hall before anyone had missed him. He found the giants busy trying to kindle a fire and get some light; but after a bit someone cried out, “Where is the princess?”

“Here, in my arms,” replied the fox. “Don’t be afraid; she is quite safe.” And he waited until he thought that his comrades had gained a good start, and put at least five or six mountains between themselves and the giants. Then he sprang through the door, calling, as he went, “The maiden is here; take her if you can!”

At these words the giants understood that their prize had escaped, and they ran after the fox as fast as their great legs could carry them, thinking that they should soon come up with the fox, who they supposed had the princess on his back. The fox, on his side, was far too clever to choose the same path that his friends had taken, but would in and out of the forest, till at last even HE was tired out, and fell fast asleep under a tree. Indeed, he was so exhausted with his day’s work that he never heard the approach of the giants, and their hands were already stretched out to seize his tail when his eyes opened, and with a tremendous bound he was once more beyond their reach. All the rest of the night the fox ran and ran; but when bright red spread over the east, he stopped and waited till the giants were close upon him. Then he turned, and said quietly, “Look, there is the Sister of the Sun!”

The giants raised their eyes all at once, and were instantly turned into pillars of stone. The fox then made each pillar a low bow, and set off to join his friends.

He knew a great many short cuts across the hills, so it was not long before he came up with them, and all four traveled night and day till they reached the castle of the Sister of the Sun. What joy and feasting there was throughout the palace at the sight of the princess whom they had mourned as dead! And they could not make enough of the boy who had gone through such dangers in order to rescue her. The golden hen was given to him at once, and, more than that, the Sister of the Sun told him that, in a little time, when he was a few years older, she would herself pay a visit to his home and become his wife. The boy could hardly believe his ears when he heard what was in store for him, for his was the most beautiful princess in all the world; and however thick the darkness might be, it fled away at once from the light of a star on her forehead.

So the boy set forth on his journey home, with his friends for company; his heart full of gladness when he thought of the promise of the princess. But, one by one, his comrades dropped off at the places where they had first met him, and he was quite alone when he reached his native town and the gates of the palace. With the golden hen under his arm he presented himself before the

king, and told his adventures, and how he was going to have for a wife a princess so wonderful and unlike all other princesses, that the star on her forehead could turn night into day. The king listened silently, and when the boy had done, he said quietly, "If I find that your story is not true I will have you thrown into a cask of pitch."

"It is true—every word of it," answered the boy; and went on to tell that the day and even the hour were fixed when his bride was to come and seek him.

But as the time drew near, and nothing was heard of the princess, the youth became anxious and uneasy, especially when it came to his ears that the great cask was being filled with pitch, and that sticks were laid underneath to make a fire to boil it with. All day long the boy stood at the window, looking over the sea by which the princess must travel; but there were no signs of her, not even the tiniest white sail. And, as he stood, soldiers came and laid hands on him, and led him up to the cask, where a big fire was blazing, and the horrid black pitch boiling and bubbling over the sides. He looked and shuddered, but there was no escape; so he shut his eyes to avoid seeing.

The word was given for him to mount the steps which led to the top of the cask, when, suddenly, some men were seen running with all their might, crying as they went that a large ship with its sails spread was making straight for the city. No one knew what the ship was, or whence it came; but the king declared that he would not have the boy burned before its arrival, there would always be time enough for that.

At length the vessel was safe in port, and a whisper went through the watching crowd that on board was the Sister of the Sun, who had come to marry the young peasant as she had promised. In a few moments more she had landed, and desired to be shown the way to the cottage which her bridegroom had so often described to her; and whither he had been led back by the king's order at the first sign of the ship.

"Don't you know me?" asked the Sister of the Sun, bending over him where he lay, almost driven out of his senses with terror.

"No, no; I don't know you," answered the youth, without raising his eyes.

"Kiss me," said the Sister of the Sun; and the youth obeyed her, but still without looking up.

"Don't you know me NOW?" asked she.

"No, I don't know you—I don't know you," he replied, with the manner of a man whom fear had driven mad.

At this the Sister of the Sun grew rather frightened, and beginning at the beginning, she told him the story of his meeting with her, and how she had come a long way in order to marry him. And just as she had finished in walked the king, to see if what the boy had said was really true. But hardly had he opened the door of the cottage when he was almost blinded by the light that filled it; and he remembered what he had been told about the star on the forehead of the princess. He staggered back as if he had been struck, then a curious

feeling took hold of him, which he had never felt before, and falling on his knees before the Sister of the Sun, he implored her to give up all thought of the peasant boy, and to share his throne. But she laughed, and said she had a finer throne of her own, if she wanted to sit on it, and that she was free to please herself, and would have no husband but the boy whom she would never have seen except for the king himself.

“I shall marry him tomorrow,” ended she; and ordered the preparations to be set on foot at once.

When the next day came, however, the bridegroom’s father informed the princess that, by the law of the land, the marriage must take place in the presence of the king; but he hoped his majesty would not long delay his arrival. An hour or two passed, and everyone was waiting and watching, when at last the sound of trumpets was heard and a grand procession was seen marching up the street. A chair covered with velvet had been made ready for the king, and he took his seat upon it, and, looking round upon the assembled company, he said, “I have no wish to forbid this marriage; but, before I can allow it to be celebrated, the bridegroom must prove himself worthy of such a bride by fulfilling three tasks. And the first is that in a single day he must cut down every tree in an entire forest.”

The youth stood aghast as the king’s words. He had never cut down a tree in his life, and had not the least idea how to begin. And as for a whole forest! But the princess saw what was passing in his mind, and whispered to him, “Don’t be afraid. In my ship you will find an axe, which you must carry off to the forest. When you have cut down one tree with it just say, ‘So let the forest fall,’ and in an instant all the trees will be on the ground. But pick up three chips of the tree you felled, and put them in your pocket.”

And the young man did exactly as he was bid, and soon returned with the three chips safe in his coat.

The following morning the princess declared that she had been thinking about the matter, and that, as she was not a subject of the king, she saw no reason why she should be bound by his laws; and she meant to be married that very day. But the bridegroom’s father told her that it was all very well for her to talk like that, but it was quite different for his son, who would pay with his head for any disobedience to the king’s commands. However, in consideration of what the youth had done the day before, he hoped his majesty’s heart might be softened, especially as he had sent a message that they might expect him at once. With this the bridal pair had to be content, and be as patient as they could till the king’s arrival.

He did not keep them long, but they saw by his face that nothing good awaited them. “The marriage cannot take place,” he said shortly, “till the youth has joined to their roots all the trees he cut down yesterday.”

This sounded much more difficult than what he had done before, and he turned in despair to the Sister of the Sun.

“It is all right,” she whispered encouragingly. “Take this water and sprinkle it on one of the fallen trees, and say to it, ‘So let all the trees of the forest stand upright,’ and in a moment they will be erect again.”

And the young man did what he was told, and left the forest looking exactly as it had done before.

Now, surely, thought the princess, there was no longer any need to put off the wedding; and she gave orders that all should be ready for the following day. But again the old man interfered, and declared that without the king’s permission no marriage could take place. For the third time his majesty was sent for, and for the third time he proclaimed that he could not give his consent until the bridegroom should have slain a serpent which dwelt in a broad river that flowed at the back of the castle. Everyone knew stories of this terrible serpent, though no one had actually seen it; but from time to time a child strayed from home and never came back, and then mothers would forbid the other children to go near the river, which had juicy fruits and lovely flowers growing along its banks.

So no wonder the youth trembled and turned pale when he heard what lay before him. “You will succeed in this also,” whispered the Sister of the Sun, pressing his hand, “for in my ship is a magic sword which will cut through everything. Go down to the river and unfasten a boat which lies moored there, and throw the chips into the water. When the serpent rears up its body you will cut off its three heads with one blow of your sword. Then take the tip of each tongue and go with it tomorrow morning into the king’s kitchen. If the king himself should enter, just say to him, ‘Here are three gifts I offer you in return for the services you demanded of me!’ and throw the tips of the serpent’s tongues at him, and hasten to the ship as fast as your legs will carry you. But be sure you take great care never to look behind you.”

The young man did exactly what the princess had told him. The three chips which he flung into the river became a boat, and, as he steered across the stream, the serpent put up its head and hissed loudly. The youth had his sword ready, and in another second the three heads were bobbing on the water. Guiding his boat till he was beside them, he stooped down and snipped off the ends of the tongues, and then rowed back to the other bank. Next morning he carried them into the royal kitchen, and when the king entered, as was his custom, to see what he was going to have for dinner, the bridegroom flung them in his face, saying, “Here is a gift for you in return for the services you asked of me.” And, opening the kitchen door, he fled to the ship. Unluckily he missed the way, and in his excitement ran backwards and forwards, without knowing whither he was going. At last, in despair, he looked round, and saw to his amazement that both the city and palace had vanished completely. Then he turned his eyes in the other direction, and, far, far away, he caught sight of the ship with her sails spread, and a fair wind behind her.

This dreadful spectacle seemed to take away his senses, and all day long he wandered about, without knowing where he was going, till, in the evening, he

noticed some smoke from a little hut of turf near by. He went straight up to it and cried, "O mother, let me come in for pity's sake!" The old woman who lived in the hut beckoned to him to enter, and hardly was he inside when he cried again, "O mother, can you tell me anything of the Sister of the Sun?"

But the woman only shook her head. "No, I know nothing of her," said she.

The young man turned to leave the hut, but the old woman stopped him, and, giving him a letter, begged him to carry it to her next eldest sister, saying, "If you should get tired on the way, take out the letter and rustle the paper."

This advice surprised the young man a good deal, as he did not see how it could help him; but he did not answer, and went down the road without knowing where he was going. At length he grew so tired he could walk no more; then he remembered what the old woman had said. After he had rustled the leaves only once all fatigue disappeared, and he strode over the grass till he came to another little turf hut.

"Let me in, I pray you, dear mother," cried he. And the door opened in front of him. "Your sister has sent you this letter," he said, and added quickly, "O mother! can you tell me anything of the Sister of the Sun?"

"No, I know nothing of her," answered she. But as he turned hopelessly away, she stopped him.

"If you happen to pass my eldest sister's house, will you give her this letter?" said she. "And if you should get tired on the road, just take it out of your pocket and rustle the paper." So the young man put the letter in his pocket, and walked all day over the hills till he reached a little turf hut, exactly like the other two.

"Let me in, I pray you, dear mother," cried he. And as he entered he added, "Here is a letter from your sister and—can you tell me anything of the Sister of the Sun?"

"Yes, I can," answered the old woman. "She lives in the castle on the Banka. Her father lost a battle only a few days ago because you had stolen his sword from him, and the Sister of the Sun herself is almost dead of grief. But, when you see her, stick a pin into the palm of her hand, and suck the drops of blood that flow. Then she will grow calmer, and will know you again. Only, beware; for before you reach the castle on the Banka fearful things will happen."

He thanked the old woman with tears of gladness for the good news she had given him, and continued his journey. But he had not gone very far when, at a turn of the road, he met with two brothers, who were quarreling over a piece of cloth.

"My good men, what are you fighting about?" said he. "That cloth does not look worth much!"

"Oh, it is ragged enough," answered they, "but it was left us by our father, and if any man wraps it round him no one can see him; and we each want it for our own."

"Let me put it round me for a moment," said the youth, "and then I will tell you whose it ought to be!"

The brothers were pleased with this idea, and gave him the stuff; but the moment he had thrown it over his shoulder he disappeared as completely as if he had never been there at all.

Meanwhile the young man walked briskly along, till he came up with two other men, who were disputing over a table-cloth.

“What is the matter?” asked he, stopping in front of them.

“If this cloth is spread on a table,” answered they, “the table is instantly covered with the most delicious food; and we each want to have it.”

“Let me try the table-cloth,” said the youth, “and I will tell you whose it ought to be.”

The two men were quite pleased with this idea, and handed him the cloth. He then hastily threw the first piece of stuff round his shoulders and vanished from sight, leaving the two men grieving over their own folly.

The young man had not walked far before he saw two more men standing by the road-side, both grasping the same stout staff, and sometimes one seemed on the point of getting it, and sometimes the other.

“What are you quarreling about? You could cut a dozen sticks from the wood each just as good as that!” said the young man. And as he spoke the fighters both stopped and looked at him.

“Ah! you may think so,” said one, “but a blow from one end of this stick will kill a man, while a touch from the other end will bring him back to life. You won’t easily find another stick like that!”

“No; that is true,” answered the young man. “Let me just look at it, and I will tell you whose it ought to be.”

The men were pleased with the idea, and handed him the staff.

“It is very curious, certainly,” said he; “but which end is it that restores people to life? After all, anyone can be killed by a blow from a stick if it is only hard enough!” But when he was shown the end he threw the stuff over his shoulders and vanished.

At last he saw another set of men, who were struggling for the possession of a pair of shoes.

“Why can’t you leave that pair of old shoes alone?” said he. “Why, you could not walk a yard in them!”

“Yes, they are old enough,” answered they; “but whoever puts them on and wishes himself at a particular place, gets there without going.”

“That sounds very clever,” said the youth. “Let me try them, and then I shall be able to tell you whose they ought to be.”

The idea pleased the men, and they handed him the shoes; but the moment they were on his feet he cried, “I wish to be in the castle on the Banka!” And before he knew it, he was there, and found the Sister of the Sun dying of grief. He knelt down by her side, and pulling a pin he stuck it into the palm of her hand, so that a drop of blood gushed out. This he sucked, as he had been told to do by the old woman, and immediately the princess came to herself, and flung

her arms round his neck. Then she told him all her story, and what had happened since the ship had sailed away without him. “But the worst misfortune of all,” she added, “was a battle which my father lost because you had vanished with his magic sword; and out of his whole army hardly one man was left.”

“Show me the battle-field,” said he. And she took him to a wild heath, where the dead were lying as they fell, waiting for burial. One by one he touched them with the end of his staff, till at length they all stood before him. Throughout the kingdom there was nothing but joy; and THIS time the wedding was REALLY celebrated. And the bridal pair lived happily in the castle on the Banka till they died.

THE FOX AND THE LAPP

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Lang, Andrew. *The Brown Fairy Book*. London: Longmans, Green and Company, 1904, 245–246.

Date: Unavailable

Original Source: Poestion, J. C. *Lappländische Märchen*.

National Origin: Sami

The curious, cunning nature of fox in Sami folk narrative is revealed in the first sentence of this **animal tale**. In the following **variant** of “The Theft of Fish” (AT 1), similar portraits of the opportunistic **trickster** find not only fox but, among others, rabbit, hare, and coyote in other cultural settings employing similar strategies to exploit their fellows.

Once upon a time a fox lay peeping out of his hole, watching the road that ran by at a little distance, and hoping to see something that might amuse him, for he was feeling very dull and rather cross. For a long while he watched in vain; everything seemed asleep, and not even a bird stirred overhead. The fox grew crosser than ever, and he was just turning away in disgust from his place when he heard the sound of feet coming over the snow.

He crouched eagerly down at the edge of the road and said to himself, “I wonder what would happen if I were to pretend to be dead! This is a man driving a reindeer sledge; I know the tinkling of the harness. And at any rate I shall have an adventure, and that is always something!” So he stretched himself out by the side of the road, carefully choosing a spot where the driver could not help seeing him, yet where the reindeer would not tread on him; and all fell out just as he had expected. The sledge driver pulled up sharply, as his eyes lighted on the beautiful animal lying stiffly beside him, and jumping out he threw the fox

into the bottom of the sledge, where the goods he was carrying were bound tightly together by ropes. The fox did not move a muscle though his bones were sore from the fall, and the driver got back to his seat again and drove on merrily.

But before they had gone very far, the fox, who was near the edge, contrived to slip over, and when the Laplander saw him stretched out on the snow he pulled up his reindeer and put the fox into one of the other sledges that was fastened behind, for it was market day at the nearest town, and the man had much to sell.

They drove on a little further, when some noise in the forest made the man turn his head, just in time to see the fox fall with a heavy thump onto the frozen snow.

“That beast is bewitched!” he said to himself, and then he threw the fox into the last sledge of all, which had a cargo of fishes. This was exactly what the cunning creature wanted, and he wriggled gently to the front and bit the cord which tied the sledge to the one before it so that it remained standing in the middle of the road.

Now there were so many sledges that the Lapp did not notice for a long while that one was missing. Indeed, he would have entered the town without knowing if snow had not suddenly begun to fall. Then he got down to secure more firmly the cloths that kept his goods dry, and going to the end of the long row, discovered that the sledge containing the fish and the fox was missing. He quickly unharnessed one of his reindeer and rode back along the way he had come, to find the sledge standing safe in the middle of the road; but as the fox had bitten off the cord close to the noose there was no means of moving it away.

The fox meanwhile was enjoying himself mightily. As soon as he had loosened the sledge, he had taken his favorite fish from among the piles neatly arranged for sale, and had trotted off to the forest with it in his mouth.

Western Europe

BASQUE

ROLDAN'S BUGLE HORN

Tradition Bearer: Mariana Monteiro

Source: Monteiro, Mariana. *Legends and Popular Tales of the Basque People*. London: Fisher Unwin, 1887, 125–149.

Date: 1829

Original Source: Basque

National Origin: Basque

The Basques are indigenous to the western Pyrenees Mountains on the northeastern border of Spain and southwestern border of France. The Basques have maintained a strong sense of identity that is reflected in the **legend** of their resistance to the forces of Charlemagne, “Roldan’s Bugle Horn.” The legend that forms the core of the **personal experience narrative** recounted below is the Basque account of the Battle of Roncevaux Pass (given the Spanish spelling of Roncesvalles in the following narrative) in 778 C.E., in which the rearguard of Charlemagne’s forces was ambushed by Basque guerillas and wiped out entirely. Among Charlemagne’s Frankish forces was Hruodland, or Roland (Roldan in the Basque oral tradition). The event was romanticized through oral retellings and eventually entered print as “The Song of Roland.” By this point, the force opposing Charlemagne’s army had been transformed from Basque Christians to Saracen Muslims. The concept of the unquiet and vengeful dead is central to the folk beliefs inspired by the legend of Roldan.

When I heard this legend for the first time I was a youth. The circumstances which preceded and followed its narrative deserve to be mentioned, although they have no relation to the legend itself, but they

were of such a nature that they will never be effaced from my mind, and I think will impart a greater interest to the tale.

The winter of 1829 was one of the most severe seasons known in this century. In Spain, snow fell all over the country, and even in the southern provinces, where a fall of snow, is quite a phenomenon, seen perhaps once in a century, the ground was covered by deep beds of snow, to the great amazement of their happy dwellers. But naturally where the rigor of the winter was felt more keenly was in the Basque Provinces. The roads from town to town and from valley to valley were impassable, and many houses were buried beneath the snow for days. The few travelers who were compelled to traverse the mountains encountered fearful dangers—of being lost in the drifts, or of falling into chasms, or, in truth, of being attacked by packs of famished wolves which, forsaking their usual haunts in the woods, prowled around the habitations.

On this occasion I was in Goizueta, a town of the mountains of Navarre, enjoying the delicious hams of the country which supplied the table of my uncle, the cura of that place, who was an indefatigable huntsman. The great snowstorm, which fell without intermission, did not permit us to leave the bounds of the dwelling-houses, and we eagerly awaited the weather to break up a little to enable us to go to the neighboring mountains to hunt the deer and wild boars which abounded.

At the beginning of January the sky began to clear up, and one evening, as we were consulting together on the practicability of starting on the following morning, a stalwart Basque presented himself as the bearer of a letter from the prior of the monastery of Roncesvalles. This letter was addressed to my uncle, and in it the prior besought him in the name of their long friendship to come and pay a visit to the abbey, and bring a good pack of hounds to hunt an enormous black bear which had appeared in the neighborhood, and which was devouring every living creature it could find.

At daydawn on the following morning we started for the abbey to the number of fourteen huntsmen and twenty dogs, the pick of the bloodhounds and mastiffs of the mountains of Navarre. At nightfall of the subsequent day we reached our destination, after traversing the picturesque valley of Baztein, the bounds of Eugui, and the plain called the *Prado de Roldan* ["Roldan's Meadow"], the water and snow reaching in many parts nearly to our waists.

II

On reaching the Abbey of Roncesvalles we were received by the prior and his monks, excellent men whose lives were passed in tranquil magnificence.

When I descried the lofty towers of that monastery, and beheld the strong walls which surrounded it—on seeing the houses of the inhabitants of that small town grouped around the immense extent of the monastic dwelling, it seemed to me that I was transported to other ages; and to my imagination, carried back seven centuries, the whole rose up before me as the work of a still more remote age—in one word, I found myself in the Middle Ages.

And in truth this idea was reasonable enough when I looked at our pack of hounds, on the robes in which we were dressed, on the two monks who had come forth to receive us, and on beholding the group of country people who attentively examined us, and saluted respectfully the venerable prior who was bestowing his blessing upon them with a benevolent fatherly smile, and whom the people loved as a true father. In truth, their affection for him was well merited, as they never had recourse to him in their troubles or difficulties without being relieved and comforted.

The massive doors of the monastery closed upon us, and we traversed the immense cloisters, preceded by servants bearing torches of pitched tow to light the way to the roomy, comfortable cell of the prior, where we could rest our wearied limbs and dry our soaked garments.

All this was a new scene to me, and I derived an immense pleasure in giving full play to my imagination, and allowing full scope to the ideas which continually presented themselves.

“That one is the noble lord of this fortress,” I thought to myself, as I looked at the prior, who was seated close to the hearth upon which burned huge blocks of wood; “further on are his principal men; we ourselves are. The retinue of the other feudal baron, coming to form some alliance with his neighbor. I, the shield-bearer, he who removes the hood from the favorite falcon, the one who holds the bridle of the horse of the lady of the castle, he who carries the shield and the standard of its lord on the day of battle. This one—his ranger, he who arranges the hunt, who sounds the *Alhali* when the noble deer dashes out of its cover; this other—”

My soliloquy was interrupted by the ringing of the bell which announced that supper was ready. We all rose up on hearing the welcome sound, and departed to the private refectory of the prior. Another surprise awaited me in harmony with the thoughts which had been suggested to me by the scenes before me. A table of colossal dimensions groaned beneath huge haunches of venison and quarters of wild boar smoking in great dishes of pewter. Further on were dozens of trout in bright copper casseroles. Large flagons of yellow sweet Peralta, of red Tudela wine and cider, flanked this enormous supper. It was truly one of those Homeric suppers the memory of which has reached even down to our days. Yet, in spite of the abundance of food, the haunches and quarters and dozens of fish were fast disappearing, and the dishes remained empty as though by enchantment; wines and liqueurs also were consumed with incredible rapidity, and I must confess that I was one of those who most contributed to their prodigious disappearance.

During supper the whole conversation turned on the object of our journey, and the prior informed us that the bear we had come from such a distance to hunt was so formidable an animal that no one dared to venture far from the dwellings through fear of being devoured.

“We shall bring you that bear tomorrow,” said my uncle, who awaited the coming hunt with all the impatience of an enthusiastic huntsman.

“Be careful what you do, my friends,” replied the prior; “I am told that it is an enormous animal, very agile and exceedingly ferocious.”

“Believe me, you need have no fear; and I promise you that his skin shall keep your feet warm this winter,” rejoined my uncle.

“Would to God you did destroy him! For I assure you that there will be many to thank you, since the poor carriers and muleteers are quite cowed with the beast who persists in following them.”

“Towards what part is the animal more frequently seen?”

“On the road which leads to the gate of France.”

“What! On the path of Roldan?”

“Yes; it is about that district that he has been seen.”

“Tis well; now, gentlemen, let us retire to rest, as it will be necessary to rise early tomorrow.”

The prior recited the *Benedicite*, and the servants appeared with lights, and each guest betook himself to the room assigned to him. It was eleven o'clock, for the supper had lasted long.

My cousin Francisco and myself occupied a small apartment which had two long, narrow windows, from which could be descried a portion of the neighboring forest.

I could not resist gazing on the weird scene before me: the moon was illuminating with her cold white beams the landscape covered with snow, and not the smallest cloud could be perceived on the horizon to obscure her pure light. I opened a window and stood contemplating the spectacle before me. If on reaching the monastery I had formed to myself the illusion that I was visiting one of the feudal castles of the Middle Ages, full of pages, ladies, and knights, that illusion began to assume a greater reality the moment I found myself at the Gothic window. In front of me lay a vast field mantled by hard snow, which beneath the moonbeams appeared like a spotless white carpet, the congealed icicles glistening in the moonlight as though the ground were studded with brilliants, topazes, and emeralds. Further on, half hidden by a slight mist, could be seen the houses of the town of Burgete. To the right rose up the lofty peaks of the Iru and other mountains which form that severe cordillera, until they were lost in the deep blue of the atmosphere. To the left the scene was still more surprising. Immense aged oaks, pines of many years' growth, stripped of leaves, could be seen moving their snow-laden tops at the weak breath of the icy breeze. Their black trunks stood out in relief against the white background of the snowy plains, while their gigantic branches appeared like the unearthly arms of some colossal phantom.

In the midst of the sepulchral silence of night, broken only by the distant noise of the running streams, my ears perceived some unfamiliar sounds, which, though weak and far distant at first, began to swell; and that singular sound which had so struck me continued to increase—was it an illusion? Perchance it was. My heated imagination conjured up before me that heroic combat of the

armies of Charlemagne against the dwellers of the mountains of Navarre. I heard the clashing of lances, the neighing of the horses, the pelting noise of stones as they struck the steel armor of the horsemen, the whizzing of the arrows as they flew across the air, the cries of the conquerors, the sighs of the wounded, the groaning of the dying; the cause of this unwonted noise was duly explained!

I was about to close the window and retire to rest when I heard truly a clear ringing cry, penetrative—a cry which was echoed by the adjoining rocks and chasms, this cry being repeated and prolonged and echoed over and over again.

“Francisco!” I cried, “Tell me what this means?”

My cousin woke up, and at that moment the weird sound was repeated.

“Oh!” replied, rising up and approaching the window, “I know what it is. It is Roldan, who is blowing his horn, asking for help.”

“And who is this Roldan?” I asked.

“Do you not know? Well, he is one of the twelve, peers of France who died at the boundary,” he replied, going back to bed.

I could not help bursting out laughing, but Francisco grew very wrathful at my incredulity, as he was a firm believer in ghosts, phantoms, and apparitions.

“You unbelieving Jew!” he cried, in anger; “is that all they teach you at the universities? Are there no witches? Do you not believe that the spirits appear of those who have died and were left unburied? Go to ‘Aquelarre’ on some Saturday night, and on the next morning you will tell me what you have seen; go now, this very moment, to take a walk in that wood which lies before us, and I promise you that ere you have walked fifty paces you will meet with *Bassa Jauna*.”

“Come, cousin, do not take it so to heart,” I replied, as I am in total ignorance of all that passes here.”

Five minutes later I was in bed and fast asleep.

III

When the first rays of the dawn were touching the tops of the mountains which surrounded the monastery, the pack of hounds were gathered in the wide courtyard, their barking awaking the huntsmen. The yelping of the impatient dogs, the blowing of the hunting horns, the voices of those who had risen early, produced such a din, that I was forced to rise against my will and descend to join them. My uncle the cura, with his merry, happy face, breathing health, through every pore, was awaiting us surrounded by huntsmen and followed by the prior, who did not cease to enjoin us to be careful, and to take ever precaution against being suddenly assailed by the fierce beast we were going to encounter.

We joined the group, and bade the prior farewell, his parting words being, “Now, boys, keep together, and above all aim right; may you have a good day’s sport; and now I shall go and celebrate mass.”

Within a quarter of an hour after leaving the monastery we had lost sight of its walls, and had interned ourselves in the forest. We divided the party into

couples, the better to scour the forest. We formed a wide semicircle as in guerilla warfare, and placed the dogs between the distances. In this way we proceeded to search high and low, leaving no defile unexplored, nor rock or mountain unscoured—but all in vain. The bear did not show an appearance, nor could we find the smallest trace which could afford us any clue to its haunts. In this bootless search we continued until three o'clock in the day, when it was judged prudent to return to the monastery before the night, should overtake us, wandering about those solitary places covered by snow and frost.

I was exceedingly tired from ascending and descending the rocks and mountain parts, as I was little accustomed to this kind of exercise, and my hands were raw from grasping the thorny bushes and briars when scaling the rocks and climbing up the hillsides. I threw myself down, resting against a rock; Francisco sat down by my side, and Tigre, our good dog, lay at our feet licking my hands. The other huntsmen were preparing for their return home.

“Come,” I said, “let us drink a draught of wine, and then tell me something about Roldan’s bugle-horn.”

“Ah,” my cousin replied, in a grave tone, “if you had passed whole weeks as I have, in the forests and woods, with no other companion but a dog and a gun, you would then know a great many things which you know nothing of. Get up and follow me, since you still wish me to tell you something concerning this French knight, and I will tell you what I have heard, but it must be related on the very spot where that brave fell and died.”

I rose up, and we both proceeded to the eminence pointed out by Francisco. Nothing more grand could be imagined than the view commanded from this eminence; the virgin luxuriance of the Basque mountains, with their trees of immense height, their huge broken chasms and rocks contemporary with the creation, their tops covered with the snows of centuries, and the torrents below of turbid waters which have been flowing on from the beginning of the world. The heights on which we stood was a broken point, and on the opposite side to this division there was a huge gap, and this opening is the boundary or gate which divides it from France.

We reached the spot where Roldan died, and from whence, it is said, he still blows his horn. It is related that whenever the blast of his horn is heard the rocks fall to pieces, the mountains catch fire, and homesteads disappear by fierce storms.

“Tell me, pray tell me all about this.”

“Well, then, listen.”

“There was in France an emperor or king who went on from conquest to conquest, working his way towards the North. In his incursions he was accompanied by some barons of his realm, who were exceedingly brave and daring, among the number being Roldan, and he was distinguished above them all, like the tops of a beech tree rising above the other trees of the forests. Wearied of always proceeding towards the North, where he only found snow and ice, he

returned to his own kingdom, and, after making some preparations, he sallied out to conquer the South. Do you see that mountain yonder, so high that its top is nearly lost in the clouds? From that mountain up to Elizondo nothing was seen but soldiers; the ground shook beneath the weight of that concourse of men covered with steel, at the head of which went Roldan. No resistance could we offer them because we were totally unprepared. They went on and reached Pamplona and conquered it; they spread themselves along the shores and they became the masters. Inebriated with such signal success, they returned to France, leaving their strongholds garrisoned. Nevertheless in that retreat there awaited them the punishment to their ambition. The whole army passed along that road covered with snow, towards where you are looking. The multitude of soldiers resembled a long serpent, whose head, led by the emperor, was concealed in Oleron, and the tail, at which stood Roldan, reached to the walls of the holy monastery of Roncesvalles. All the cliffs and chasms repeated the echoes a thousand times over, the noise of the songs, and the clamping of the horses' hoofs. Roldan had already reached to the summit of the pine plantation, which from hence looks as small as the lime tree; he was conversing cheerfully with his soldiers, when a horrible stampede was heard on the winds. They looked up in terror and saw huge masses bounding down the slopes in fearful leaps and awe-inspiring roar, and falling like hail on the troops, crushing them to the ground like so many reptiles."

"And what was that which was flying in space?" I asked, deeply interested with this picturesque narrative.

"Pieces of rock of the size of these we are sitting upon," he replied. "A fearful cry was heard in that defile. The troops mustered together, and with their shields endeavored to offer an opposition to that shower of broken rocks, but the resistance was too weak to be able to repulse projectiles of this description. Their arms were broken, their bodies trampled, and men, guns, vehicles, and horses were crushed down, and, before many minutes had elapsed, all that road was covered over with dead bodies, broken corselets, and shields. Roldan was the only one who had been untouched by the missiles; he blew his horn asking for help, and the fierce, terrible *irrinzi*, or war-whoop, of the Basques was the response he received.

"All those mountain tops and heights were crowned, with Basques, who were hurling down broken rocks flying arrows, and even throwing huge balls of hard snow. They were commanded by Count Lobo. The count witnessed all this terrible slaughter, seated on the very spot which you are occupying. Roldan made strenuous efforts to reunite his men, and, by scaling the mountain sides, to cast the enemy from the heights. Several times did he reach as far as that break which lies two yards from your feet; but the trunk of a tree which rolled down the cliff, and other projectiles, arrested his venture.

"At length, wearied by so much wrestling, he formed a rampart with the bodies of his soldiers, and in this manner, behind this defense, he blew his horn

and cursed his cousin the emperor. The sounds from his trumpet grew weaker and weaker, and as a last effort of his death agony he took his sword by the blade and cast it far from him. The sword struck this very spot, and was buried up to the hilt. The horn was silenced.

“Roldan died pierced by arrows, and surrounded by the dead bodies of his soldiers. His shadow, nevertheless, wanders about these solitary places; armed to the teeth, he is seen on the heights flinging down enormous rocks to obstruct the passage, the silent proof of his rout. At times, when some catastrophe threatens the land, the sound of his horn is distinctly heard, announcing by those blasts the misfortune which is threatened. And when the anticipated calamity takes place, there are seen about these localities during the night long lines of armed men dancing to the measure of the strange music which their chieftain executes. Hapless indeed is the Basque muleteer who happens to pass at that moment.”

“What happens then?” I asked.

“He will die broken to pieces against the rocks.”

“So that, should these ill-omened fellows appear at this moment—”

“We should be instantly killed,” replied Francisco.

“Hum, hum! I am not afraid of the dead,” I replied, smiling. “I am more impressed by the presence of two living men than by all the dead bodies of Roldan and his soldiers.”

“Afraid of the living?” he replied, with a contemptuous sneer. “When I have my gun loaded I fear none who may stand before me!”

I was about to reply, and perhaps start a discussion, when we heard close to us the same strange noise and ringing cry which had reached us on the previous night.

“That is your Roldan, who no doubt is coming to tear us to pieces,” I said, laughing, little thinking what was the actual cause of that cry.

But I was astonished to witness the terror and ashy pallor of the countenance of my cousin, who with finger on his lips was indicating to me to keep silence. Tigre had pricked up his ears, and was uttering sinister growls.

Suddenly Francisco cried, “I have lost my bugle-horn.”

“What is the matter?”

“Why, look to the right; do you not hear?”

I could certainly hear the crackling sound of dry branches as they broke under the heavy muffled tread of some one slowly advancing, but I did not apprehend what it was.

“Is it, perhaps, Roldan who is approaching?” I asked, half convinced that this supposition might be a true one.

“Who knows? Silence! Quiet, Tigre!” he whispered, menacing the dog which at once lay down at my feet.

The night was fast closing in, and the mists were descending from the mountains over the valleys. All at once throughout space resounded a ringing

cry far more piercing than any we had yet heard, and on turning round in the direction from whence it proceeded, we beheld in astonishment a formidable black bear about thirty paces from us, and which stood still to look at us. When I saw him, I felt the blood freezing in my veins, and almost mechanically I raised my gun to aim but Francisco cried out, as he grasped my gun, to lower it. "Do not fire, else we are lost!"

The animal was slowly advancing, growling with pleasure on seeing his coveted prey so near to him, and which he felt sure of obtaining. The beast was a huge one, and his paws, with their sharp curved claws, were truly monstrous.

"Let us prepare for a hand-to-hand fight," said Francisco, on perceiving that the animal was beginning to agitate himself. "Were I alone," he added, drawing out his long woodman's knife—

"What would you do?" I asked.

"I would lodge a shot in his body, and then pierce him through with this knife."

"Shoot him then, and if you do not succeed in killing him I will fire also."

"It is impossible," he replied, "because, should I not kill him, he would attack us and although, were I alone, I could easily defend myself, yet I could not do so with you."

"Let us run for it, then," I said.

"Run from him?" he replied, looking at me from head to foot. "You are tired out, and before we should have departed twenty paces you would feel his claws clutching at your neck. No, let us do something else."

"Let us fight him to death," I rejoined.

The bear uttered a deep growl and dashed at us. Quick as thought my cousin leaped to the front and placed his body between me and the beast. The eyes of Francisco were gleaming with a strange light, his right hand grasped the long knife, and a feverish tremor betrayed his extraordinary resolve. That wrestling would have proved an unequal one, had not another combatant appeared on the field, when the bear was at a short distance from us. The dog Tigre, which had been hitherto only yelping and watching, now leaped on to the beast with the strength and agility of dogs of his breed, and, catching him by the neck, turned him over and both rolled to the ground. The rage of the bear was something terrible: he growled savagely, and set at the dog; but the latter, being agile and trained, parried the attacks of the beast with surprising skill.

"We are saved!" cried Francisco.

"Let us fire at him!" I said, preparing my gun.

"Keep quiet, for heaven's sake!" he exclaimed. "Don't you see that, should we not kill him, he would turn his attacks from the dog and direct his fury towards us? Let us reserve our shot for the end."

Meantime the bear was vainly trying to catch the dog, but every time that he renewed the attack the dog would fly at him, and dig its teeth into the bear, forcing him to roar furiously.

My cousin then began to call at the top of his voice to summon the other huntsmen, if he could make himself heard by them, and they in their turn were already very anxious because we had not rejoined them. At last, after a quarter of an hour of anxious waiting, we heard the blasting of the hunting horns, the yelping of dogs, and the answering cries of our companions announcing their arrival.

When the bear heard all that noise he began to retire very slowly: we then fired two shots, and he disappeared in the wood. The huntsmen hastened up to us, nearly exhausted with fatigue, and fearful that some misfortune had happened to us.

“Pepe! Pepe! Where is Pepe?” cried my uncle, in terror and out of breath.

“Here we are, uncle,” I replied.

“Are you unhurt?”

“Yes, thank God; but had it not been for Francisco the bear would have torn me to pieces.”

“Mercy upon us!” exclaimed all the huntsmen in one voice. “Have you seen the bear?”

“Yes, as surely as I see you!” I replied.

“Where is Francisco?” they asked.

At that moment we heard the report of a gun in the wood, followed by a fierce growl. We all ran towards the spot whence came the noise, and we found Francisco raising his gun to fire with the greatest coolness.

“I have wounded the beast,” he said, as soon as he saw us coming; “if we follow the track the bear will be ours.”

“But, gentlemen,” said one of the huntsmen, “it is almost night.”

“What does it matter?” replied Francisco, as he shouldered his gun and started in pursuit.

We all followed him, and on the snow we could plainly see the spots of blood from the wounded animal.

“He is certainly wounded,” said my uncle; “therefore let us proceed cautiously. Pepe,” he added, addressing me, “come close to me, do not linger behind nor separate yourself from our party.”

“Come along with me!” cried Francisco, as he grasped my hand in an affectionate manner; “before the bear touches a thread of your coat he will have to tear me to pieces.”

Deeply touched at this proof of his friendship I returned his grasp in silence. The pack of dogs were leashed together, setting Tigre foremost, and we joined ourselves together in a close column, and, preparing our weapons, we followed for a considerable distance the track of the animal. The night quite closed in, but we were able to continue our search, thanks to, the reflection cast up from the whiteness of the untrodden snow. The footprints and occasional spots of blood from the wounded animal served as a guide, but on reaching a plain, encircled by high rocks like gradients in an amphitheatre, the trace of footprints and the drops of blood ceased.

From this we inferred that the bear's den must be in some opening of the rocks standing before us, so we decided to encamp on the snow, taking all necessary precautions to spend the night in security and all possible comfort. With a quantity of dry branches we kindled a fire, fastened the dogs in couples, refreshed ourselves with food and wine, and settled to sleep. Some of the keepers took their turn to watch, and formed a sort of mounted guards. In spite of the piercing cold, somewhat modified by the heat of the fire, we soon fell fast asleep.

IV

At daydawn we were up and commenced anew our search. We found deeply impressed footprints of the beacon the snow, and followed the track which led us to the further end of this natural amphitheater of rocks. At the base of a high cliff we discovered an opening curtained by overhanging branches and much tangled growth, and none doubted that this opening led to the den of our enemy. We carefully examined the surroundings of this mountain, in order to discover whether there existed any other opening to this cave, but to our great satisfaction we found none. We then held a sort of council of war, to discuss the best means possible to dislodge the animal from his lair, and after some animated discussion the proposal suggested by my cousin was unanimously adopted. This was simply to place the huntsmen on the heights which surrounded the plain for safety, and the keepers with the dogs leashed together to stand at the entrance of the plain. Then to collect some branches, pile them up at the mouth of the cave and set fire to them, and by this means smoke out the beast from his lair. We accordingly perched ourselves all along the heights of the rocks, and my cousin, armed with his long knife, and followed by some of the men carrying wood, gently approached the cavern, covered up the entrance with the branches, and set fire to them. My curiosity was at its highest point, and the eyes of all were fixed on the bonfire, which was beginning to cast vivid flames and dense columns of smoke. Francisco stood on my right, and the dog Tigre on the left. Ten minutes elapsed without anything taking place, and we were beginning to think we had after all missed our mark, when we perceived the ignited branches flying in the air, and scattered about on all sides under the vigorous kicks of the bear. He appeared on the scene uttering fearful growls, and casting fiery glances around at us. When the animal found himself enclosed within that narrow circle, his fury knew no bounds. He made towards the dogs, which were all let loose together, and a terrible fight ensued. The bloodhounds covered the bear with their tawny bodies; the beast lacerating all those he could bite at with his long teeth, and in a short time out of that rolling heap of bodies came forth indescribable cries of pain, and blood flowed. Thirteen dogs fell victims, either killed or wounded, in that fight, and the rest withdrew at the call of their keepers. The bear, now fairly exhausted, sat on his haunches, unable to move, his jaws wide open, and his tongue hanging out like a sheet of red-hot iron.

"Fire altogether!" cried my uncle, and five balls entered the animal's body.

The bear gave a tremendous leap on finding himself wounded; he reared on his hind legs, gazed upon the scene around him, and with desperate bounds, horrible growls, and grinding his teeth in a fearful manner, covered with blood and froth, he dashed in the direction where Francisco and I were standing to attack us. In order to reach to where we stood, it was necessary for the animal to clamber a cliff of about sixteen feet high, upon one of the crevices of which we had taken our position. The other huntsmen did not dare to fire through fear of wounding us; nor were they able to render us any assistance, as it was too late to prevent the attack or divert the beast. Meanwhile the bear was with surprising agility clambering up, and we almost felt the hot breath of his nostrils. The huntsmen were terror-stricken: my poor uncle endeavored to encourage us with cheering words, while a cold perspiration overspread my face. I trembled from head to foot, and I knew not what to do. I turned towards my cousin, who gave me a grasp of the hand, and, turning deadly pale, murmured, "The bugle-horn of Roldan!" The critical moment had arrived. Flight was now impossible. The bear advanced, and had already raised his huge paws to pounce upon us. Francisco leaped forward, made the sign of the cross, raised his gun, took aim, and fired. I closed my eyes. A cry of joy resounded in that enclosed plain on seeing the beast roll over, down the broken cliff, and Tigre with him. Francisco uttered an *irrinzi* of triumph, and, swiftly following the animal, he leaped down and stuck his long knife into the breast of the bear.

Three hours later, we entered the walls of the monastery bringing the dead body of the black bear, the terror of the adjacent mountains. From his body was extracted about twenty pounds of fat, and his handsome skin covered for some years the prioral couch of Roncesvalles.

For a considerable time after this event I used to dream very frequently about Roldan's bugle-horn; and whenever I was troubled with these dreams I would awaken as in a fright and start up nervously, believing myself caught in the clutches of a black bear.

THE GRATEFUL TARTARO AND THE HEREN-SUGE

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Webster, Wentworth. *Basque Legends: Collected Chiefly in the Labourd*. London: Griffith and Farran, 1879, 20–32.

Date: ca. 1879

Original Source: Basque

National Origin: Basque

The Tartaro of Basque folklore is commonly described as a giant cyclops. In some cases, the description is so vague that the Tartaro is no more

than an ogre or monstrous animal. Often, the Basque tales cast it in the role of the stupid ogre (for example, AT 1000-1181). In his **variant** of “The Dragon-Slayer” (AT 300), however, the Tartaro returns the hero’s kindness by advice and magical assistance in saving his own life, defeating the seven-headed serpent, and winning a princess. The opening episode is a variant of “The Helpful Horse” (AT 532) with the Tartaro assuming the role played by the horse elsewhere.

Like many of us who are, have been, and shall be in the world, there was a king, and his wife, and three sons. The king went out hunting one day, and caught a Tartaro. He brings him home, and shuts him up in prison in a stable, and proclaims, by sound of trumpet, that all his court should meet the next day at his house, that he would give them a grand dinner, and afterwards would show them an animal such as they had never seen before.

The next day the two sons of the king were playing at ball against (the wall of) the stable where the Tartaro was confined, and the ball went into the stable. One of the boys goes and asks the Tartaro, “Throw me back my ball, I beg you.”

He says to him, “Yes, if you will deliver me.”

He replies, “Yes, yes,” and he threw him the ball.

A moment after, the ball goes again to the Tartaro. He asks for it again; and the Tartaro says, “If you will deliver me, I will give it you.”

The boy says, “Yes, yes,” takes his ball, and goes off.

The ball goes there for the third time, but the Tartaro will not give it before he is let out.

The boy says that he has not the key. The Tartaro says to him, “Go to your mother, and tell her to look in your right ear, because something hurts you there. Your mother will have the key in her left pocket, and take it out.”

The boy goes, and does as the Tartaro had told him. He takes the key from his mother, and delivers the Tartaro. When he was letting him go, he said to him, “What shall I do with the key now? I am undone.”

The Tartaro says to him, “Go again to your mother, and tell her that your left ear hurts you, and ask her to look, and you will slip the key into her pocket.”

The Tartaro tells him, too, that he will soon have need of him, and that he will only have to call him, and he will be his servant forever.

He puts the key back; and everyone came to the dinner. When they had eaten well, the king said to them that they must go and see this curious thing. He takes them all with him. When they are come to the stable, he finds it empty. Judge of the anger of this king, and of his shame. He said, “I should like to eat the heart, half cooked, and without salt, of him who has let my beast go.”

Some time afterwards the two brothers quarreled in presence of their mother, and one said to the other, “I will tell our father about the affair of the Tartaro.”

When the mother heard that, she was afraid for her son, and said to him, "Take as much money as you wish."

And she gave him the Fleur-de-lis [a mark alleged by the narrator to be tattooed on the chest of royalty]. "By this you will be known everywhere as the son of a king."

Petit Yorge [Little George] goes off, then, far, far, far away. He spends and squanders all his money, and does not know what to do more. He remembers the Tartaro, and calls him directly. He comes, and Petit Yorge tells him all his misfortunes; that he has not a penny left, and that he does not know what will become of him. The Tartaro says to him, "When you have gone a short way from here you will come to a city. A king lives there. You will go to his house, and they will take you as gardener. You will pull up everything that there is in the garden, and the next day everything will come up more beautiful than before. Also, three beautiful flowers will spring up, and you will carry them to the three daughters of the king, and you will give the most beautiful to the youngest daughter."

He goes off, then, as he had told him, and he asks them if they want a gardener. They say, "Yes, indeed, very much." He goes to the garden, and pulls up the fine cabbages, and the beautiful leeks as well. The youngest of the king's daughters sees him, and she tells it to her father, and her father says to her, "Let him alone, we will see what he will do afterwards." And, indeed, the next day he sees cabbages and leeks such as he had never seen before. Petit Yorge takes a flower to each of the young ladies.

The eldest said, "I have a flower that the gardener has brought me, which has not its equal in the world."

And the second says that she has one, too, and that no one has ever seen one so beautiful. And the youngest said that hers was still more beautiful than theirs, and the others confess it, too.

The youngest of the young ladies found the gardener very much to her taste. Every day she used to bring him his dinner. After a certain time she said to him, "You must marry me."

The lad says to her, "That is impossible. The king would not like such a marriage."

The young girl says, too, "Well, indeed, it is hardly worthwhile. In eight days I shall be eaten by the serpent."

For eight days she brought him his dinner again. In the evening she tells him that it is for the last time that she brought it. The young man tells her, "No," that she will bring it again; that somebody will help her.

The next day Petit Yorge goes off at eight o'clock to call the Tartaro. He tells him what has happened. The Tartaro gives him a fine horse, a handsome dress, and a sword, and tells him to go to such a spot, and to open the carriage door with his sword, and that he will cut off two of the serpent's heads. Petit Yorge goes off to the said spot. He finds the young lady in the carriage. He bids

her open the door. The young lady says that she cannot open it—that there are seven doors, and that he had better go away; that it is enough for one person to be eaten.

Petit Yorge opens the doors with his sword, and sat down by the young lady's side. He tells her that he has hurt his ear, and asks her to look at it; and at the same time he cuts off seven pieces of the seven robes which she wore, without the young lady seeing him. At the same instant comes the serpent, and says to him, "Instead of one, I shall have three to eat."

Petit Yorge leaps on his horse, and says to him, "You will not touch one; you shall not have one of us."

And they begin to fight. With his sword he cuts off one head, and the horse with his feet another; and the serpent asks quarter till the next day. Petit Yorge leaves the young lady there. The young lady is full of joy; she wishes to take the young man home with her. He will not go by any means (he says); that he cannot; that he has made a vow to go to Rome; but he tells her that "tomorrow my brother will come, and he will be able to do something, too." The young lady goes home, and Petit Yorge to his garden. At noon she comes to him with the dinner, and Petit Yorge says to her, "You see that it has really happened as I told you—he has not eaten you."

"No, but tomorrow he will eat me. How can it be otherwise?"

"No, no! Tomorrow you will bring me my dinner again. Some help will come to you."

The next day Petit Yorge goes off at eight o'clock to the Tartaro, who gives him a new horse, a different dress, and a fine sword. At ten o'clock he arrives where the young lady is. He bids her open the door. But she says to him that she cannot in any way open fourteen doors; she is there, and that she cannot open them, and he should go away; that it is enough for one to be eaten; that she is grieved to see him there. As soon as he has touched them with his sword, the fourteen doors fly open. He sits down by the side of the young lady, and tells her to look behind his ear, for it hurts him. At the same time he cuts off fourteen bits of the fourteen dresses she was wearing. As soon as he had done that, the serpent comes, saying joyfully, "I shall eat not one, but three."

Petit Yorge says to him, "Not even one of us."

He leaps on his horse, and begins to fight with the serpent. The serpent makes some terrible bounds. After having fought a long time, at last Petit Yorge is the conqueror. He cuts off one head, and the horse another with his foot. The serpent begs quarter till the next day. Petit Yorge grants it, and the serpent goes away.

The young lady wishes to take the young man home, to show him to her father; but he will not go by any means.

He tells her that he must go to Rome, and set off that very day; that he has made a vow, but that tomorrow he will send his cousin, who is very bold, and is afraid of nothing.

The young lady goes to her father's, Petit Yorge to his garden. Her father is delighted, and cannot comprehend it at all. The young lady goes again with the dinner. The gardener says to her, "You see you have come again today, as I told you. Tomorrow you will come again, just the same."

"I should be very glad of it."

On the morrow Petit Yorge went off at eight o'clock to the Tartaro. He said to him that the serpent had still three heads to be cut off, and that he had still need of all his help. The Tartaro said to him, "Keep quiet, keep quiet; you will conquer him."

He gives him a new dress, finer than the others, a more spirited horse, a terrible dog, a sword, and a bottle of good scented water. He said to him, "The serpent will say to you, 'Ah! if I had a spark between my head and my tail, how I would burn you and your lady, and your horse and your dog.' And you, you will say to him then, 'I, if I had the good-scented water to smell, I would cut off a head from thee, the horse another, and the dog another.' You will give this bottle to the young lady, who will place it in her bosom, and, at the very moment you shall say that she must throw some in your face, and on the horse and on the dog as well."

He goes off then without fear, because the Tartaro had given him this assurance. He comes then to the carriage. The young lady says to him, "Where are you going? The serpent will be here directly. It is enough if he eats me."

He says to her, "Open the door."

She tells him that it is impossible; that there are twenty-one doors. This young man touches them with his sword, and they open of themselves. This young man says to her, giving her the bottle, "When the serpent shall say, 'If I had a spark between my head and my tail, I would burn you,' I shall say to him, 'If I had a drop of the good-scented water under my nose'; you will take the bottle, and throw some over me in a moment."

He then makes her look into his ear, and, while she is looking, he cuts off twenty-one pieces from her twenty-one dresses that she was wearing. At the same moment comes the serpent, saying, with joy, "Instead of one, I shall have four to eat."

The young man said to him, "And you shall not touch one of us, at any rate."

He leaps on his spirited horse, and they fight more fiercely than ever. The horse leaped as high as a house, and the serpent, in a rage, says to him, "If I had a spark of fire between my tail and my head, I would burn you and your lady, and this horse and this terrible dog."

The young man says, "I, if I had the good-scented water under my nose, I would cut off one of your heads, and the horse another, and the dog another."

As he said that, the young lady jumps up, opens the bottle, and very cleverly throws the water just where it was wanted. The young man cuts off a head with his sword, his horse another, and the dog another; and thus they make an end of the serpent. This young man takes the seven tongues with him, and throws

away the heads. Judge of the joy of this young lady. She wanted to go straight to her father with her preserver (she says), that her father must thank him too; that he owes his daughter to him. But the young man says to her that it is altogether impossible for him; that he must go and meet his cousin at Rome; that they have made a vow, and that, on their return, all three will come to her father's house.

The young lady is vexed, but she goes off without losing time to tell her father what has happened. The father is very glad that the serpent was utterly destroyed; and he proclaims in all the country that he who has killed the serpent should come forward with the proofs of it.

The young lady goes again with the dinner to the gardener. He says to her, "I told you true, then, that you would not be eaten? Something has, then, killed the serpent?"

She relates to him what had taken place.

But, lo! Some days afterwards there appeared a black charcoal-burner, who said that he had killed the serpent, and was come to claim the reward. When the young lady saw the charcoal-burner, she said immediately, that most certainly it was not he; that it was a fine gentleman, on horseback, and not a pest of a man like him. The charcoal-burner shows the heads of the serpent; and the king says that, in truth, this must be the man. The king had only one word to say, she *must* marry him. The young lady says, she will not at all, and the father began to compel her, (saying) that no other man came forward. But, as the daughter would not consent, to make a delay, the king proclaims in all the country, that he who killed the serpent would be capable of doing something else, too, and that, on such a day, all the young men should assemble, that he would hang a diamond ring from a bell, and that whosoever riding under it should pierce the ring with his sword, should certainly have his daughter.

From all sides arrive the young men. Our Petit Yorge goes off to the Tartaro, and tells him what has happened, and that he has again need of him. The Tartaro gives him a handsome horse, a superb dress, and a splendid sword. Equipped thus, Petit Yorge goes with the others. He gets ready. The young lady recognizes him immediately, and says so to her father. He has the good luck to carry off the ring on his sword; but he does not stop at all, but goes off galloping as hard as his horse can go. The king and his daughter were in a balcony, looking on at all these gentlemen. They saw that he still went on. The young lady says to her father, "Papa, call him!"

The father says to her, in an angry tone, "He is going off, because apparently he has no desire to have you." And he hurls his lance at him. It strikes him on the leg. He still rides on. You can well imagine what chagrin for the young lady.

The next day she goes with the gardener's dinner. She sees him with his leg bandaged. She asks him what it is.

The young lady begins to suspect something, and goes to tell to her father how the gardener had his leg tied up, and that he must go and ask him what is the matter. That he had told her that it was nothing.

The king did not want to go, (and said) that she must get it out of the gardener; but to please his daughter, he says he will go there. He goes then, and asks him, "What is the matter?" He tells him that a blackthorn has run into him. The king gets angry, and says, "that there is not a blackthorn in all his garden, and that he is telling him a lie."

The daughter says to him, "Tell him to show it us."

He shows it to them, and they are astonished to see that the lance is still there. The king did not know what to think of it all. This gardener has deceived him, and he must give him his daughter. But Petit Yorge, uncovering his bosom, shows the "fleur-de-lis" there. The king did not know what to say; but the daughter said to him, "This is my preserver, and I will marry no one else than him."

Petit Yorge asks the king to send for five dressmakers, the best in the town, and five butchers. The king sends for them.

Petit Yorge asks the dressmakers if they have ever made any new dresses which had a piece out; and on the dressmakers saying, "No," he counts out the pieces and gives them to the dressmakers, asking if it was like that that they had given the dresses to the princess. They say, "*Certainly not.*"

He goes, then, to the butchers, and asks them, if they have ever killed animals without tongues? They say, "No!" He tells them, then, to look in the heads of the serpent. They see that the tongues are not there, and then he takes out the tongues he has.

The king, having seen all that, has nothing more to say. He gives him his daughter. Petit Yorge says to him, that he must invite his father to the wedding, but on the part of the young lady's father; and that they must serve him up at dinner a sheep's heart, half cooked, and without salt. They make a great feast, and place this heart before this father. They make him carve it himself, and he is very indignant at that. The son then says to him, "I expected that"; and he adds, "Ah! My poor father, have you forgotten how you said that you wished to eat the heart, half cooked, and without salt, of him who let the Tartaro go? That is not my heart, but a sheep's heart. I have done this to recall to your memory what you said, and to make you, recognize me."

They embrace each other, and tell each other all their news, and what services the Tartaro had done him. The father returned happy to his house, and Petit Yorge lived very happily with his young lady at the king's house; and they wanted nothing, because they had always the Tartaro at their service.

THE WITCH AND THE NEW BORN INFANT

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Webster, Wentworth. *Basque Legends: Collected Chiefly in the Labourd*. London: Griffith and Farran, 1879, 69–72.

Date: ca. 1879

Original Source: Basque

National Origin: Basque

The following narrative, a supernatural **legend**, although the setting is Basque, embodies folk beliefs that have international circulation. Witches have the power of shape-shifting in Native American, African, and European traditions. Likewise hair clippings, blood, scraps of clothing, and nail pairings are cross-culturally employed for supernatural purposes. Finally, crossroads are widely accepted as points of intersection between the human and the supernatural realms and are especially associated with pacts between human and superhuman entities.

Like many others in the world, there was a man and woman, laborers, who lived by their toil. They had a mule, and the man lived by his mule carrying wine. Sometimes he was a week away from home. He always went to the same inn, where there was a woman and her daughter. One day the laborer sets off with his loaded mule, and his wife was very near her confinement. She was expecting it hourly; but, as he had orders upon orders, he was obliged to set off. He goes then, and comes to this inn. It was a market-day, and they had not kept a bedroom for him as usual, because there were so many people there, and he is put into a dark room without windows near the kitchen. He had not yet gone to sleep, when he hears the woman say to her daughter,

“You are not aware that the wife of the man who is there is confined? Go and see if he is asleep.”

When the man heard that, he began to snore; and when the young girl heard through a slit in the door that he was snoring, she said to her mother,

“Yes, yes, he is asleep.”

The mother said to her then (you may guess whether he was listening), “I must go and charm this newly born infant.”

She takes up a stone under the hearth, and takes from under it a saucepan, in which there was an ointment. She takes a brush, and well rubs herself over her whole body, saying, “*Under* all the clouds and *over* all the hedges, half an hour on the road, another half-hour there, and another to return.”

As soon as she had said that, off she went. When the man saw that she was gone, he comes out of his room. He had seen what she did. He anoints himself like her, and says,

“*Over* the clouds, and *under* the hedges” (he made a blunder there) “a quarter of an hour to go there, half an hour to stop, and a quarter of an hour for the return.”

He arrives at his house, but torn to pieces by the thorns, and his clothes in strips, but that was all the same to him; he places himself behind the door of his

wife's bedroom with a big stick. There comes a great white cat, "Miau, miau!" When the man heard that, he goes out of the place where he was hiding, and with his stick he almost killed this cat, and set out directly afterwards for the inn, but not easily, under all the hedges. In spite of that, he arrives at the woman's house. He goes to bed quickly. The next day, when he gets up, he sees only the daughter. He asks her where her mother is. "She is ill, and you must pay me."

"No! I prefer to see your mother."

He goes to the mother, and finds her very ill. From this day he goes no more to that inn. When he gets home, he tells his wife what had happened, and how he had saved the child. But all was not ended there. They had misfortune upon misfortune. All their cows died, and all their other animals too. They were sinking into the deepest misery. They did not know what would become of them. This man was brooding sadly in thought, when he met an old woman, who asked him what was the matter with him. He told her all his troubles, how many misfortunes they had had all his cows lost. He had bought others, and they too had died directly. He is charmed by witches.

"If you are like that you have only to put a consecrated taper under the peck measure, in the stable, and you will catch her."

He does as the old woman told him, and hides himself in the manger. At midnight she comes under the form of a cat, and gets astride the ox, saying, "The others before were fine, but this is very much finer."

When our man heard that he comes out from where he was hiding, and with his stick he leaves her quite dead; although when he had done that our man was without any resources; (he had) neither bread, nor maize, nor cows, nor pigs, and his wife and children were starving.

He goes off to see if he can do anything. There meets him a gentleman, who says to him, "What is the matter, man, that you are so sad?"

"It is this misery that I am in that torments me so."

"If you have only that, we will arrange all that if you like. I will give you as much money as you wish, if at the end of the year you can guess, and if you tell me with what the devil makes his chalice; and if you do not guess it then your soul shall be for us."

When our man has got his money, he goes off home without thinking at all of the future. He lived happily for some time with his wife and child; but as the time approached he grew sad, and said nothing to his wife. One day he had gone a long way, wishing and trying to find out his secret, and the night overtakes him.

He stops at crossroads, and hides himself. (You know that the witches come to the crossroads to meet together.) They come then, "hushta" from one side, "fushta" from the other, dancing. When they had well amused themselves like that, they begin to tell each other the news.

One says, "You do not know, then, such a man has sold his head to the devil; certainly he will not guess with what the devil makes his chalice. I do not know myself; tell it me."

“With the parings of the finger-nails which Christians cut on the Sunday.”

Our man with difficulty, with great difficulty, kept from showing himself, through his joy and delight. As soon as the day appeared all the witches went off to their homes, and our man too went off to his. He was no more sad. He waited till the day arrived, and went to the crossroads.

This gentleman was already there, come with a lot of devils, thinking that he would be for hell. He asks him, “You know what the devil makes his chalice of?”

“I do not know, but I will try. With the parings of the finger-nails which Christians cut on Sundays?”

As soon as he heard that, the devil goes off with all the others in fire and flame to the bottom of hell. Our man went off home, and lived a long time with his wife and daughter. If they had lived well, they would have died well too.

FRANCE

BLUEBEARD

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Lang, Andrew. *The Blue Fairy Book*. London: Longmans, Green and Company, 1889, 290–295.

Date: 1889

Original Source: Perrault, Charles. *Histoires ou contes du temps passé, avec des moralités: Contes de ma mère l'Oye*. Paris, 1697.

National Origin: France

Sharing borders with Belgium, German, Italy, Luxembourg, Monaco, Spain, and Switzerland, and only 21 miles from Great Britain across the English Channel, the various regional cultures of France have had the opportunity to assimilate and adapt a range of European folk traditions in their specific repertoires. Along with those tales that have a unique Basque or Breton essence, France developed literary versions of traditional tales. These narratives, which are now more widely known than their folk models, came to be called **fairy tales**. Charles Perrault (1628–1703) is the French author who is credited with having established this **genre**, as well as creating the literary device of “Mother Goose” (mère l’Oye). Despite Perrault’s literary recasting of the plot, the “Bluebeard” tale (AT 312) is an internationally distributed narrative. See, for example, the African American **variant** “The Bride of the Evil One” (Volume 4, page 193) and the closely related Efik (Nigeria) tale “The Disobedient Daughter Who Married a Skull” (Volume 1, page 85). The motivation for the universal appeal of such narratives is likely to be the apprehension traditionally surrounding the act of marriage. Oral tradition frequently takes such anxieties as the core around which traditional fictions are constructed.

There was once a man who had fine houses, both in town and country, a deal of silver and gold plate, embroidered furniture, and coaches gilded all over with gold. But this man was so unlucky as to have a blue beard, which made him so frightfully ugly that all the women and girls ran away from him.

One of his neighbors, a lady of quality, had two daughters who were perfect beauties. He desired of her one of them in marriage, leaving to her choice which of the two she would bestow on him. Neither of them would have him, and they sent him backwards and forwards from one to the other, not being able to bear the thoughts of marrying a man who had a blue beard. Adding to their disgust and aversion was the fact that he already had been married to several wives, and nobody knew what had become of them.

Bluebeard, to engage their affection, took them, with their mother and three or four ladies of their acquaintance, with other young people of the neighborhood, to one of his country houses, where they stayed a whole week.

The time was filled with parties, hunting, fishing, dancing, mirth, and feasting. Nobody went to bed, but all passed the night in rallying and joking with each other. In short, everything succeeded so well that the youngest daughter began to think that the man's beard was not so very blue after all, and that he was a mighty civil gentleman.

As soon as they returned home, the marriage was concluded. About a month afterwards, Bluebeard told his wife that he was obliged to take a country journey for six weeks at least, about affairs of very great consequence. He desired her to divert herself in his absence, to send for her friends and acquaintances, to take them into the country, if she pleased, and to make good cheer wherever she was.

"Here," said he, "are the keys to the two great wardrobes, wherein I have my best furniture. These are to my silver and gold plate, which is not everyday in use. These open my strongboxes, which hold my money, both gold and silver; these my caskets of jewels. And this is the master key to all my apartments. But as for this little one here, it is the key to the closet at the end of the great hall on the ground floor. Open them all; go into each and every one of them, except that little closet, which I forbid you, and forbid it in such a manner that, if you happen to open it, you may expect my just anger and resentment."

She promised to observe, very exactly, whatever he had ordered. Then he, after having embraced her, got into his coach and proceeded on his journey.

Her neighbors and good friends did not wait to be sent for by the newly married lady. They were impatient to see all the rich furniture of her house, and had not dared to come while her husband was there, because of his blue beard, which frightened them. They ran through all the rooms, closets, and wardrobes, which were all so fine and rich that they seemed to surpass one another.

After that, they went up into the two great rooms, which contained the best and richest furniture. They could not sufficiently admire the number and beauty

of the tapestry, beds, couches, cabinets, stands, tables, and looking glasses, in which you might see yourself from head to foot; some of them were framed with glass, others with silver, plain and gilded, the finest and most magnificent that they had ever seen.

They ceased not to extol and envy the happiness of their friend, who in the meantime in no way diverted herself in looking upon all these rich things, because of the impatience she had to go and open the closet on the ground floor. She was so much pressed by her curiosity that, without considering that it was very uncivil for her to leave her company, she went down a little back staircase, and with such excessive haste that she nearly fell and broke her neck.

Having come to the closet door, she made a stop for some time, thinking about her husband's orders, and considering what unhappiness might attend her if she was disobedient; but the temptation was so strong that she could not overcome it. She then took the little key, and opened it, trembling. At first she could not see anything plainly, because the windows were shut. After some moments she began to perceive that the floor was all covered over with clotted blood, on which lay the bodies of several dead women, ranged against the walls. (These were all the wives whom Bluebeard had married and murdered, one after another.) She thought she should have died for fear, and the key, which she, pulled out of the lock, fell out of her hand.

After having somewhat recovered her surprise, she picked up the key, locked the door, and went upstairs into her chamber to recover; but she could not, so much was she frightened. Having observed that the key to the closet was stained with blood, she tried two or three times to wipe it off; but the blood would not come out; in vain did she wash it, and even rub it with soap and sand. The blood still remained, for the key was magical and she could never make it quite clean; when the blood was gone off from one side, it came again on the other.

Bluebeard returned from his journey the same evening, saying that he had received letters upon the road, informing him that the affair he went about had concluded to his advantage. His wife did all she could to convince him that she was extremely happy about his speedy return.

The next morning he asked her for the keys, which she gave him, but with such a trembling hand that he easily guessed what had happened.

"What!" said he, "is not the key of my closet among the rest?"

"I must," said she, "have left it upstairs upon the table."

"Fail not," said Bluebeard, "to bring it to me at once."

After several goings backwards and forwards, she was forced to bring him the key. Bluebeard, having very attentively considered it, said to his wife, "Why is there blood on the key?"

"I do not know," cried the poor woman, paler than death.

"You do not know!" replied Bluebeard. "I very well know. You went into the closet, did you not? Very well, madam; you shall go back, and take your place among the ladies you saw there."

Upon this she threw herself at her husband's feet, and begged his pardon with all the signs of a true repentance, vowing that she would never more be disobedient. She would have melted a rock, so beautiful and sorrowful was she; but Bluebeard had a heart harder than any rock!

"You must die, madam," said he, "at once."

"Since I must die," answered she (looking upon him with her eyes all bathed in tears), "give me some little time to say my prayers."

"I give you," replied Bluebeard, "half a quarter of an hour, but not one moment more."

When she was alone she called out to her sister, and said to her, "Sister Anne" (for that was her name), "go up, I beg you, to the top of the tower, and look if my brothers are not coming. They promised me that they would come today, and if you see them, give them a sign to make haste."

Her sister Anne went up to the top of the tower, and the poor afflicted wife cried out from time to time, "Anne, sister Anne, do you see anyone coming?"

And sister Anne said, "I see nothing but a cloud of dust in the sun, and the green grass."

In the meanwhile Bluebeard, holding a great saber in his hand, cried out as loud as he could bawl to his wife, "Come down instantly, or I shall come up to you."

"One moment longer, if you please," said his wife; and then she cried out very softly, "Anne, sister Anne, do you see anybody coming?"

And sister Anne answered, "I see nothing but a cloud of dust in the sun, and the green grass."

"Come down quickly," cried Bluebeard, "or I will come up to you."

"I am coming," answered his wife; and then she cried, "Anne, sister Anne, do you not see anyone coming?"

"I see," replied sister Anne, "a great cloud of dust approaching us."

"Are they my brothers?"

"Alas, no my dear sister, I see a flock of sheep."

"Will you not come down?" cried Bluebeard.

"One moment longer," said his wife, and then she cried out, "Anne, sister Anne, do you see nobody coming?"

"I see," said she, "two horsemen, but they are still a great way off."

"God be praised," replied the poor wife joyfully. "They are my brothers. I will make them a sign, as well as I can for them to make haste."

Then Bluebeard bawled out so loud that he made the whole house tremble. The distressed wife came down, and threw herself at his feet, all in tears, with her hair about her shoulders.

"This means nothing," said Bluebeard. "You must die!" Then, taking hold of her hair with one hand, and lifting up the sword with the other, he prepared to strike off her head. The poor lady, turning about to him, and looking at him with dying eyes, desired him to afford her one little moment to recollect herself.

"No, no," said he, "commend yourself to God," and was just ready to strike.

At this very instant there was such a loud knocking at the gate that Bluebeard made a sudden stop. The gate was opened, and two horsemen entered. Drawing their swords, they ran directly to Bluebeard. He knew them to be his wife's brothers, one a dragoon, the other a musketeer; so that he ran away immediately to save himself; but the two brothers pursued and overtook him before he could get to the steps of the porch. Then they ran their swords through his body and left him dead. The poor wife was almost as dead as her husband, and had not strength enough to rise and welcome her brothers.

Bluebeard had no heirs, and so his wife became mistress of all his estate. She made use of one part of it to marry her sister Anne to a young gentleman who had loved her a long while; another part to buy captains' commissions for her brothers, and the rest to marry herself to a very worthy gentleman, who made her forget the ill time she had passed with Bluebeard.

THE STORY OF PRETTY GOLDBLOCKS

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Lang, Andrew. *The Blue Fairy Book*. London: Longmans, Green and Company, 1889, 193–205.

Date: 1889

Original Source: d'Aulnoy, Madame (Marie-Catherine). *La Belle aux Cheveux d'Or, Les Contes des Fées (Fairy Tales)*, 1697.

National Origin: France

The following narrative is in most of its particulars a **variant** of “Ferdinand the True and Ferdinand the False” (AT 531). The tale, however, shares many **motifs** with “The Grateful Animals” (AT 554). Just as Charles Perrault is credited with establishing the major features of the **fairy tale**, the French author Marie-Catherine Le Jumel de Barneville, Baronne d'Aulnoy (1650/1651–1705) Madame d'Aulnoy, is credited with coining the term “fairy tale” for this **genre**.

Once upon a time there was a princess who was the prettiest creature in the world. And because she was so beautiful, and because her hair was like the finest gold, and waved and rippled nearly to the ground, she was called Pretty Goldilocks. She always wore a crown of flowers, and her dresses were embroidered with diamonds and pearls, and everybody who saw her fell in love with her.

Now one of her neighbors was a young king who was not married. He was very rich and handsome, and when he heard all that was said about Pretty

Goldilocks, though he had never seen her, he fell so deeply in love with her that he could neither eat nor drink. So he resolved to send an ambassador to ask her in marriage. He had a splendid carriage made for his ambassador, and gave him more than a hundred horses and a hundred servants, and told him to be sure and bring the Princess back with him. After he had started nothing else was talked of at Court, and the King felt so sure that the Princess would consent that he set his people to work at pretty dresses and splendid furniture, that they might be ready by the time she came. Meanwhile, the ambassador arrived at the Princess's palace and delivered his little message, but whether she happened to be cross that day, or whether the compliment did not please her, is not known. She only answered that she was very much obliged to the King, but she had no wish to be married. The ambassador set off sadly on his homeward way, bringing all the King's presents back with him, for the Princess was too well brought up to accept the pearls and diamonds when she would not accept the King, so she had only kept twenty-five English pins that he might not be vexed.

When the ambassador reached the city, where the King was waiting impatiently, everybody was very much annoyed with him for not bringing the Princess, and the King cried like a baby, and nobody could console him. Now there was at the Court a young man, who was more clever and handsome than anyone else. He was called Charming, and everyone loved him, excepting a few envious people who were angry at his being the King's favorite and knowing all the State secrets. He happened to one day be with some people who were speaking of the ambassador's return and saying that his going to the Princess had not done much good, when Charming said rashly, "If the King had sent me to the Princess Goldilocks I am sure she would have come back with me."

His enemies at once went to the King and said, "You will hardly believe, sire, what Charming has the audacity to say—that if HE had been sent to the Princess Goldilocks she would certainly have come back with him. He seems to think that he is so much handsomer than you that the Princess would have fallen in love with him and followed him willingly." The King was very angry when he heard this.

"Ha, ha!" said he; "does he laugh at my unhappiness, and think himself more fascinating than I am? Go, and let him be shut up in my great tower to die of hunger."

So the King's guards went to fetch Charming, who had thought no more of his rash speech, and carried him off to prison with great cruelty. The poor prisoner had only a little straw for his bed, and but for a little stream of water which flowed through the tower he would have died of thirst.

One day when he was in despair he said to himself, "How can I have offended the King? I am his most faithful subject, and have done nothing against him."

The King chanced to be passing the tower and recognized the voice of his former favorite. He stopped to listen in spite of Charming's enemies, who tried

to persuade him to have nothing more to do with the traitor. But the King said, "Be quiet, I wish to hear what he says."

And then he opened the tower door and called to Charming, who came very sadly and kissed the King's hand, saying, "What have I done, sire, to deserve this cruel treatment?"

"You mocked me and my ambassador," said the King, "and you said that if I had sent you for the Princess Goldilocks you would certainly have brought her back."

"It is quite true, sire," replied Charming; "I should have drawn such a picture of you, and represented your good qualities in such a way, that I am certain the Princess would have found you irresistible. But I cannot see what there is in that to make you angry."

The King could not see any cause for anger either when the matter was presented to him in this light, and he began to frown very fiercely at the courtiers who had so misrepresented his favorite.

So he took Charming back to the palace with him, and after seeing that he had a very good supper he said to him, "You know that I love Pretty Goldilocks as much as ever, her refusal has not made any difference to me; but I don't know how to make her change her mind; I really should like to send you, to see if you can persuade her to marry me."

Charming replied that he was perfectly willing to go, and would set out the very next day.

"But you must wait till I can get a grand escort for you," said the King. But Charming said that he only wanted a good horse to ride, and the King, who was delighted at his being ready to start so promptly, gave him letters to the Princess, and bade him good speed. It was on a Monday morning that he set out all alone upon his errand, thinking of nothing but how he could persuade the Princess Goldilocks to marry the King. He had a writing-book in his pocket, and whenever any happy thought struck him he dismounted from his horse and sat down under the trees to put it into the harangue which he was preparing for the Princess, before he forgot it.

One day when he had started at the very earliest dawn, and was riding over a great meadow, he suddenly had a capital idea, and, springing from his horse, he sat down under a willow tree which grew by a little river. When he had written it down he was looking round him, pleased to find himself in such a pretty place, when all at once he saw a great golden carp lying gasping and exhausted upon the grass. In leaping after little flies she had thrown herself high upon the bank, where she had lain till she was nearly dead. Charming had pity upon her, and, though he couldn't help thinking that she would have been very nice for dinner, he picked her up gently and put her back into the water. As soon as Dame Carp felt the refreshing coolness of the water she sank down joyfully to the bottom of the river, then, swimming up to the bank quite boldly, she said, "I thank you, Charming, for the kindness you have done me. You have saved

my life; one day I will repay you.” So saying, she sank down into the water again, leaving Charming greatly astonished at her politeness.

Another day, as he journeyed on, he saw a raven in great distress. The poor bird was closely pursued by an eagle, which would soon have eaten it up, had not Charming quickly fitted an arrow to his bow and shot the eagle dead. The raven perched upon a tree very joyfully.

“Charming,” said he, “it was very generous of you to rescue a poor raven; I am not ungrateful, some day I will repay you.”

Charming thought it was very nice of the raven to say so, and went on his way.

Before the sun rose he found himself in a thick wood where it was too dark for him to see his path, and here he heard an owl crying as if it were in despair.

“Hark!” said he, “that must be an owl in great trouble, I am sure it has gone into a snare”; and he began to hunt about, and presently found a great net which some bird-catchers had spread the night before.

“What a pity it is that men do nothing but torment and persecute poor creatures which never do them any harm!” said he, and he took out his knife and cut the cords of the net, and the owl flitted away into the darkness, but then turning, with one flicker of her wings, she came back to Charming and said, “It does not need many words to tell you how great a service you have done me. I was caught; in a few minutes the fowlers would have been here—without your help I should have been killed. I am grateful, and one day I will repay you.”

These three adventures were the only ones of any consequence that befell Charming upon his journey, and he made all the haste he could to reach the palace of the Princess Goldilocks.

When he arrived he thought everything he saw delightful and magnificent. Diamonds were as plentiful as pebbles, and the gold and silver, the beautiful dresses, the sweetmeats and pretty things that were everywhere quite amazed him; he thought to himself, “If the Princess consents to leave all this, and come with me to marry the King, he may think himself lucky!”

Then he dressed himself carefully in rich brocade, with scarlet and white plumes, and threw a splendid embroidered scarf over his shoulder, and, looking as gay and as graceful as possible, he presented himself at the door of the palace, carrying in his arm a tiny pretty dog which he had bought on the way. The guards saluted him respectfully, and a messenger was sent to the Princess to announce the arrival of Charming as ambassador of her neighbor the King.

“Charming,” said the Princess, “the name promises well; I have no doubt that he is good looking and fascinates everybody.”

“Indeed he does, madam,” said all her maids of honor in one breath. “We saw him from the window of the garret where we were spinning flax, and we could do nothing but look at him as long as he was in sight.”

“Well to be sure,” said the Princess, “that’s how you amuse yourselves, is it? Looking at strangers out of the window! Be quick and give me my blue satin

embroidered dress, and comb out my golden hair. Let somebody make me fresh garlands of flowers, and give me my high-heeled shoes and my fan, and tell them to sweep my great hall and my throne, for I want everyone to say I am really 'Pretty Goldilocks'."

You can imagine how all her maids scurried this way and that to make the Princess ready, and how in their haste they knocked their heads together and hindered each other, till she thought they would never have done. However, at last they led her into the gallery of mirrors that she might assure herself that nothing was lacking in her appearance, and then she mounted her throne of gold, ebony, and ivory, while her ladies took their guitars and began to sing softly. Then Charming was led in, and was so struck with astonishment and admiration that at first not a word could he say. But presently he took courage and delivered his harangue, bravely ending by begging the Princess to spare him the disappointment of going back without her.

"Sir Charming," answered she, "all the reasons you have given me are very good ones, and I assure you that I should have more pleasure in obliging you than anyone else, but you must know that a month ago as I was walking by the river with my ladies I took off my glove, and as I did so a ring that I was wearing slipped off my finger and rolled into the water. As I valued it more than my kingdom, you may imagine how vexed I was at losing it, and I vowed to never listen to any proposal of marriage unless the ambassador first brought me back my ring. So now you know what is expected of you, for if you talked for fifteen days and fifteen nights you could not make me change my mind."

Charming was very much surprised by this answer, but he bowed low to the Princess, and begged her to accept the embroidered scarf and the tiny dog he had brought with him. But she answered that she did not want any presents, and that he was to remember what she had just told him. When he got back to his lodging he went to bed without eating any supper, and his little dog, who was called Frisk, couldn't eat any either, but came and lay down close to him. All night Charming sighed and lamented.

"How am I to find a ring that fell into the river a month ago?" said he. "It is useless to try; the Princess must have told me to do it on purpose, knowing it was impossible." And then he sighed again.

Frisk heard him and said, "My dear master, don't despair; the luck may change, you are too good not to be happy. Let us go down to the river as soon as it is light."

But Charming only gave him two little pats and said nothing, and very soon he fell asleep.

At the first glimmer of dawn Frisk began to jump about, and when he had waked Charming they went out together, first into the garden, and then down to the river's brink, where they wandered up and down. Charming was thinking sadly of having to go back unsuccessful when he heard someone calling, "Charming, Charming!" He looked all about him and thought he must be

dreaming, as he could not see anybody. Then he walked on and the voice called again, "Charming, Charming!"

"Who calls me?" said he. Frisk, who was very small and could look closely into the water, cried out, "I see a golden carp coming." And sure enough there was the great carp, who said to Charming, "You saved my life in the meadow by the willow tree, and I promised that I would repay you. Take this, it is Princess Goldilock's ring." Charming took the ring out of Dame Carp's mouth, thanking her a thousand times, and he and tiny Frisk went straight to the palace, where someone told the Princess that he was asking to see her.

"Ah! poor fellow," said she, "he must have come to say good-bye, finding it impossible to do as I asked."

So in came Charming, who presented her with the ring and said, "Madam, I have done your bidding. Will it please you to marry my master?" When the Princess saw her ring brought back to her unhurt she was so astonished that she thought she must be dreaming.

"Truly, Charming," said she, "you must be the favorite of some fairy, or you could never have found it."

"Madam," answered he, "I was helped by nothing but my desire to obey your wishes."

"Since you are so kind," said she, "perhaps you will do me another service, for till it is done I will never be married. There is a prince not far from here whose name is Galifron, who once wanted to marry me, but when I refused he uttered the most terrible threats against me, and vowed that he would lay waste my country. But what could I do? I could not marry a frightful giant as tall as a tower, who eats up people as a monkey eats chestnuts, and who talks so loud that anybody who has to listen to him becomes quite deaf. Nevertheless, he does not cease to persecute me and to kill my subjects. So before I can listen to your proposal you must kill him and bring me his head.

Charming was rather dismayed at this command, but he answered, "Very well, Princess, I will fight this Galifron; I believe that he will kill me, but at any rate I shall die in your defense."

Then the Princess was frightened and said everything she could think of to prevent Charming from fighting the giant, but it was of no use, and he went out to arm himself suitably, and then, taking little Frisk with him, he mounted his horse and set out for Galifron's country. Everyone he met told him what a terrible giant Galifron was, and that nobody dared go near him; and the more he heard, the more frightened he grew. Frisk tried to encourage him by saying, "While you are fighting the giant, dear master, I will go and bite his heels, and when he stoops down to look at me you can kill him."

Charming praised his little dog's plan, but knew that this help would not do much good.

At last he drew near the giant's castle, and saw to his horror that every path that led to it was strewn with bones. Before long he saw Galifron coming. His

head was higher than the tallest trees, and he sang in a terrible voice, "Bring out your little boys and girls, Pray do not stay to do their curls, For I shall eat so very many, I shall not know if they have any."

Thereupon Charming sang out as loud as he could to the same tune, "Come out and meet the valiant Charming who finds you not at all alarming; Although he is not very tall, He's big enough to make you fall."

The rhymes were not very correct, but you see he had made them up so quickly that it is a miracle that they were not worse; especially as he was horribly frightened all the time. When Galifron heard these words he looked all about him, and saw Charming standing, sword in hand this put the giant into a terrible rage, and he aimed a blow at Charming with his huge iron club, which would certainly have killed him if it had reached him, but at that instant a raven perched upon the giant's head, and, pecking with its strong beak and beating with its great wings so confused and blinded him that all his blows fell harmlessly upon the air, and Charming, rushing in, gave him several strokes with his sharp sword so that he fell to the ground. Whereupon Charming cut off his head before he knew anything about it, and the raven from a tree close by croaked out, "You see I have not forgotten the good turn you did me in killing the eagle. Today I think I have fulfilled my promise of repaying you."

"Indeed, I owe you more gratitude than you ever owed me," replied Charming. And then he mounted his horse and rode off with Galifron's head.

When he reached the city the people ran after him in crowds, crying, "Behold the brave Charming, who has killed the giant!" And their shouts reached the Princess's ear, but she dared not ask what was happening, for fear she should hear that Charming had been killed. But very soon he arrived at the palace with the giant's head, of which she was still terrified, though it could no longer do her any harm.

"Princess," said Charming, "I have killed your enemy; I hope you will now consent to marry the King my master."

"Oh dear! no," said the Princess, "not until you have brought me some water from the Gloomy Cavern.

"Not far from here there is a deep cave, the entrance to which is guarded by two dragons with fiery eyes, who will not allow anyone to pass them. When you get into the cavern you will find an immense hole, which you must go down, and it is full of toads and snakes; at the bottom of this hole there is another little cave, in which rises the Fountain of Health and Beauty. It is some of this water that I really must have: everything it touches becomes wonderful. The beautiful things will always remain beautiful, and the ugly things become lovely. If one is young one never grows old, and if one is old one becomes young. You see, Charming, I could not leave my kingdom without taking some of it with me."

"Princess," said he, "you at least can never need this water, but I am an unhappy ambassador, whose death you desire. Where you send me I will go, though I know I shall never return."

And, as the Princess Goldilocks showed no sign of relenting, he started with his little dog for the Gloomy Cavern. Everyone he met on the way said, "What a pity that a handsome young man should throw away his life so carelessly! He is going to the cavern alone, though if he had a hundred men with him he could not succeed. Why does the Princess ask impossibilities?" Charming said nothing, but he was very sad. When he was near the top of a hill he dismounted to let his horse graze, while Frisk amused himself by chasing flies. Charming knew he could not be far from the Gloomy Cavern, and on looking about him he saw a black hideous rock from which came a thick smoke, followed in a moment by one of the dragons with fire blazing from his mouth and eyes. His body was yellow and green, and his claws scarlet, and his tail was so long that it lay in a hundred coils. Frisk was so terrified at the sight of it that he did not know where to hide. Charming, quite determined to get the water or die, now drew his sword, and, taking the crystal flask which Pretty Goldilocks had given him to fill, said to Frisk,

"I feel sure that I shall never come back from this expedition; when I am dead, go to the Princess and tell her that her errand has cost me my life. Then find the King my master, and relate all my adventures to him."

As he spoke he heard a voice calling, "Charming, Charming!"

"Who calls me?" said he; then he saw an owl sitting in a hollow tree, who said to him,

"You saved my life when I was caught in the net, now I can repay you. Trust me with the flask, for I know all the ways of the Gloomy Cavern, and can fill it from the Fountain of Beauty." Charming was only too glad to give her the flask, and she flitted into the cavern quite unnoticed by the dragon, and after some time returned with the flask, filled to the very brim with sparkling water. Charming thanked her with all his heart, and joyfully hastened back to the town.

He went straight to the palace and gave the flask to the Princess, who had no further objection to make. So she thanked Charming, and ordered that preparations should be made for her departure, and they soon set out together. The Princess found Charming such an agreeable companion that she sometimes said to him, "Why didn't we stay where we were? I could have made you king, and we should have been so happy!"

But Charming only answered, "I could not have done anything that would have vexed my master so much, even for a kingdom, or to please you, though I think you are as beautiful as the sun."

At last they reached the King's great city, and he came out to meet the Princess, bringing magnificent presents, and the marriage was celebrated with great rejoicings. But Goldilocks was so fond of Charming that she could not be happy unless he was near her, and she was always singing his praises.

"If it hadn't been for Charming," she said to the King, "I should never have come here; you ought to be very much obliged to him, for he did the most impossible things and got me water from the Fountain of Beauty, so I can never grow old, and shall get prettier every year."

Then Charming's enemies said to the King, "It is a wonder that you are not jealous, the Queen thinks there is nobody in the world like Charming. As if anybody you had sent could not have done just as much!"

"It is quite true, now I come to think of it," said the King. "Let him be chained hand and foot, and thrown into the tower."

So they took Charming, and as a reward for having served the King so faithfully he was shut up in the tower, where he only saw the jailer, who brought him a piece of black bread and a pitcher of water every day.

However, little Frisk came to console him, and told him all the news.

When Pretty Goldilocks heard what had happened she threw herself at the King's feet and begged him to set Charming free, but the more she cried, the more angry he was, and at last she saw that it was useless to say any more; but it made her very sad. Then the King took it into his head that perhaps he was not handsome enough to please the Princess Goldilocks, and he thought he would bathe his face with the water from the Fountain of Beauty, which was in the flask on a shelf in the Princess's room, where she had placed it that she might see it often. Now it happened that one of the Princess's ladies in chasing a spider had knocked the flask off the shelf and broken it, and every drop of the water had been spilt. Not knowing what to do, she had hastily swept away the pieces of crystal, and then remembered that in the King's room she had seen a flask of exactly the same shape, also filled with sparkling water. So, without saying a word, she fetched it and stood it upon the Queen's shelf.

Now the water in this flask was what was used in the kingdom for getting rid of troublesome people. Instead of having their heads cut off in the usual way, their faces were bathed with the water, and they instantly fell asleep and never woke up any more. So, when the King, thinking to improve his beauty, took the flask and sprinkled the water upon his face, HE fell asleep, and nobody could wake him.

Little Frisk was the first to hear the news, and he ran to tell Charming, who sent him to beg the Princess not to forget the poor prisoner. All the palace was in confusion on account of the King's death, but tiny Frisk made his way through the crowd to the Princess's side, and said,

"Madam, do not forget poor Charming."

Then she remembered all he had done for her, and without saying a word to anyone went straight to the tower, and with her own hands took off Charming's chains. Then, putting a golden crown upon his head, and the royal mantle upon his shoulders, she said, "Come, faithful Charming, I make you king, and will take you for my husband."

Charming, once more free and happy, fell at her feet and thanked her for her gracious words.

Everybody was delighted that he should be king, and the wedding, which took place at once, was the prettiest that can be imagined, and Prince Charming and Princess Goldilocks lived happily ever after.

RICKY OF THE TUFT

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Ashliman, D. L. "Ricky of the Tuft." *Folktexts: A Library of Folktales, Folklore, Fairy Tales and Mythology*. <http://www.pitt.edu/~dash/perrault07.html> (July 21, 2007).

Date: Unavailable

Original Sources: Johnson, A. E., trans. *Old-Time Stories Told by Master Charles Perrault*. New York: Dodd Mead and Company, 1921. Morals are from Littlewood, S. R., trans. *Perrault's Fairy Tales*. London: Herbert and Daniel, 1912.

National Origin: France

"Ricky of the Tuft" is a **variant** of "The Beautiful and the Ugly Twin" (AT 711). A common version of the tale focuses on a childless woman's pact with a supernatural figure to bear a child. When conditions of the agreement are violated, twins are born: one ugly but clever, the other beautiful but inept. Rather than outshining her beautiful sister, the ugly twin assists her. This variant, however, focuses on the relationship between the beautiful sister and a deformed suitor to extol the virtues of both love and sensibility.

Once upon a time there was a queen who bore a son so ugly and misshapen that for some time it was doubtful if he would have human form at all. But a fairy who was present at his birth promised that he should have plenty of brains, and added that by virtue of the gift which she had just bestowed upon him he would be able to impart to the person whom he should love best the same degree of intelligence which he possessed himself.

This somewhat consoled the poor queen, who was greatly disappointed at having brought into the world such a hideous brat. And indeed, no sooner did the child begin to speak than his sayings proved to be full of shrewdness, while all that he did was somehow so clever that he charmed everyone.

I forgot to mention that when he was born he had a little tuft of hair upon his head. For this reason he was called Ricky of the Tuft, Ricky being his family name.

Some seven or eight years later the queen of a neighboring kingdom gave birth to twin daughters. The first one to come into the world was more beautiful than the dawn, and the queen was so overjoyed that it was feared her great excitement might do her some harm. The same fairy who had assisted at the birth of Ricky of the Tuft was present, and in order to moderate the transports of the queen she declared that this little princess would have no sense at all, and would be as stupid as she was beautiful. The queen was deeply mortified,

and a moment or two later her chagrin became greater still, for the second daughter proved to be extremely ugly.

“Do not be distressed, Madam,” said the fairy. “Your daughter shall be recompensed in another way. She shall have so much good sense that her lack of beauty will scarcely be noticed.”

“May Heaven grant it!” said the queen. “But is there no means by which the elder, who is so beautiful, can be endowed with some intelligence?”

“In the matter of brains I can do nothing for her, Madam,” said the fairy, “but as regards beauty I can do a great deal. As there is nothing I would not do to please you, I will bestow upon her the power of making beautiful any person who shall greatly please her.”

As the two princesses grew up their perfections increased, and everywhere the beauty of the elder and the wit of the younger were the subject of common talk.

It is equally true that their defects also increased as they became older. The younger grew uglier every minute, and the elder daily became more stupid. Either she answered nothing at all when spoken to, or replied with some idiotic remark. At the same time she was so awkward that she could not set four china vases on the mantelpiece without breaking one of them, nor drink a glass of water without spilling half of it over her clothes.

Now although the elder girl possessed the great advantage which beauty always confers upon youth, she was nevertheless outshone in almost all company by her younger sister. At first everyone gathered round the beauty to see and admire her, but very soon they were all attracted by the graceful and easy conversation of the clever one. In a very short time the elder girl would be left entirely alone, while everybody clustered round her sister.

The elder princess was not so stupid that she was not aware of this, and she would willingly have surrendered all her beauty for half her sister’s cleverness. Sometimes she was ready to die of grief for the queen, though a sensible woman, could not refrain from occasionally reproaching her for her stupidity.

The princess had retired one day to a wood to bemoan her misfortune, when she saw approaching her an ugly little man, of very disagreeable appearance, but clad in magnificent attire.

This was the young prince Ricky of the Tuft. He had fallen in love with her portrait, which was everywhere to be seen, and had left his father’s kingdom in order to have the pleasure of seeing and talking to her.

Delighted to meet her thus alone, he approached with every mark of respect and politeness. But while he paid her the usual compliments he noticed that she was plunged in melancholy.

“I cannot understand, madam,” he said, “how anyone with your beauty can be so sad as you appear. I can boast of having seen many fair ladies, and I declare that none of them could compare in beauty with you.”

“It is very kind of you to say so, sir,” answered the princess; and stopped there, at a loss what to say further.

“Beauty,” said Ricky, “is of such great advantage that everything else can be disregarded; and I do not see that the possessor of it can have anything much to grieve about.”

To this the princess replied, “I would rather be as plain as you are and have some sense, than be as beautiful as I am and at the same time stupid.”

“Nothing more clearly displays good sense, madam, than a belief that one is not possessed of it. It follows, therefore, that the more one has, the more one fears it to be wanting.”

“I am not sure about that,” said the princess; “but I know only too well that I am very stupid, and this is the reason of the misery which is nearly killing me.”

“If that is all that troubles you, madam, I can easily put an end to your suffering.”

“How will you manage that?” said the princess.

“I am able, madam,” said Ricky of the Tuft, “to bestow as much good sense as it is possible to possess on the person whom I love the most. You are that person, and it therefore rests with you to decide whether you will acquire so much intelligence. The only condition is that you shall consent to marry me.”

The princess was dumfounded, and remained silent.

“I can see,” pursued Ricky, “that this suggestion perplexes you, and I am not surprised. But I will give you a whole year to make up your mind to it.”

The princess had so little sense, and at the same time desired it so ardently, that she persuaded herself the end of this year would never come. So she accepted the offer which had been made to her. No sooner had she given her word to Ricky that she would marry him within one year from that very day, than she felt a complete change come over her. She found herself able to say all that she wished with the greatest ease, and to say it in an elegant, finished, and natural manner. She at once engaged Ricky in a brilliant and lengthy conversation, holding her own so well that Ricky feared he had given her a larger share of sense than he had retained for himself.

On her return to the palace amazement reigned throughout the court at such a sudden and extraordinary change. Whereas formerly they had been accustomed to hear her give vent to silly, pert remarks, they now heard her express herself sensibly and very wittily. The entire court was overjoyed. The only person not too pleased was the younger sister, for now that she had no longer the advantage over the elder in wit, she seemed nothing but a little fright in comparison.

The king himself often took her advice, and several times held his councils in her apartment.

The news of this change spread abroad, and the princes of the neighboring kingdoms made many attempts to captivate her. Almost all asked her in marriage. But she found none with enough sense, and so she listened to all without promising herself to any.

At last came one who was so powerful, so rich, so witty, and so handsome, that she could not help being somewhat attracted by him. Her father noticed

this, and told her she could make her own choice of a husband. She had only to declare herself. Now the more sense one has, the more difficult it is to make up one's mind in an affair of this kind. After thanking her father, therefore, she asked for a little time to think it over. In order to ponder quietly what she had better do she went to walk in a wood—the very one, as it happened, where she had encountered Ricky of the Tuft.

While she walked, deep in thought, she heard beneath her feet a thudding sound, as though many people were running busily to and fro. Listening more attentively she heard voices. "Bring me that boiler," said one; then another, "Put some wood on that fire!"

At that moment the ground opened, and she saw below what appeared to be a large kitchen full of cooks and scullions, and all the train of attendants which the preparation of a great banquet involves. A gang of some twenty or thirty spit-turners emerged and took up their positions round a very long table in a path in the wood. They all wore their cook's caps on one side, and with their basting implements in their hands they kept time together as they worked, to the lilt of a melodious song.

The princess was astonished by this spectacle, and asked for whom their work was being done.

"For Prince Ricky of the Tuft, madam," said the foreman of the gang. "His wedding is tomorrow."

At this the princess was more surprised than ever. In a flash she remembered that it was a year to the very day since she had promised to marry Prince Ricky of the Tuft, and was taken aback by the recollection. The reason she had forgotten was that when she made the promise she was still without sense, and with the acquisition of that intelligence which the prince had bestowed upon her, all memory of her former stupidities had been blotted out.

She had not gone another thirty paces when Ricky of the Tuft appeared before her, gallant and resplendent, like a prince upon his wedding day.

"As you see, madam," he said, "I keep my word to the minute. I do not doubt that you have come to keep yours, and by giving me your hand to make me the happiest of men."

"I will be frank with you," replied the princess. "I have not yet made up my mind on the point, and I am afraid I shall never be able to take the decision you desire."

"You astonish me, madam," said Ricky of the Tuft.

"I can well believe it," said the princess, "and undoubtedly, if I had to deal with a clown, or a man who lacked good sense, I should feel myself very awkwardly situated. 'A princess must keep her word,' he would say, 'and you must marry me because you promised to!' But I am speaking to a man of the world, of the greatest good sense, and I am sure that he will listen to reason. As you are aware, I could not make up my mind to marry you even when I was entirely without sense; how can you expect that today, possessing the intelligence you

bestowed on me, which makes me still more difficult to please than formerly, I should take a decision which I could not take then? If you wished so much to marry me, you were very wrong to relieve me of my stupidity, and to let me see more clearly than I did."

"If a man who lacked good sense," replied Ricky of the Tuft, "would be justified, as you have just said, in reproaching you for breaking your word, why do you expect, madam, that I should act differently where the happiness of my whole life is at stake? Is it reasonable that people who have sense should be treated worse than those who have none? Would you maintain that for a moment—you, who so markedly have sense, and desired so ardently to have it? But, pardon me, let us get to the facts. With the exception of my ugliness, is there anything about me which displeases you? Are you dissatisfied with my breeding, my brains, my disposition, or my manners?"

"In no way," replied the princess. "I like exceedingly all that you have displayed of the qualities you mention."

"In that case," said Ricky of the Tuft, "happiness will be mine, for it lies in your power to make me the most attractive of men."

"How can that be done?" asked the princess.

"It will happen of itself," replied Ricky of the Tuft, "if you love me well enough to wish that it be so. To remove your doubts, madam, let me tell you that the same fairy who on the day of my birth bestowed upon me the power of endowing with intelligence the woman of my choice, gave to you also the power of endowing with beauty the man whom you should love, and on whom you should wish to confer this favor."

"If that is so," said the princess, "I wish with all my heart that you may become the handsomest and most attractive prince in the world, and I give you without reserve the boon which it is mine to bestow."

No sooner had the princess uttered these words than Ricky of the Tuft appeared before her eyes as the handsomest, most graceful and attractive man that she had ever set eyes on.

Some people assert that this was not the work of fairy enchantment, but that love alone brought about the transformation. They say that the princess, as she mused upon her lover's constancy, upon his good sense, and his many admirable qualities of heart and head, grew blind to the deformity of his body and the ugliness of his face; that his humpback seemed no more than was natural in a man who could make the courtliest of bows, and that the dreadful limp which had formerly distressed her now betokened nothing more than a certain diffidence and charming deference of manner. They say further that she found his eyes shine all the brighter for their squint, and that this defect in them was to her but a sign of passionate love; while his great red nose she found naught but martial and heroic.

However that may be, the princess promised to marry him on the spot, provided only that he could obtain the consent of her royal father.

The king knew Ricky of the Tuft to be a prince both wise and witty, and on learning of his daughter's regard for him, he accepted him with pleasure as a son-in-law.

The wedding took place upon the morrow, just as Ricky of the Tuft had foreseen, and in accordance with the arrangements he had long ago put in train.

Moral:

Here's a fairy tale for you,
Which is just as good as true.
What we love is always fair,
Clever, deft, and debonair.

Another Moral:

Nature oft, with open arms,
Lavishes a thousand charms;
But it is not these that bring
True love's truest offering.
'Tis some quality that lies
All unseen to other eyes—
Something in the heart or mind.

SEPHARDIM

THE SARAGOSSAN PURIM

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Hanauer, James Edward. *Folklore of the Holy Land: Moslem, Christian and Jewish*. London: Duckworth and Company, 1907, 124–126.

Date: Unavailable

Original Source: Spain

National Origin: Sephardim

The Sephardim are the descendants of Jews whose origins are in Portugal or Spain, including those who were expelled from these countries by royal decrees in the late fifteenth century C.E. See “The Weight before the Door” (Volume 1, page 14) for additional discussion of the Sephardic Diaspora, after the Iberian expulsion. Purim is a Jewish festival that commemorates their deliverance from a plot by Persian noble Haman (ca. sixth century B.C.E.) to exterminate all the Jews in the Persian Empire. The following **legend** explains the origin of the “Saragossan Purim” festival and cautions against enemies both within and outside of the group.

A few of the Jews resident at Jerusalem celebrate, beside the usual Jewish feasts of Passover, Pentecost, Tabernacles, etc., a yearly anniversary which they call “the Saragossan Purim,” in order to commemorate the deliverance of the Jews of Saragossa, the capital of the former kingdom of Arragon, from a great peril. The story of this escape, as recorded in certain small parchment scrolls or Megilloth written in the style and evident imitation of the Roll of Esther, is read in public at each celebration. I had heard of the custom a good many years ago, but on February 13, 1906, having been informed that the

festival had been held two days before, I obtained the loan, through a friend, of a copy of the roll. It was, of course, in Hebrew, and on parchment. The narrative is, briefly, as follows:

About the year 1420, in the reign of Alphonso V of Arragon, there were in the city of Saragossa twelve handsome synagogues supported by as many congregations of prosperous and influential Jews, who were so well treated by the Government that, whenever the king came to Saragossa, all the rabbis went out in procession to honor him, each carrying, in its case, the Roll of the Law belonging to his synagogue. People objected that it was dishonor for the Sacred Rolls to be carried out to flatter the vanity of a Gentile; and so the rabbis, possibly glad of an excuse not to carry the heavy manuscripts, got in the habit of leaving the scrolls at the synagogues on such occasions, and going out with the empty cases.

Now a certain Jew, named Marcus of Damascus, turned Christian, and in his zeal as a new convert became the deadly enemy of his own race. When the king one day was praising the loyalty of his Jewish subjects, this renegade, who was among the courtiers, replied that his majesty was being grossly deceived. The loyalty of the Jews was a sham, he averred, like their carrying empty cases before the king when pretending to bear the rolls of their respective synagogues.

At this the king was angered against the Jews, but would not punish them until he had ascertained the truth of the charge. He set out at once (Shebat 17th [fifth month of the Jewish civil calendar, eleventh month of the religious calendar]) for Saragossa, with Marcus in his train; and the latter was in high spirits, thinking he had ruined the Jews. But that night an aged man roused the servant of each synagogue, and told him how the king intended to surprise the rabbis. So when the noise of the king's coming went abroad next morning, and they went out to meet him as usual, they were not unprepared. Alphonso did not return their greetings but, frowning, ordered the cases to be opened. His command was obeyed very cheerfully, and every case was found to contain its scroll of the Pentateuch. The king then turned his anger upon Marcus, who was hanged from the nearest tree.

To commemorate this event the Jews of Saragossa instituted an annual feast, observed even after subsequent persecutions had driven them from Spain, and still, as we have seen, celebrated by their descendants on the 17th of Shebat.

THE SLAVE'S FORTUNE

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Landa, Gertrude. *Jewish Fairy Tales and Legends*. New York: Bloch Publishing Co., Inc., 1919, 225–233.

Date: Unavailable

Original Source: Unavailable

National Origin: Sephardim

In the years following the Reconquest of Spain from the Moors and the subsequent expulsion of the Jewish Spaniards in 1492, many of these Sephardim fled the Inquisition to settle in North Africa and the Middle East under the more tolerant Islamic rulers. As the following narrative attests, many became valued members of their communities where they prospered as traders and intellectuals. The plot of the following tale tests the quality of the education Ahmed received from his Jewish mentor. Had the rabbi instilled wisdom along with religious instruction?

Ahmed was the only child of the wealthiest merchant in Damascus. His father devoted his days to doing everything possible to anticipate his wishes. The boy returned his father's love with interest, and the two lived together in the utmost happiness. They were seldom apart, the father curtailing his business journeys so that he could hastily return to Damascus, and finally restricting his affairs to those which he could perform in his own home.

For safety's sake, Ahmed, whenever he was out of his father's sight, was attended by a big negro slave, Pedro, an imposing looking person, richly attired as befitted his station and duties.

Pedro was a faithful servant, and he and Ahmed were the firmest friends.

When Ahmed grew up to be a youth, his father decided to send him to Jerusalem to be educated. He did so reluctantly, knowing, however, that it was the wisest course to adopt,

Gently he broke the news to Ahmed, for he knew the latter would dislike to leave home.

Ahmed was truly sorry to have to be parted from his father, but he kept back his tears and said bravely, "It is thy wish, father, therefore I question it not. I know that thou desirest only my welfare."

"Well spoken, my son," said his father.

"May I take Pedro with me?" asked Ahmed.

"Nay, that would not be seemly," answered his father, gently. "It would make thee appear anxious to display thy wealth. Such ostentation will induce people to regard thee and thy father as foolish persons, possessed of more wealth than is good for the exercise of wisdom. Also, my son, thy future teaching must be not confined to the learning that wise men can impart unto thee. Thou art going to the great city to learn the ways of the world, to train thyself in self-reliance, and to prepare thyself for all the duties of manhood."

The youth was somewhat disappointed to hear this. It was the first occasion, as far as his memory served him, that his father had failed to grant his wish; but

he was nevertheless flattered by the prospect of quickly becoming a man, and he answered, "I bow to thy wisdom, my father."

He left for Jerusalem, after bidding the merchant an affectionate farewell, and in the Holy City he applied himself diligently to his studies. He delighted his teachers with his cheerful attention to his lessons, and discovered a new source of happiness in learning things for himself from observation. Also, it was a pleasant sensation to conduct his own affairs, and in the great city, with its busy narrow thoroughfares and its wonderful buildings, he daily grew less homesick. Regularly he received letters by messengers from his father, and dutifully he returned, by the same means, long epistles, setting out all the big and little things that made up his life.

A year passed, and one day the usual message that Ahmed expected came to him in a strange hand-writing.

He opened it hastily, with a foreboding of evil and alarm. The writer of the letter was one of the merchant's closest friends. He said, "O worthy son of a most worthy father, greeting to thee, and may God give thee strength to hear the terrible and sad tidings which it is my sorrowful duty to convey unto thee. Know then that it hath pleased God in his wisdom to call from this earth thy saintly father, to sit with the righteous ones in Heaven. Here in the city of Damascus there is great weeping, for thy honored father was the most upright of men, a friend to all in distress, a man whose bounteous charity to the poor and unfortunate was unsurpassed. But our grief, deep and heartfelt as it is, cannot be compared to thine. We have all lost a wise counselor, a trusty friend, a guide in all things. But thou hast lost more. Thou hast lost a father. Thou art his only son, and on thee his duties will now devolve. Know then thy profound grief we share with thee. We tender to thee our sincere sympathy, and eagerly do we await thy coming. Thou hast a noble position to occupy and a tradition to continue. We, thy father's friends and thine, O Ahmed, will assist thee."

The young man was dumbfounded when he gathered the purport of the letter. For some moments he spoke not, but sat on the ground, weeping silently. Then, remembering his father's admonitions, he promptly took up the task of settling his affairs in Jerusalem prior to his departure for Damascus.

"I will take with me," he said, "the good rabbi who has been my religious instructor, for I am not fully prepared to undertake all the duties that will fall to my lot and need some strengthening counsel."

On arrival at Damascus he was greeted by a large concourse of people who expressed their sympathy with him and spoke in terms of highest praise of his father's benevolence.

After the funeral, Ahmed called the leading townspeople together to hear his father's will read, for he was certain that many gifts to charities would be announced. Such was the case, and there were subdued murmurs of applause when the amounts were read forth.

Then suddenly the friend who had written to the young man and was reading the will, paused.

"I fear there must be a mistake," he said, in a whisper to Ahmed.

"Go on," urged the assembled people, and the man read in a strange voice, "And now, having as I hope, faithfully performed my duty to the poor, I bequeath the rest of my possessions unto my devoted negro slave, Pedro."

"Pedro!" cried the astonished crowd.

They looked at the massive figure of the black attendant, but he stood motionless and impassive, betraying no sign whatsoever of joy or surprise.

Ahmed could not conceal his bewilderment. "Is naught left unto me?" he managed to ask.

"Yes," returned his friend, and amid a sudden silence, he continued to read, "This bequest is subject to the following proviso: that one thing be given to my son before the division of my property, the same to be selected by him within twenty-four hours of the reading of this will unto him."

The crowd melted away with mutterings of sympathy mingled with astonishment, but out of earshot of Ahmed, all said the merchant must have been mad to draw up so absurd a testament. Ahmed himself could hardly realize the great blow that had befallen him. He consulted with his father's friend and the rabbi, but, although they re-read the document many times, they could find no fault or flaw in it.

"Legally, this is correct and in perfect order and cannot be altered," said the friend.

"My father must have made a foolish mistake and must have misplaced the two words 'son' and 'slave,'" said Ahmed, bitterly.

"That does not so appear," said the rabbi; "thy father was a scholar and wise man. Speak not hastily, and above all act not rashly without thought. I would counsel thee to sleep over this matter, and in the morning we shall solve this puzzle."

Ahmed, who was exhausted with grief and rage and surprise, soon fell into a deep sleep, and when he awoke the rabbi was reciting his morning prayers.

"It is a beautiful day," he said, when he had finished. "The sun shines on thy happiness, Ahmed."

Ahmed was too depressed to make any comment, nor was he completely satisfied when the rabbi assured him all would be well.

"I have pondered deeply and long over thy father's words," he said. "I sat up through the night until the dawn, and I have been impelled to the conclusion that thy father was truly a wise man."

Ahmed interrupted with a gesture of disapproval. The rabbi took no notice but proceeded quietly, "Thy father must have feared that in thy absence after his death and pending thy possible delay in returning hither, slaves and others might rob thee of thy inheritance. Pedro, I have discovered, knew of the terms of the will. By informing him and making his strange will, thy father, O fortunate Ahmed, made sure of thy inheritance unto thee."

“I understand not,” muttered Ahmed.

“It is perfectly clear,” said the rabbi. “As soon as thou art ready, thou shalt make thy choice of one thing. Do as I bid thee, and thou shalt see thy father’s wisdom.”

Ahmed had no option but to agree. He could find no solution himself, and wretched though he felt, reason told him that his father loved him and that the rabbi was renowned for shrewdness.

The townspeople gathered early to hear Ahmed make his choice of one thing—and one only—from his father’s possessions. Ahmed looked less troubled than they expected, the rabbi wore his most benign expression, and Pedro stationed himself in his usual place at the door, statuesque, obedient, and expressionless as ever.

Ahmed held up his hand to obtain silence. “Acting under the terms of my father’s will,” he said, solemnly, “at this moment when all, before division, belongs to his estate, I choose but one of my father’s possessions—Pedro, the black slave.”

Then everybody saw the wisdom of the strange will, for with Pedro, Ahmed became possessed of his father’s vast wealth.

To Pedro, who still stood motionless, Ahmed said, “And thou, my good friend, shalt have thy freedom and possessions sufficient to keep thee in comfort for the rest of thy days.”

“I desire naught but to serve thee,” Pedro answered, “I wish to remain the faithful attendant of one who will follow nobly in the footsteps of thy father.”

So everybody was satisfied.

SPAIN

THE KNIGHTS OF THE FISH

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Lang, Andrew. *The Brown Fairy Book*. London: Longmans, Green and Company, 1904, 343–350.

Date: Unavailable

Original Source: Caballero, Fernán (Cecilia Francisca Josefa de Arrom). *Cuentos, Oraciones, Adivinas*.

National Origin: Spain

Occupying most of the Iberian Peninsula of Europe, Spain was conquered by North African Muslims (Berbers) early in the eighth century. Although the Moors were a diminishing presence from the eleventh century, Muslim dominance existed in some areas until the late fifteenth century. Thus, Spanish folktales are heirs to both European Christian traditions and North African Islamic traditions. In this Spanish **variant** of “The Twins or Blood-Brothers” (AT 303), the heroes are brought to life by magic and reunited by the magical resuscitation of the slain brother by his twin. The name of the murderous witch, “Berberisca” (Berber) may signify the embodiment in folklore of a lingering resentment directed toward the Moorish colonization of Andalusia, the autonomous community in the kingdom of Spain in which de Arrom, the collector of “The Knights of the Fish,” spent most of her life.

Once upon a time there lived an old cobbler who worked hard at his trade from morning till night, and scarcely gave himself a moment to eat. But, industrious as he was, he could hardly buy bread and cheese for himself and his wife, and they grew thinner and thinner daily.

For a long while they pretended to each other that they had no appetite, and that a few blackberries from the hedges were a great deal nicer than a good strong bowl of soup. But at length there came a day when the cobbler could bear it no longer, and he threw away his last, and borrowing a rod from a neighbor he went out to fish.

Now the cobbler was as patient about fishing as he had been about cobbling. From dawn to dark he stood on the banks of the little stream, without hooking anything better than an eel, or a few old shoes, that even he, clever though he was, felt were not worth mending. At length his patience began to give way, and as he undressed one night he said to himself, "Well, I will give it one more chance; and if I don't catch a fish tomorrow, I will go and hang myself."

He had not cast his line for ten minutes the next morning before he drew from the river the most beautiful fish he had ever seen in his life. But he nearly fell into the water from surprise, when the fish began to speak to him, in a small, squeaky voice, "Take me back to your hut and cook me; then cut me up, and sprinkle me over with pepper and salt. Give two of the pieces to your wife, and bury two more in the garden."

The cobbler did not know what to make of these strange words; but he was wiser than many people, and when he did not understand, he thought it was well to obey. His children wanted to eat all the fish themselves, and begged their father to tell them what to do with the pieces he had put aside; but the cobbler only laughed, and told them it was no business of theirs. And when they were safe in bed he stole out and buried the two pieces in the garden.

By and by two babies, exactly alike, lay in a cradle, and in the garden were two tall plants, with two brilliant shields on the top.

Years passed away, and the babies were almost men. They were tired of living quietly at home, being mistaken for each other by everybody they saw, and determined to set off in different directions, to seek adventures.

So, one fine morning, the two brothers left the hut, and walked together to the place where the great road divided. There they embraced and parted, promising that if anything remarkable had happened to either, he would return to the cross roads and wait till his brother came.

The youth who took the path that ran eastwards arrived presently at a large city, where he found everybody standing at the doors, wringing their hands and weeping bitterly, "What is the matter?" asked he, pausing and looking round. And a man replied, in a faltering voice, that each year a beautiful girl was chosen by lot to be offered up to a dreadful fiery dragon, who had a mother even worse than himself, and this year the lot had fallen on their peerless princess.

"But where is the princess?" said the young man once more, and again the man answered him, "She is standing under a tree, a mile away, waiting for the dragon."

This time the Knight of the Fish did not stop to hear more, but ran off as fast as he could, and found the princess bathed in tears, and trembling from head to foot.

She turned as she heard the sound of his sword, and removed her handkerchief from his eyes.

“Fly,” she cried; “fly while you have yet time, before that monster sees you.”

She said it, and she meant it; yet, when he had turned his back, she felt more forsaken than before. But in reality it was not more than a few minutes before he came back, galloping furiously on a horse he had borrowed, and carrying a huge mirror across its neck.

“I am in time, then,” he cried, dismounting very carefully, and placing the mirror against the trunk of a tree.

“Give me your veil,” he said hastily to the princess. And when she had unwound it from her head he covered the mirror with it.

“The moment the dragon comes near you, you must tear off the veil,” cried he; “and be sure you hide behind the mirror. Have no fear; I shall be at hand.”

He and his horse had scarcely found shelter amongst some rocks, when the flap of the dragon’s wings could be plainly heard. He tossed his head with delight at the sight of her, and approached slowly to the place where she stood, a little in front of the mirror. Then, still looking the monster steadily in the face, she passed one hand behind her back and snatched off the veil, stepping swiftly behind the tree as she did so.

The princess had not known, when she obeyed the orders of the Knight of the Fish, what she expected to happen. Would the dragon with snaky locks be turned to stone, she wondered, like the dragon in an old story her nurse had told her; or would some fiery spark dart from the heart of the mirror, and strike him dead? Neither of these things occurred, but, instead, the dragon stopped short with surprise and rage when he saw a monster before him as big and strong as himself. He shook his mane with rage and fury; the enemy in front did exactly the same. He lashed his tail, and rolled his red eyes, and the dragon opposite was no whit behind him. Opening his mouth to its very widest, he gave an awful roar; but the other dragon only roared back. This was too much, and with another roar which made the princess shake in her shoes, he flung himself upon his foe. In an instant the mirror lay at his feet broken into a thousand pieces, but as every piece reflected part of himself, the dragon thought that he too had been smashed into atoms.

It was the moment for which the Knight of the Fish had watched and waited, and before the dragon could find out that he was not hurt at all, the young man’s lance was down his throat, and he was rolling, dead, on the grass.

Oh what shouts of joy rang through the great city, when the youth came riding back with the princess sitting behind him, and dragging the horrible monster by a cord! Everybody cried out that the king must give the victor the hand of the princess; and so he did, and no one had ever seen such balls and feasts and sports before. And when they were all over the young couple went to the palace prepared for them, which was so large that it was three miles round.

The first wet day after their marriage the bridegroom begged the bride to show him all the rooms in the palace, and it was so big and took so long that the sun was shining brightly again before they stepped on to the roof to see the view.

“What castle is that out there,” asked the knight; “it seems to be made of black marble?”

“It is called the castle of Albatroz,” answered the princess. “It is enchanted, and no one that has tried to enter it has ever come back.”

Her husband said nothing, and began to talk of something else; but the next morning he ordered his horse, took his spear, called his bloodhound, and set off for the castle.

It needed a brave man to approach it, for it made your hair stand on end merely to look at it; it was as dark as the night of a storm, and as silent as the grave. But the Knight of the Fish knew no fear, and had never turned his back on an enemy; so he drew out his horn, and blew a blast.

The sound awoke all the sleeping echoes in the castle, and was repeated now loudly, now softly; now near, and now far. But nobody stirred for all that.

“Is there anyone inside?” cried the young man in his loudest voice; “anyone who will give a knight hospitality? Neither governor, nor squire, not even a page?”

“Not even a page!” answered the echoes. But the young man did not heed them, and only struck a furious blow at the gate.

Then a small grating opened, and there appeared the tip of a huge nose, which belonged to the ugliest old woman that ever was seen.

“What do you want?” said she.

“To enter,” he answered shortly. “Can I rest here this night? Yes or No?”

“No, No, No!” repeated the echoes.

Between the fierce sun and his anger at being kept waiting, the Knight of the Fish had grown so hot that he lifted his visor, and when the old woman saw how handsome he was, she began fumbling with the lock of the gate.

“Come in, come in,” said she, “so fine a gentleman will do us no harm.”

“Harm!” repeated the echoes, but again the young man paid no heed.

“Let us go in, ancient dame,” but she interrupted him.

“You must call me the Lady Berberisca,” she answered, sharply; “and this is my castle, to which I bid you welcome. You shall live here with me and be my husband.” But at these words the knight let his spear fall, so surprised was he.

“I marry YOU? why you must be a hundred at least!” cried he. “You are mad! All I desire is to inspect the castle and then go.” As he spoke he heard the voices give a mocking laugh; but the old woman took no notice, and only bade the knight follow her.

Old though she was, it seemed impossible to tire her. There was no room, however small, she did not lead him into, and each room was full of curious things he had never seen before.

At length they came to a stone staircase, which was so dark that you could not see your hand if you held it up before your face.

"I have kept my most precious treasure till the last," said the old woman; "but let me go first, for the stairs are steep, and you might easily break your leg." So on she went, now and then calling back to the young man in the darkness. But he did not know that she had slipped aside into a recess, till suddenly he put his foot on a trap door which gave way under him, and he fell down, down, as many good knights had done before him, and his voice joined the echoes of theirs.

"So you would not marry me!" chuckled the old witch. "Ha! ha! Ha! ha!"

Meanwhile his brother had wandered far and wide, and at last he wandered back to the same great city where the other young knight had met with so many adventures. He noticed, with amazement, that as he walked through the streets the guards drew themselves up in line, and saluted him, and the drummers played the royal march; but he was still more bewildered when several servants in livery ran up to him and told him that the princess was sure something terrible had befallen him, and had made herself ill with weeping. At last it occurred to him that once more he had been taken for his brother. "I had better say nothing," thought he; "perhaps I shall be able to help him after all."

So he suffered himself to be borne in triumph to the palace, where the princess threw herself into his arms.

"And so you did go to the castle?" she asked.

"Yes, of course I did," answered he.

"And what did you see there?"

"I am forbidden to tell you anything about it, until I have returned there once more," replied he.

"Must you really go back to that dreadful place?" she asked wistfully. "You are the only man who has ever come back from it."

"I must," was all he answered. And the princess, who was a wise woman, only said, "Well, go to bed now, for I am sure you must be very tired."

But the knight shook his head. "I have sworn never to lie in a bed as long as my work in the castle remains standing." And the princess again sighed, and was silent.

Early next day the young man started for the castle, feeling sure that some terrible thing must have happened to his brother.

At the blast of his horn the long nose of the old woman appeared at the grating, but the moment she caught sight of his face, she nearly fainted from fright, as she thought it was the ghost of the youth whose bones were lying in the dungeon of the castle.

"Lady of all the ages," cried the new comer, "did you not give hospitality to a young knight but a short time ago?"

"A short time ago!" wailed the voices.

"And how have you ill-treated him?" he went on.

"Ill-treated him!" answered the voices. The woman did not stop to hear more; she turned to fly; but the knight's sword entered her body.

"Where is my brother, cruel hag?" asked he sternly.

“I will tell you,” said she; “but as I feel that I am going to die I shall keep that piece of news to myself, till you have brought me to life again.”

The young man laughed scornfully. “How do you propose that I should work that miracle?”

“Oh, it is quite easy. Go into the garden and gather the flowers of the everlasting plant and some of dragon’s blood. Crush them together and boil them in a large tub of water, and then put me into it.”

The knight did as the old witch bade him, and, sure enough, she came out quite whole, but uglier than ever. She then told the young man what had become of his brother, and he went down into the dungeon, and brought up his body and the bodies of the other victims who lay there, and when they were all washed in the magic water their strength was restored to them.

And, besides these, he found in another cavern the bodies of the girls who had been sacrificed to the dragon, and brought them back to life also.

As to the old witch, in the end she died of rage at seeing her prey escape her; and at the moment she drew her last breath the castle of Albatroz fell into ruins with a great noise.

THE WHITE SLIPPER

Tradition Bearer: Unavailable

Source: Lang, Andrew. *The Orange Fairy Book*. London: Longmans, Green and Company, 1904, 335–348.

Date: Unavailable

Original Source: Ceballos Quintana, Enrique. *Capullos de Rosa*.

National Origin: Spain

In most cases, the folktales describe cures such as those classified by Aarne-Thompson as “Magic Remedies” (AT 610–619). In the present narrative, science—specifically, chemistry—rather than any occult remedy, provides the means by which a king is cured and the hero wins the hand of a princess. Any explanation for this deviation from the general rule is speculative, but under Muslim rule, cities such as Cordoba became centers of learning nurturing Christian, Jewish, and Islamic scholars in equal measure.

Once upon a time there lived a king who had a daughter just fifteen years old. And what a daughter!

Even the mothers who had daughters of their own could not help allowing that the princess was much more beautiful and graceful than any of them;

and, as for the fathers, if one of them ever beheld her by accident he could talk of nothing else for a whole day afterwards.

Of course the king, whose name was Balancin, was the complete slave of his little girl from the moment he lifted her from the arms of her dead mother; indeed, he did not seem to know that there was anyone else in the world to love.

Now Diamantina, for that was her name, did not reach her fifteenth birthday without proposals for marriage from every country under heaven; but be the suitor who he might, the king always said him nay.

Behind the palace a large garden stretched away to the foot of some hills, and more than one river flowed through. Hither the princess would come each evening towards sunset, attended by her ladies, and gather herself the flowers that were to adorn her rooms. She also brought with her a pair of scissors to cut off the dead blooms, and a basket to put them in, so that when the sun rose next morning he might see nothing unsightly. When she had finished this task she would take a walk through the town, so that the poor people might have a chance of speaking with her, and telling her of their troubles; and then she would seek out her father, and together they would consult over the best means of giving help to those who needed it.

“But what has all this to do with the White Slipper?” my readers will ask.

“Have patience, and you will see.”

Next to his daughter, Balancin loved hunting, and it was his custom to spend several mornings every week chasing the boars which abounded in the mountains a few miles from the city. One day, rushing downhill as fast as he could go, he put his foot into a hole and fell, rolling into a rocky pit of brambles. The king’s wounds were not very severe, but his face and hands were cut and torn, while his feet were in a worse plight still, for, instead of proper hunting boots, he only wore sandals, to enable him to run more swiftly.

In a few days the king was as well as ever, and the signs of the scratches were almost gone; but one foot still remained very sore, where a thorn had pierced deeply and had festered. The best doctors in the kingdom treated it with all their skill; they bathed, and poulticed, and bandaged, but it was in vain. The foot only grew worse and worse, and became daily more swollen and painful.

After everyone had tried his own particular cure, and found it fail, there came news of a wonderful doctor in some distant land who had healed the most astonishing diseases. On inquiring, it was found that he never left the walls of his own city, and expected his patients to come to see him; but, by dint of offering a large sum of money, the king persuaded the famous physician to undertake the journey to his own court.

On his arrival the doctor was led at once into the king’s presence, and made a careful examination of his foot.

“Alas! your majesty,” he said, when he had finished, “the wound is beyond the power of man to heal; but though I cannot cure it, I can at least deaden the pain, and enable you to walk without so much suffering.”

“Oh, if you can only do that,” cried the king, “I shall be grateful to you for life! Give your own orders; they shall be obeyed.”

“Then let your majesty bid the royal shoemaker make you a shoe of goat-skin very loose and comfortable, while I prepare a varnish to paint over it of which I alone have the secret!” So saying, the doctor bowed himself out, leaving the king more cheerful and hopeful than he had been for long.

The days passed very slowly with him during the making of the shoe and the preparation of the varnish, but on the eighth morning the physician appeared, bringing with him the shoe in a case. He drew it out to slip on the king’s foot, and over the goat-skin he had rubbed a polish so white that the snow itself was not more dazzling.

“While you wear this shoe you will not feel the slightest pain,” said the doctor. “For the balsam with which I have rubbed it inside and out has, besides its healing balm, the quality of strengthening the material it touches, so that, even were your majesty to live a thousand years, you would find the slipper just as fresh at the end of that time as it is now.”

The king was so eager to put it on that he hardly gave the physician time to finish. He snatched it from the case and thrust his foot into it, nearly weeping for joy when he found he could walk and run as easily as any beggar boy.

“What can I give you?” he cried, holding out both hands to the man who had worked this wonder. “Stay with me, and I will heap on you riches greater than ever you dreamed of.” But the doctor said he would accept nothing more than had been agreed on, and must return at once to his own country, where many sick people were awaiting him. So king Balancin had to content himself with ordering the physician to be treated with royal honors, and desiring that an escort should attend him on his journey home.

For two years everything went smoothly at court, and to king Balancin and his daughter the sun no sooner rose than it seemed time for it to set. Now, the king’s birthday fell in the month of June, and as the weather happened to be unusually fine, he told the princess to celebrate it in any way that pleased her. Diamantina was very fond of being on the river, and she was delighted at this chance of delighting her tastes. She would have a merry-making such as never had been seen before, and in the evening, when they were tired of sailing and rowing, there should be music and dancing, plays and fireworks. At the very end, before the people went home, every poor person should be given a loaf of bread and every girl who was to be married within the year a new dress.

The great day appeared to Diamantina to be long in coming, but, like other days, it came at last. Before the sun was fairly up in the heavens the princess, too full of excitement to stay in the palace, was walking about the streets so covered with precious stones that you had to shade your eyes before you could look at her. By-and-by a trumpet sounded, and she hurried home, only to appear again in a few moments walking by the side of her father down to the river. Here a splendid barge was waiting for them, and from it they watched all sorts

of races and feats of swimming and diving. When these were over the barge proceeded up the river to the field where the dancing and concerts were to take place, and after the prizes had been given away to the winners, and the loaves and the dresses had been distributed by the princess, they bade farewell to their guests, and turned to step into the barge which was to carry them back to the palace.

Then a dreadful thing happened. As the king stepped on board the boat one of the sandals of the white slipper, which had got loose, caught in a nail that was sticking out, and caused the king to stumble. The pain was great, and unconsciously he turned and shook his foot, so that the sandals gave way, and in a moment the precious shoe was in the river.

It had all occurred so quickly that nobody had noticed the loss of the slipper, not even the princess, whom the king's cries speedily brought to his side.

"What is the matter, dear father?" asked she. But the king could not tell her; and only managed to gasp out, "My shoe! my shoe!" While the sailors stood round staring, thinking that his majesty had suddenly gone mad.

Seeing her father's eyes fixed on the stream, Diamantina looked hastily in that direction. There, dancing on the current, was the point of something white, which became more and more distant the longer they watched it. The king could bear the sight no more, and, besides, now that the healing ointment in the shoe had been removed the pain in his foot was as bad as ever; he gave a sudden cry, staggered, and fell over the bulwarks into the water.

In an instant the river was covered with bobbing heads all swimming their fastest towards the king, who had been carried far down by the swift current. At length one swimmer, stronger than the rest, seized hold of his tunic, and drew him to the bank, where a thousand eager hands were ready to haul him out. He was carried, unconscious, to the side of his daughter, who had fainted with terror on seeing her father disappear below the surface, and together they were placed in a coach and driven to the palace, where the best doctors in the city were awaiting their arrival.

In a few hours the princess was as well as ever; but the pain, the wetting, and the shock of the accident, all told severely on the king, and for three days he lay in a high fever. Meanwhile, his daughter, herself nearly mad with grief, gave orders that the white slipper should be sought for far and wide; and so it was, but even the cleverest divers could find no trace of it at the bottom of the river.

When it became clear that the slipper must have been carried out to sea by the current, Diamantina turned her thoughts elsewhere, and sent messengers in search of the doctor who had brought relief to her father, begging him to make another slipper as fast as possible, to supply the place of the one which was lost. But the messengers returned with the sad news that the doctor had died some weeks before, and, what was worse, his secret had died with him.

In his weakness this intelligence had such an effect on the king that the physicians feared he would become as ill as before. He could hardly be persuaded

to touch food, and all night long he lay moaning, partly with pain, and partly over his own folly in not having begged the doctor to make him several dozens of white slippers, so that in case of accidents he might always have one to put on. However, by-and-by he saw that it was no use weeping and wailing, and commanded that they should search for his lost treasure more diligently than ever.

What a sight the river banks presented in those days! It seemed as if all the people in the country were gathered on them. But this second search was no more fortunate than the first, and at last the king issued a proclamation that whoever found the missing slipper should be made heir to the crown, and should marry the princess.

Now many daughters would have rebelled at being disposed of in the manner; and it must be admitted that Diamantina's heart sank when she heard what the king had done. Still, she loved her father so much that she desired his comfort more than anything else in the world, so she said nothing, and only bowed her head.

Of course the result of the proclamation was that the river banks became more crowded than before; for all the princess's suitors from distant lands flocked to the spot, each hoping that he might be the lucky finder. Many times a shining stone at the bottom of the stream was taken for the slipper itself, and every evening saw a band of dripping downcast men returning homewards. But one youth always lingered longer than the rest, and night would still see him engaged in the search, though his clothes stuck to his skin and his teeth chattered.

One day, when the king was lying on his bed racked with pain, he heard the noise of a scuffle going on in his antechamber, and rang a golden bell that stood by his side to summon one of his servants.

"Sire," answered the attendant, when the king inquired what was the matter, "the noise you heard was caused by a young man from the town, who has had the impudence to come here to ask if he may measure your majesty's foot, so as to make you another slipper in place of the lost one."

"And what have you done to the youth?" said the king.

"The servants pushed him out of the palace, and, added a few blows to teach him not to be insolent," replied the man.

"Then they did very ill," answered the king, with a frown. "He came here from kindness, and there was no reason to maltreat him."

"Oh, my lord, he had the audacity to wish to touch your majesty's sacred person—he, a good-for-nothing boy, a mere shoemaker's apprentice, perhaps! And even if he could make shoes to perfection they would be no use without the soothing balsam."

The king remained silent for a few moments, then he said, "Never mind. Go and fetch the youth and bring him to me. I would gladly try any remedy that may relieve my pain."

So, soon afterwards, the youth, who had not gone far from the palace, was caught and ushered into the king's presence.

He was tall and handsome and, though he professed to make shoes, his manners were good and modest, and he bowed low as he begged the king not only to allow him to take the measure of his foot, but also to suffer him to place a healing plaster over the wound.

Balancin was pleased with the young man's voice and appearance, and thought that he looked as if he knew what he was doing. So he stretched out his bad foot which the youth examined with great attention, and then gently laid on the plaster.

Very shortly the ointment began to soothe the sharp pain, and the king, whose confidence increased every moment, begged the young man to tell him his name.

"I have no parents; they died when I was six, sire," replied the youth, modestly. "Everyone in the town calls me Gilguerillo [linnet], because, when I was little, I went singing through the world in spite of my misfortunes. Luckily for me I was born to be happy."

"And you really think you can cure me?" asked the king.

"Completely, my lord," answered Gilguerillo.

"And how long do you think it will take?"

"It is not an easy task; but I will try to finish it in a fortnight," replied the youth.

A fortnight seemed to the king a long time to make one slipper. But he only said,

"Do you need anything to help you?"

"Only a good horse, if your majesty will be kind enough to give me one," answered Gilguerillo. And the reply was so unexpected that the courtiers could hardly restrain their smiles, while the king stared silently.

"You shall have the horse," he said at last, "and I shall expect you back in a fortnight. If you fulfill your promise you know your reward; if not, I will have you flogged for your impudence."

Gilguerillo bowed, and turned to leave the palace, followed by the jeers and scoffs of everyone he met. But he paid no heed, for he had got what he wanted.

He waited in front of the gates till a magnificent horse was led up to him, and vaulting into the saddle with an ease which rather surprised the attendant, rode quickly out of the town amidst the jests of the assembled crowd, who had heard of his audacious proposal. And while he is on his way let us pause for a moment and tell who he is.

Both father and mother had died before the boy was six years old; and he had lived for many years with his uncle, whose life had been passed in the study of chemistry. He could leave no money to his nephew, as he had a son of his own; but he taught him all he knew, and at his death Gilguerillo entered an office, where he worked for many hours daily. In his spare time, instead of

playing with the other boys, he passed hours poring over books, and because he was timid and liked to be alone he was held by everyone to be a little mad. Therefore, when it became known that he had promised to cure the king's foot, and had ridden away—no one knew where—a roar of laughter and mockery rang through the town, and jeers and scoffing words were sent after him.

But if they had only known what were Gilguerillo's thoughts they would have thought him madder than ever.

The real truth was that, on the morning when the princess had walked through the streets before making holiday on the river Gilguerillo had seen her from his window, and had straightway fallen in love with her. Of course he felt quite hopeless. It was absurd to imagine that the apothecary's nephew could ever marry the king's daughter; so he did his best to forget her, and study harder than before, till the royal proclamation suddenly filled him with hope. When he was free he no longer spent the precious moments poring over books, but, like the rest, he might have been seen wandering along the banks of the river, or diving into the stream after something that lay glistening in the clear water, but which turned out to be a white pebble or a bit of glass.

And at the end he understood that it was not by the river that he would win the princess; and, turning to his books for comfort, he studied harder than ever.

There is an old proverb which says, "Everything comes to him who knows how to wait." It is not all men who know how to wait, any more than it is all men who can learn by experience; but Gilguerillo was one of the few and instead of thinking his life wasted because he could not have the thing he wanted most, he tried to busy himself in other directions. So, one day, when he expected it least, his reward came to him.

He happened to be reading a book many hundreds of years old, which told of remedies for all kinds of diseases. Most of them, he knew, were merely invented by old women, who sought to prove themselves wiser than other people; but at length he came to something which caused him to sit up straight in his chair, and made his eyes brighten. This was the description of a balsam—which would cure every kind of sore or wound—distilled from a plant only to be found in a country so distant that it would take a man on foot two months to go and come back again.

When I say that the book declared that the balsam could heal every sort of sore or wound, there were a few against which it was powerless, and it gave certain signs by which these might be known. This was the reason why Gilguerillo demanded to see the king's foot before he would undertake to cure it; and to obtain admittance he gave out that he was a shoemaker. However, the dreaded signs were absent, and his heart bounded at the thought that the princess was within his reach.

Perhaps she was; but a great deal had to be accomplished yet, and he had allowed himself a very short time in which to do it.

He spared his horse only so much as was needful, yet it took him six days to reach the spot where the plant grew. A thick wood lay in front of him, and,

fastening the bridle tightly to a tree, he flung himself on his hands and knees and began to hunt for the treasure. Many times he fancied it was close to him, and many times it turned out to be something else; but, at last, when light was fading, and he had almost given up hope, he came upon a large bed of the plant, right under his feet! Trembling with joy, he picked every scrap he could see, and placed it in his wallet. Then, mounting his horse, he galloped quickly back towards the city.

It was night when he entered the gates, and the fifteen days allotted were not up till the next day. His eyes were heavy with sleep, and his body ached with the long strain, but, without pausing to rest, he kindled a fire on his hearth, and quickly filling a pot with water, threw in the herbs and left them to boil. After that he lay down and slept soundly.

The sun was shining when he awoke, and he jumped up and ran to the pot. The plant had disappeared and in its stead was a thick syrup, just as the book had said there would be. He lifted the syrup out with a spoon, and after spreading it in the sun till it was partly dry, poured it into a small flask of crystal. He next washed himself thoroughly, and dressed himself, in his best clothes, and putting the flask in his pocket, set out for the palace, and begged to see the king without delay.

Now Balancin, whose foot had been much less painful since Gilguerillo had wrapped it in the plaster, was counting the days to the young man's return; and when he was told Gilguerillo was there, ordered him to be admitted at once. As he entered, the king raised himself eagerly on his pillows, but his face fell when he saw no signs of a slipper.

"You have failed, then?" he said, throwing up his hands in despair.

"I hope not, your majesty; I think not," answered the youth. And drawing the flask from his pocket, he poured two or three drops on the wound.

"Repeat this for three nights, and you will find yourself cured," said he. And before the king had time to thank him he had bowed himself out.

Of course the news soon spread through the city, and men and women never tired of calling Gilguerillo an impostor, and prophesying that the end of the three days would see him in prison, if not on the scaffold. But Gilguerillo paid no heed to their hard words, and no more did the king, who took care that no hand but his own should put on the healing balsam.

On the fourth morning the king awoke and instantly stretched out his wounded foot that he might prove the truth or falsehood of Gilguerillo's remedy. The wound was certainly cured on that side, but how about the other? Yes, that was cured also; and not even a scar was left to show where it had been!

Was ever any king so happy as Balancin when he satisfied himself of this?

Lightly as a deer he jumped from his bed, and began to turn head over heels and to perform all sorts of antics, so as to make sure that his foot was in truth as well as it looked. And when he was quite tired he sent for his daughter, and bade the courtiers bring the lucky young man to his room.

“He is really young and handsome,” said the princess to herself, heaving a sigh of relief that it was not some dreadful old man who had healed her father; and while the king was announcing to his courtiers the wonderful cure that had been made, Diamantina was thinking that if Gilguerillo looked so well in his common dress, how much improved by the splendid garments of a king’ son. However, she held her peace, and only watched with amusement when the courtiers, knowing there was no help for it, did homage and obeisance to the chemist’s boy.

Then they brought to Gilguerillo a magnificent tunic of green velvet bordered with gold, and a cap with three white plumes stuck in it; and at the sight of him so arrayed, the princess fell in love with him in a moment. The wedding was fixed to take place in eight days, and at the ball afterwards nobody danced so long or so lightly as king Balancin.

Glossary

anecdote: Originally, a short, humorous tale. Now, the term commonly refers to single-episode narratives, regarded as true and commonly concentrating on an individual.

animal tales: Narratives told as conscious fictions in which the characters, though they speak and behave like human beings, are animals. These animal characters are commonly stock types. For example, in many Native American traditions, coyote is regarded as an exploitive, impulsive manipulator. In African American tales, rabbit is type cast in the same role. The tales are most often moralistic (“don’t be greedy”) or etiological (why the frog has no tail) in intent.

belief tales: Legends or personal experience narratives that are told with the purpose of validating a particular folk belief.

cautionary tales: Narratives whose plots embody a message cautioning against the consequences of particular kinds of behavior.

culture hero: Character in myth who finishes the work that brings technology (usually symbolized as fire), laws, religion, and other elements of culture to humans. Culture heroes may take over the business of creating order out of chaos where a Supreme Creator left off. The culture hero serves as a secondary creator or transformer of the universe. He/she transforms the universe by means of his gifts into a universe in which humans can live. In some myths, the culture hero cleanses the universe of things that threaten human existence: monsters, cannibals, or meteorological phenomena.

cumulative tale: A tale that begins with an incident, action, or phrase and adds a succession of elements to create a lengthy chain of events.

cycle: A group of tales that focuses on a central character, plot, or theme.

fable: Fictional narrative ending with a didactic message that is often couched in the form of a “moral” or proverb.

fairy tale: See **ordinary folktale**.

family saga: Chronologically and often thematically linked collection of legends constituting the folk history of a particular family, usually over several generations. The term was coined by folklorist Mody C. Boatright.

folk history: Accounts based on perceptions of historical events rather than on written documentation or similar media.

- formula/formulaic element:** Conventional elements that recur in folk narrative. For example, clichés, structural patterns, stock characters, or situations.
- framing:** The act of setting apart a traditional performance from other types of activity by words, occasions of performance or other distinguishing features.
- genre:** Type, category.
- legend:** Narrative told as truth, set in the historical past, and that does not depart from the present reality of the members of the group.
- local legend:** Legends derived from and closely associated with specific places and events believed to have occurred in those locales.
- märchen:** See **ordinary folktale**.
- motif:** Small element of traditional narrative content, such as an event, object, concept, or pattern.
- myth:** Narratives that explain the will (the intent) and the workings (the orderly principles) of a group's major supernatural figures. Myth is set in a world that predates the present reality.
- natural context:** Setting, in all its elements, in which a performance would ordinarily take place.
- novelle:** Romantic tale.
- numskull:** Character who behaves in an absurdly ignorant fashion, also called "noodle."
- ordinary folktale:** Highly formulaic and structured fictional narrative that is popularly referred to as "fairytale" and designated by folklorists as *märchen* or "wonder tale." Term coined by folklorist Stith Thompson.
- personal experience narrative:** Narrative intended as truth performed in the first person by the individual to whom the described events happened.
- personal legend:** Narrative intended as truth told about a specific (usually well-known) individual.
- resource person:** The bearer of a particular tradition, such as the performer of a folktale.
- stock character:** Recurrent narrative character who invariably plays a stereotyped role such as trickster or fool.
- tale type:** Standard, recurrent folk narrative plot.
- tall tale:** Fictional narrative often told as a firsthand experience, which gradually introduces hyperbole until the audience realizes by the conclusion that the tale is a lie.
- trickster:** Character who defies the limits of propriety and often gender and species. Trickster lives on the margins of his world by his wits and is often regarded as possessing supernatural power. Often a mythic figure such as a coyote or hare will function as both culture hero and trickster.
- validating device:** Any element occurring within a traditional narrative that is intended to convince listeners that the tale is true.
- variant:** Version of a standard tale type.

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About the Editor

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