

FILLMORE PARKER

MIGHTY MIKKO: A BOOK
OF FINNISH FAIRY TALES
AND FOLK TALES

Parker Fillmore

**Mighty Mikko: A Book of Finnish
Fairy Tales and Folk Tales**

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Fillmore P.

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NOTE

The spirit of nationalism that swept over the small peoples of Europe in the early nineteenth century touched faraway Finland and started the Finns on the quest of the Finnish. There as elsewhere scholars who were also patriots found that the native tongue, lost to the educated and the well-to-do, had been preserved in the songs and stories which were current among the peasants. Elias Lönnrot spent a long and busy life collecting those ancient *runos* from which he succeeded in building up a national epic, the *Kalevala*. This is Lönnrot's great contribution to his own country and to the world. Beside the material for the *Kalevala* Lönnrot made important collections of lyrics, proverbs, and stories.

During his time and since other patriot scholars have made faithful records of the songs and tales which the old Finnish minstrels, the *runolaulajat*, chanted to the strains of the *kantele*. The mass of such material now gathered together in the archives of the Society of Finnish Literature at Helsingfors is imposing in bulk and of great importance to the student of comparative folklore.

My own excursions into the Finnish have been made possible through the kindness and endless patience of my friend, Lydia Tulonen (Mrs. Kurt J. Rahlson). With her as a native guide I have been wandering some time through the byways of Finnish folklore. The present volume is the traveler's pack I have brought home with me filled with strange treasures which will, I hope, seem as lovely to others as they seemed to me when first I came upon them.

The stories as I offer them are not translations but my own versions. Literal translations from the Finnish would make small appeal to the general reader. To English ears the Finnish is stiff, bald, and monotonous. One has only to read or attempt to read Kirby's excellent translation of the *Kalevala* to realize the truth of this statement. So I make no apology for retelling these tales in a manner more likely to prove entertaining to the English reader, whether child or adult.

In some form or other all the tales in this book may be found in the various folklore collections made by Eero Salmelainen, one of the patriotic young scholars who followed in Lönnrot's footsteps. His books were sponsored by the Society of Finnish Literature and used in its campaign to bring back the Finnish language to the Finns at a time when Swedish was the official language of the country.

Full of local color as these stories are, it would be vain to pretend that they are not, for the most part, variants of stories told the world over. All that I can claim for them is that they are dramatic and picturesque, that they are told with a wealth of charming detail which is essentially Finnish, and that they are certainly new to the generality of English readers. *The Three Chests*, so characteristic in feeling of a country famous for its lakes and marshes, is the variant of a German story which Grimm gives as *Fitcher's Bird*. Of *The Forest Bride* I have found variants in the folklore of many lands. There are several very beautiful ones in the Russian; in other books I myself have retold two, one current among the Czechs and one among the Serbians; Grimm has two different versions in *The Three Feathers* and *The Poor Miller's Boy and the Cat*; and Madame d'Aulnoy has used the same story in her elaborate tale, *The White Cat*. There is a well-known Oriental version of *Mighty Mikko* in which the part of the fox is played by a jackal and I am sure that Mikko's faithful retainer, though neither city-bred nor polished, is after all pretty closely related to that most debonnaire of Frenchmen, *Puss in Boots*. Perrault probably and Madame d'Aulnoy certainly are in turn indebted to Straparola. And so it goes.

The little cycle of animal stories included under *Mikko the Fox* will of course instantly invite comparison with the Beast Epic of *Reynard the Fox*. The two have many episodes in common and both have episodes to be found in Æsop and in those books of animal analogues, widely read in mediæval times, *Physiologus* and the *Disciplina Clericalis* of Petrus Alfonsus. The *Reynard* as we have it is a finished satire on church and state and in its present form has been current in Europe since the twelfth century. It was thought at one time that the animal stories found in Finland were debased versions of the *Reynard* stories, but scholars are now of opinion that they antedate *Reynard* and are similar to the earlier simpler stories upon which the *Reynard* cycle was originally built. This makes the little Finnish tales of great interest to the student. Needless to say I do not present them for this reason but because they seem to me charming merely as fables. The animals here are not the clerics and the judges and the nobles that the *Reynard* animals are, but plain downright Finnish peasants, sometimes stupid, often dull, frequently amusing, and always very human.

I have taken one liberty with spelling. I have transliterated *Syöjätär*, the name of the dread Finnish witch, as *Suyettar*. I have been unwilling to translate by the insufficient word, *bath-house* or *vapor bath*, that very characteristic institution of Finnish family life, the *sauna*, but have retained the Finnish word, *sauna*, allowing the context in each case to indicate the meaning.

P. F.

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THE TRUE BRIDE

There were once two orphans, a brother and a sister, who lived alone in the old farmhouse where their fathers before them had lived for many generations. The brother's name was Osmo, the sister's Ilona. Osmo was an industrious youth, but the farm was small and barren and he was hard put to it to make a livelihood.

"Sister," he said one day, "I think it might be well if I went out into the world and found work."

"Do as you think best, brother," Ilona said. "I'm sure I can manage on here alone."

So Osmo started off, promising to come back for his sister as soon as he could give her a new home. He wandered far and wide and at last got employment from the King's Son as a shepherd.

The King's Son was about Osmo's age, and often when he met Osmo tending his flocks he would stop and talk to him.

One day Osmo told the King's Son about his sister, Ilona.

"I have wandered far over the face of the earth," he said, "and never have I seen so beautiful a maiden as Ilona."

"What does she look like?" the King's Son asked.

Osmo drew a picture of her and she seemed to the King's Son so beautiful that at once he fell in love with her.

"Osmo," he said, "if you will go home and get your sister, I will marry her."

So Osmo hurried home not by the long land route by which he had come but straight over the water in a boat.

"Sister," he cried, as soon as he saw Ilona, "you must come with me at once for the King's Son wishes to marry you!"

He thought Ilona would be overjoyed, but she sighed and shook her head.

"What is it, sister? Why do you sigh?"

"Because it grieves me to leave this old house where our fathers have lived for so many generations."

"Nonsense, Ilona! What is this little old house compared to the King's castle where you will live once you marry the King's Son!"

But Ilona only shook her head.

"It's no use, brother! I can't bear to leave this old house until the grindstone with which our fathers for generations ground their meal is worn out."

When Osmo found she was firm, he went secretly and broke the old grindstone into small pieces. He then put the pieces together so that the stone looked the same as before. But of course the next time Ilona touched it, it fell apart.

"Now, sister, you'll come, will you not?" Osmo asked.

But again Ilona shook her head.

"It's no use, brother. I can't bear to go until the old stool where our mothers have sat spinning these many generations is worn through."

So again Osmo took things into his own hands and going secretly to the old spinning stool he broke it and when Ilona sat on it again it fell to pieces.

Then Ilona said she couldn't go until the old mortar which had been in use for generations should fall to bits at a blow from the pestle. Osmo cracked the mortar and the next time Ilona struck it with the pestle it broke.

Then Ilona said she couldn't go until the old worn doorsill over which so many of their forefathers had walked should fall to splinters at the brush of her skirts. So Osmo secretly split the old doorsill into thin slivers and, when next Ilona stepped over it, the brush of her skirts sent the splinters flying.

“I see now I must go,” Ilona said, “for the house of our forefathers no longer holds me.”

So she packed all her ribbons and her bodices and skirts in a bright wooden box and, calling her little dog Pilka, she stepped into the boat and Osmo rowed her off in the direction of the King’s castle.

Soon they passed a long narrow spit of land at the end of which stood a woman waving her arms. That is she looked like a woman. Really she was Suyettar but they, of course, did not know this.

“Take me in your boat!” she cried.

“Shall we?” Osmo asked his sister.

“I don’t think we ought to,” Ilona said. “We don’t know who she is or what she wants and she may be evil.”

So Osmo rowed on. But the woman kept shouting:

“Hi, there! Take me in your boat! Take me!”

A second time Osmo paused and asked his sister:

“Don’t you think we ought to take her?”

“No,” Ilona said.

So Osmo rowed on again. At this the creature raised such a pitiful outcry demanding what they meant denying assistance to a poor woman that Osmo was unable longer to refuse and in spite of Ilona’s warning he rowed to land.

Suyettar instantly jumped into the boat and seated herself in the middle with her face towards Osmo and her back towards Ilona.

“What a fine young man!” Suyettar said in whining flattering tones. “See how strong he is at the oars! And what a beautiful girl, too! I daresay the King’s Son would fall in love with her if ever he saw her!”

Thereupon Osmo very foolishly told Suyettar that the King’s Son had already promised to marry Ilona. At that an evil look came into Suyettar’s face and she sat silent for a time biting her fingers. Then she began mumbling a spell that made Osmo deaf to what Ilona was saying and Ilona deaf to what Osmo was saying.

At last in the distance the towers of the King’s castle appeared.

“Stand up, sister!” Osmo said. “Shake out your skirts and arrange your pretty ribbons! We’ll soon be landing now!”

Ilona could see her brother’s lips moving but of course she could not hear what he was saying.

“What is it, brother?” she asked.

Suyettar answered for him:

“Osmo orders you to jump headlong into the water!”

“No! No!” Ilona cried. “He couldn’t order anything so cruel as that!”

Presently Osmo said:

“Sister, what ails you? Don’t you hear me? Shake out your skirts and arrange your pretty ribbons for we’ll soon be landing now.”

“What is it, brother?” Ilona asked.

As before Suyettar answered for him:

“Osmo orders you to jump headlong into the water!”

“Brother, how can you order so cruel a thing!” Ilona cried, bursting into tears. “Is it for this you made me leave the home of my fathers?”

A third time Osmo said:

“Stand up, sister, and shake out your skirts and arrange your ribbons! We’ll soon be landing now!”

“I can’t hear you, brother! What is it you say?”

Suyettar turned on her fiercely and screamed:

“Osmo orders you to jump headlong into the water!”

“If he says I must, I must!” poor Ilona sobbed, and with that she leapt overboard.

Osmo tried to save her but Suyettar held him back and with her own arms rowed off and Ilona was left to sink.

“What will become of me now!” Osmo cried. “When the King’s Son finds I have not brought him my sister he will surely order my death!”

“Not at all!” Suyettar said. “Do as I say and no harm will come to you. Offer me to the King’s Son and tell him I am your sister. He won’t know the difference and anyway I’m sure I’m just as beautiful as Ilona ever was!”

With that Suyettar opened the wooden box that held Ilona’s clothes and helped herself to skirt and bodice and gay colored ribbons. She decked herself out in these and for a little while she really did succeed in looking like a pretty young girl.

So Osmo presented Suyettar to the King’s Son as Ilona, and the King’s Son because he had given his word married her. But before one day was past, he called Osmo to him and asked him angrily:

“What did you mean by telling me your sister was beautiful?”

“Isn’t she beautiful?” Osmo faltered.

“No! I thought she was at first but she isn’t! She is ugly and evil and you shall pay the penalty for having deceived me!”

Thereupon he ordered that Osmo be shut up in a place filled with serpents.

“If you are innocent,” the King’s Son said, “the serpents will not harm you. If you are guilty they will devour you!”

Meanwhile poor Ilona when she jumped into the water sank down, down, down, until she reached the Sea King’s palace. They received her kindly there and comforted her and the Sea King’s Son, touched by her grief and beauty, offered to marry her. But Ilona was homesick for the upper world and would not listen to him.

“I want to see my brother again!” she wept.

They told her that the King’s Son had thrown her brother to the serpents and had married Suyettar in her stead, but Ilona still begged so pitifully to be allowed to return to earth that at last the Sea King said:

“Very well, then! For three successive nights I will allow you to return to the upper world. But after that never again!”

So they decked Ilona in the lovely jewels of the sea with great strands of pearls about her neck and to each of her ankles they attached long silver chains. As she rose in the water the sound of the chains was like the chiming of silver bells and could be heard for five miles.

Ilona came to the surface of the water just where Osmo had landed. The first thing she saw was his boat at the water’s edge and curled up asleep in the bottom of the boat her own little dog, Pilka.

“Pilka!” Ilona cried, and the little dog woke with a bark of joy and licked Ilona’s hand and yelped and frisked.

Then Ilona sang this magic song to Pilka:

“Peely, peely, Pilka, pide,
Lift the latch and slip inside!
Past the watchdog in the yard,
Past the sleeping men on guard!
Creep in softly as a snake,
Then creep out before they wake!
Peely, peely, Pilka, pide,
Peely, peely, Pilka!”

Pilka barked and frisked and said:

“Yes, mistress, yes! I’ll do whatever you bid me!”

Ilona gave the little dog an embroidered square of gold and silver which she herself had worked down in the Sea King's palace.

"Take this," she said to Pilka, "and put it on the pillow where the King's Son lies asleep. Perhaps when he sees it he will know that it comes from Osmo's true sister and that the frightful creature he has married is Suyettar. Then perhaps he will release Osmo before the serpents devour him. Go now, my faithful Pilka, and come back to me before the dawn."

So Pilka raced off to the King's palace carrying the square of embroidery in her teeth. Ilona waited and half an hour before sunrise the little dog came panting back.

"What news, Pilka? How fares my brother and how is my poor love, the King's Son?"

"Osmo is still with the serpents," Pilka answered, "but they haven't eaten him yet. I left the embroidered square on the pillow where the King's Son's head was lying. Suyettar was asleep on the bed beside him where you should be, dear mistress. Suyettar's awful mouth was open and she was snoring horribly. The King's Son moved uneasily for he was troubled even in his sleep."

"And did you go through the castle, Pilka?"

"Yes, dear mistress."

"And did you see the remains of the wedding feast?"

"Yes, dear mistress, the remains of a feast that shamed the King's Son, for Suyettar served bones instead of meat, fish heads, turnip tops, and bread burned to a cinder."

"Good Pilka!" Ilona said. "Good little dog! You have done well! Now the dawn is coming and I must go back to the Sea King's palace. But I shall come again to-night and also to-morrow night and do you be here waiting for me."

Pilka promised and Ilona sank down into the sea to a clanking of chains that sounded like silver bells. The King's Son heard them in his sleep and for a moment woke and said:

"What's that?"

"What's what?" snarled Suyettar. "You're dreaming! Go back to sleep!"

A few hours later when he woke again, he found the lovely square of embroidery on his pillow.

"Who made this?" he cried.

Suyettar was busy combing her snaky locks. She turned on him quickly.

"Who made what?"

When she saw the embroidery she tried to snatch it from him, but he held it tight.

"I made it, of course!" she declared. "Who but me would sit up all night and work while you lay snoring!"

But the King's Son, as he folded the embroidery, muttered to himself:

"It doesn't look to me much like your work!"

After he had breakfasted, the King's Son asked for news of Osmo. A slave was sent to the place of the serpents and when he returned he reported that Osmo was sitting amongst them uninjured.

"The old king snake has made friends with him," he added, "and has wound himself around Osmo's arm."

The King's Son was amazed at this news and also relieved, for the whole affair troubled him sorely and he was beginning to suspect a mystery.

He knew an old wise woman who lived alone in a little hut on the seashore and he decided he would go and consult her. So he went to her and told her about Osmo and how Osmo had deceived him in regard to his sister. Then he told her how the serpents instead of devouring Osmo had made friends with him and last he showed her the square of lovely embroidery he had found on his pillow that morning.

"There is a mystery somewhere, granny," he said in conclusion, "and I know not how to solve it."

The old woman looked at him thoughtfully.

“My son,” she said at last, “that is never Osmo’s sister that you have married. Take an old woman’s word – it is Suyettar! Yet Osmo’s sister must be alive and the embroidery must be a token from her. It probably means that she begs you to release her brother.”

“Suyettar!” repeated the King’s Son, aghast.

At first he couldn’t believe such a horrible thing possible and yet that, if it were so, would explain much.

“I wonder if you’re right,” he said. “I must be on my guard!”

That night on the stroke of midnight to the sound of silver chimes Ilona came floating up through the waves and little Pilka, as she appeared, greeted her with barks of joy.

As before Ilona sang:

“Peely, peely, Pilka, pide,
Lift the latch and slip inside!
Past the watchdog in the yard,
Past the sleeping men on guard!
Creep in softly as a snake,
Then creep out before they wake!
Peely, peely, Pilka, pide,
Peely, peely, Pilka!”

This time Ilona gave Pilka a shirt for the King’s Son. Beautifully embroidered it was in gold and silver and Ilona herself had worked it in the Sea King’s palace.

Pilka carried it safely to the castle and left it on the pillow where the King’s Son could see it as soon as he woke. Then Pilka visited the place of the serpents and before the first ray of dawn was back at the seashore to reassure Ilona of Osmo’s safety.

Then dawn came and Ilona, as she sank in the waves to the chime of silver bells, called out to Pilka:

“Meet me here to-night at the same hour! Fail me not, dear Pilka, for to-night is the last night that the Sea King will allow me to come to the upper world!”

Pilka, howling with grief, made promise:

“I’ll be here, dear mistress, that I will!”

The King’s Son that morning, as he opened his eyes, saw the embroidered shirt lying on the pillow at his head. He thought at first he must be dreaming for it was more beautiful than any shirt that had ever been worked by human fingers.

“Ah!” he sighed at last, “who made this?”

“Who made what?” Suyettar demanded rudely.

When she saw the shirt she tried to snatch it, but the King’s Son held it from her. Then she pretended to laugh and said:

“Oh, that! I made it, of course! Do you think any one else in the world would sit up all night and work for you while you lie there snoring! And small thanks I get for it, too!”

“It doesn’t look to me like your work!” said the King’s Son significantly.

Again the slave reported to him that Osmo was alive and unhurt by the serpents.

“Strange!” thought the King’s Son.

He took the embroidered shirt and made the old wise woman another visit.

“Ah!” she said, when she saw the shirt, “now I understand! Listen, my Prince: last night at midnight I was awakened by the chime of silver bells and I got up and looked out the door. Just there at the water’s edge, close to that little boat, I saw a strange sight. A lovely maiden rose from the waves holding in her hands the very shirt that you now have. A little dog that was lying in the boat greeted her with barks of joy. She sang a magic rime to the dog and gave it the shirt and off it ran. That

maid, my Prince, must be Ilona. She must be in the Sea King's power and I think she is begging you to rescue her and to release her brother."

The King's Son slowly nodded his head.

"Granny, I'm sure what you say is true! Help me to rescue Ilona and I shall reward you richly."

"Then, my son, you must act at once, for to-night, I heard Ilona say, is the last night that the Sea King will allow her to come to the upper world. Go now to the smith and have him forge you a strong iron chain and a great strong scythe. Then to-night hide you down yonder in the shadow of the boat. At midnight when you hear the silver chimes and the maiden slowly rises from the waves, throw the iron chain about her and quickly draw her to you. Then, with one sweep of your scythe, cut the silver chains that are fastened to her ankles. But remember, my son, that is not all. She is under enchantment and as you try to grasp her the Sea King will change her to many things – a fish, a bird, a fly, and I know not what, and if in any form she escape you, then all is lost."

At once the King's Son hurried away to the smithy and had the smith forge him a strong iron chain and a heavy sharp scythe. Then when night fell he hid in the shadow of the boat and waited. Pilka snuggled up beside him. Midnight came and to the sweet chiming as of silver bells Ilona slowly rose from the waves. As she came she began singing:

"Peely, peely, Pilka, pide – "

Instantly the King's Son threw the strong iron chain about her and drew her to him. Then with one mighty sweep of the scythe he severed the silver chains that were attached to her ankles and the silver chains fell chiming into the depths. Another instant and the maiden in his arms was no maiden but a slimy fish that squirmed and wriggled and almost slipped through his fingers. He killed the fish and, lo! it was not a fish but a frightened bird that struggled to escape. He killed the bird and, lo! it was not a bird but a writhing lizard. And so on through many transformations, growing finally small and weak until at last there was only a mosquito. He crushed this and in his arms he found again the lovely Ilona.

"Ah, dear one," he said, "you are my true bride and not Suyettar who pretended she was you! Come, we will go at once to the castle and confront her!"

But Ilona cried out at this:

"Not there, my Prince, not there! Suyettar if she saw me would kill me and devour me! Keep me from her!"

"Very well, my dear one," the King's Son said. "We'll wait until to-morrow and after to-morrow there will be no Suyettar to fear."

So for that night they took shelter in the old wise woman's hut, Ilona and the King's Son and faithful little Pilka.

The next morning early the King's Son returned to the castle and had the *sauna* heated. Just inside the door he had a deep hole dug and filled it with burning tar. Then over the top of the hole he stretched a brown mat and on the brown mat a blue mat. When all was ready he went indoors and roused Suyettar.

"Where have you been all night?" she demanded angrily.

"Forgive me this time," he begged in pretended humility, "and I promise never again to be parted from my own true bride. Come now, my dear, and bathe for the *sauna* is ready."

Then Suyettar, who loved to have people see her go to the *sauna* just as if she were a real human being, put on a long bathrobe and clapped her hands. Four slaves appeared. Two took up the train of her bathrobe and the two others supported her on either side. Slowly she marched out of the castle, across the courtyard, and over to the *sauna*.

“They all really think I’m a human princess!” she said to herself, and she was so sure she was beautiful and admired that she tossed her head and smirked from side to side and took little mincing steps.

When she reached the *sauna* she was ready to drop the bathrobe and jump over the doorsill to the steaming shelf, but the King’s Son whispered:

“Nay! Nay! Remember your dignity as a beautiful princess and walk over the blue mat!”

So with one more toss of her head, one more smirk of her ugly face, Suyettar stepped on the blue mat and sank into the hole of burning tar. Then the King’s Son quickly locked the door of the *sauna* and left her there to burn in the tar, for burning, you know, is the only way to destroy Suyettar. As she burned the last hateful thing Suyettar did was to tear out handfuls of her hair and scatter them broadcast in the air.

“Let these,” she cried, yelling and cursing, “turn into mosquitos and worms and moths and trouble mankind forever!”

Then her yells grew fainter and at last ceased altogether and the King’s Son knew that it was now safe to bring Ilona home. First, however, he had Osmo released from the place of the serpents and asked his forgiveness for the unjust punishment.

Then he and Osmo together went to the hut of the old wise woman and there with tears of happiness the brother and sister were reunited. The King’s Son to show his gratitude to the old wise woman begged her to accompany them to the castle and presently they all set forth with Pilka frisking ahead and barking for joy.

That day there was a new wedding feast spread at the castle and this time it was not bones and fish heads and burnt crusts but such food as the King’s Son had not tasted for many a day.

To celebrate his happy marriage the King’s Son made Osmo his chamberlain and gave Pilka a beautiful new collar.

“Now at last,” Ilona said, “I am glad I left the house of my forefathers.”

MIGHTY MIKKO

There was once an old woodsman and his wife who had an only son named Mikko. As the mother lay dying the young man wept bitterly.

“When you are gone, my dear mother,” he said, “there will be no one left to think of me.”

The poor woman comforted him as best she could and said to him:

“You will still have your father.”

Shortly after the woman’s death, the old man, too, was taken ill.

“Now, indeed, I shall be left desolate and alone,” Mikko thought, as he sat beside his father’s bedside and saw him grow weaker and weaker.

“My boy,” the old man said just before he died, “I have nothing to leave you but the three snares with which these many years I have caught wild animals. Those snares now belong to you. When I am dead, go into the woods and if you find a wild creature caught in any of them, free it gently and bring it home alive.”

After his father’s death, Mikko remembered the snares and went out to the woods to see them. The first was empty and also the second, but in the third he found a little red Fox. He carefully lifted the spring that had shut down on one of the Fox’s feet and then carried the little creature home in his arms. He shared his supper with it and when he lay down to sleep the Fox curled up at his feet. They lived together some time until they became close friends.

“Mikko,” said the Fox one day, “why are you so sad?”

“Because I’m lonely.”

“Pooh!” said the Fox. “That’s no way for a young man to talk! You ought to get married! Then you wouldn’t feel lonely!”

“Married!” Mikko repeated. “How can I get married? I can’t marry a poor girl because I’m too poor myself and a rich girl wouldn’t marry me.”

“Nonsense!” said the Fox. “You’re a fine well set up young man and you’re kind and gentle. What more could a princess ask?”

Mikko laughed to think of a princess wanting him for a husband.

“I mean what I say!” the Fox insisted. “Take our own Princess now. What would you think of marrying her?”

Mikko laughed louder than before.

“I have heard,” he said, “that she is the most beautiful princess in the world! Any man would be happy to marry her!”

“Very well,” the Fox said, “if you feel that way about her then I’ll arrange the wedding for you.”

With that the little Fox actually did trot off to the royal castle and gain audience with the King.

“My master sends you greetings,” the Fox said, “and he begs you to loan him your bushel measure.”

“My bushel measure!” the King repeated in surprise. “Who is your master and why does he want my bushel measure?”

“Ssh!” the Fox whispered as though he didn’t want the courtiers to hear what he was saying. Then slipping up quite close to the King he murmured in his ear:

“Surely you have heard of Mikko, haven’t you? – Mighty Mikko as he’s called.”

The King had never heard of any Mikko who was known as Mighty Mikko but, thinking that perhaps he should have heard of him, he shook his head and murmured:

“H’m! Mikko! Mighty Mikko! Oh, to be sure! Yes, yes, of course!”

“My master is about to start off on a journey and he needs a bushel measure for a very particular reason.”

“I understand! I understand!” the King said, although he didn’t understand at all, and he gave orders that the bushel measure which they used in the storeroom of the castle be brought in and given to the Fox.

The Fox carried off the measure and hid it in the woods. Then he scurried about to all sorts of little out of the way nooks and crannies where people had hidden their savings and he dug up a gold piece here and a silver piece there until he had a handful. Then he went back to the woods and stuck the various coins in the cracks of the measure. The next day he returned to the King.

“My master, Mighty Mikko,” he said, “sends you thanks, O King, for the use of your bushel measure.”

The King held out his hand and when the Fox gave him the measure he peeped inside to see if by chance it contained any trace of what had recently been measured. His eye of course at once caught the glint of the gold and silver coins lodged in the cracks.

“Ah!” he said, thinking Mikko must be a very mighty lord indeed to be so careless of his wealth; “I should like to meet your master. Won’t you and he come and visit me?”

This was what the Fox wanted the King to say but he pretended to hesitate.

“I thank your Majesty for the kind invitation,” he said, “but I fear my master can’t accept it just now. He wants to get married soon and we are about to start off on a long journey to inspect a number of foreign princesses.”

This made the King all the more anxious to have Mikko visit him at once for he thought that if Mikko should see his daughter before he saw those foreign princesses he might fall in love with her and marry her. So he said to the Fox:

“My dear fellow, you must prevail on your master to make me a visit before he starts out on his travels! You will, won’t you?”

The Fox looked this way and that as if he were too embarrassed to speak.

“Your Majesty,” he said at last, “I pray you pardon my frankness. The truth is you are not rich enough to entertain my master and your castle isn’t big enough to house the immense retinue that always attends him.”

The King, who by this time was frantic to see Mikko, lost his head completely.

“My dear Fox,” he said, “I’ll give you anything in the world if you prevail upon your master to visit me at once! Couldn’t you suggest to him to travel with a modest retinue this time?”

The Fox shook his head.

“No. His rule is either to travel with a great retinue or to go on foot disguised as a poor woodsman attended only by me.”

“Couldn’t you prevail on him to come to me disguised as a poor woodsman?” the King begged. “Once he was here, I could place gorgeous clothes at his disposal.”

But still the Fox shook his head.

“I fear Your Majesty’s wardrobe doesn’t contain the kind of clothes my master is accustomed to.”

“I assure you I’ve got some very good clothes,” the King said. “Come along this minute and we’ll go through them and I’m sure you’ll find some that your master would wear.”

So they went to a room which was like a big wardrobe with hundreds and hundreds of hooks upon which were hung hundreds of coats and breeches and embroidered shirts. The King ordered his attendants to bring the costumes down one by one and place them before the Fox.

They began with the plainer clothes.

“Good enough for most people,” the Fox said, “but not for my master.”

Then they took down garments of a finer grade.

“I’m afraid you’re going to all this trouble for nothing,” the Fox said. “Frankly now, don’t you realize that my master couldn’t possibly put on any of these things!”

The King, who had hoped to keep for his own use his most gorgeous clothes of all, now ordered these to be shown.

The Fox looked at them sideways, sniffed them critically, and at last said:

“Well, perhaps my master would consent to wear these for a few days. They are not what he is accustomed to wear but I will say this for him: he is not proud.”

The King was overjoyed.

“Very well, my dear Fox, I’ll have the guest chambers put in readiness for your master’s visit and I’ll have all these, my finest clothes, laid out for him. You won’t disappoint me, will you?”

“I’ll do my best,” the Fox promised.

With that he bade the King a civil good day and ran home to Mikko.

The next day as the Princess was peeping out of an upper window of the castle, she saw a young woodsman approaching accompanied by a Fox. He was a fine stalwart youth and the Princess, who knew from the presence of the Fox that he must be Mikko, gave a long sigh and confided to her serving maid:

“I think I could fall in love with that young man if he really were only a woodsman!”

Later when she saw him arrayed in her father’s finest clothes – which looked so well on Mikko that no one even recognized them as the King’s – she lost her heart completely and when Mikko was presented to her she blushed and trembled just as any ordinary girl might before a handsome young man.

All the Court was equally delighted with Mikko. The ladies went into ecstasies over his modest manners, his fine figure, and the gorgeousness of his clothes, and the old graybeard Councilors, nodding their heads in approval, said to each other:

“Nothing of the coxcomb about this young fellow! In spite of his great wealth see how politely he listens to us when we talk!”

The next day the Fox went privately to the King, and said:

“My master is a man of few words and quick judgment. He bids me tell you that your daughter, the Princess, pleases him mightily and that, with your approval, he will make his addresses to her at once.”

The King was greatly agitated and began:

“My dear Fox – ”

But the Fox interrupted him to say:

“Think the matter over carefully and give me your decision to-morrow.”

So the King consulted with the Princess and with his Councilors and in a short time the marriage was arranged and the wedding ceremony actually performed!

“Didn’t I tell you?” the Fox said, when he and Mikko were alone after the wedding.

“Yes,” Mikko acknowledged, “you did promise that I should marry the Princess. But, tell me, now that I am married what am I to do? I can’t live on here forever with my wife.”

“Put your mind at rest,” the Fox said. “I’ve thought of everything. Just do as I tell you and you’ll have nothing to regret. To-night say to the King: ‘It is now only fitting that you should visit me and see for yourself the sort of castle over which your daughter is hereafter to be mistress!’”

When Mikko said this to the King, the King was overjoyed for now that the marriage had actually taken place he was wondering whether he hadn’t perhaps been a little hasty. Mikko’s words reassured him and he eagerly accepted the invitation.

On the morrow the Fox said to Mikko:

“Now I’ll run on ahead and get things ready for you.”

“But where are you going?” Mikko said, frightened at the thought of being deserted by his little friend.

The Fox drew Mikko aside and whispered softly:

“A few days’ march from here there is a very gorgeous castle belonging to a wicked old dragon who is known as the Worm. I think the Worm’s castle would just about suit you.”

“I’m sure it would,” Mikko agreed. “But how are we to get it away from the Worm?”

“Trust me,” the Fox said. “All you need do is this: lead the King and his courtiers along the main highway until by noon to-morrow you reach a crossroads. Turn there to the left and go straight on until you see the tower of the Worm’s castle. If you meet any men by the wayside, shepherds or the like, ask them whose men they are and show no surprise at their answer. So now, dear master, farewell until we meet again at your beautiful castle.”

The little Fox trotted off at a smart pace and Mikko and the Princess and the King attended by the whole Court followed in more leisurely fashion.

The little Fox, when he had left the main highway at the crossroads, soon met ten woodsmen with axes over their shoulders. They were all dressed in blue smocks of the same cut.

“Good day,” the Fox said politely. “Whose men are you?”

“Our master is known as the Worm,” the woodsmen told him.

“My poor, poor lads!” the Fox said, shaking his head sadly.

“What’s the matter?” the woodsmen asked.

For a few moments the Fox pretended to be too overcome with emotion to speak. Then he said:

“My poor lads, don’t you know that the King is coming with a great force to destroy the Worm and all his people?”

The woodsmen were simple fellows and this news threw them into great consternation.

“Is there no way for us to escape?” they asked.

The Fox put his paw to his head and thought.

“Well,” he said at last, “there is one way you might escape and that is by telling every one who asks you that you are the Mighty Mikko’s men. But if you value your lives never again say that your master is the Worm.”

“We are Mighty Mikko’s men!” the woodsmen at once began repeating over and over. “We are Mighty Mikko’s men!”

A little farther on the road the Fox met twenty grooms, dressed in the same blue smocks, who were tending a hundred beautiful horses. The Fox talked to the twenty grooms as he had talked to the woodsmen and before he left them they, too, were shouting:

“We are Mighty Mikko’s men!”

Next the Fox came to a huge flock of a thousand sheep tended by thirty shepherds all dressed in the Worm’s blue smocks. He stopped and talked to them until he had them roaring out:

“We are Mighty Mikko’s men!”

Then the Fox trotted on until he reached the castle of the Worm. He found the Worm himself inside lolling lazily about. He was a huge dragon and had been a great warrior in his day. In fact his castle and his lands and his servants and his possessions had all been won in battle. But now for many years no one had cared to fight him and he had grown fat and lazy.

“Good day,” the Fox said, pretending to be very breathless and frightened. “You’re the Worm, aren’t you?”

“Yes,” the dragon said, boastfully, “I am the great Worm!”

The Fox pretended to grow more agitated.

“My poor fellow, I am sorry for you! But of course none of us can expect to live forever. Well, I must hurry along. I thought I would just stop and say good-by.”

Made uneasy by the Fox’s words, the Worm cried out:

“Wait just a minute! What’s the matter?”

The Fox was already at the door but at the Worm’s entreaty he paused and said over his shoulder:

“Why, my poor fellow, you surely know, don’t you? that the King with a great force is coming to destroy you and all your people!”

“What!” the Worm gasped, turning a sickly green with fright. He knew he was fat and helpless and could never again fight as in the years gone by.

“Don’t go just yet!” he begged the Fox. “When is the King coming?”

“He’s on the highway now! That’s why I must be going! Good-by!”

“My dear Fox, stay just a moment and I’ll reward you richly! Help me to hide so that the King won’t find me! What about the shed where the linen is stored? I could crawl under the linen and then if you locked the door from the outside the King could never find me.”

“Very well,” the Fox agreed, “but we must hurry!”

So they ran outside to the shed where the linen was kept and the Worm hid himself under the linen. The Fox locked the door, then set fire to the shed, and soon there was nothing left of that wicked old dragon, the Worm, but a handful of ashes.

The Fox now called together the dragon’s household and talked them over to Mikko as he had the woodsmen and the grooms and the shepherds.

Meanwhile the King and his party were slowly covering the ground over which the Fox had sped so quickly. When they came to the ten woodsmen in blue smocks, the King said:

“I wonder whose woodsmen those are.”

One of his attendants asked the woodsmen and the ten of them shouted out at the top of their voices:

“We are Mighty Mikko’s men!”

Mikko said nothing and the King and all the Court were impressed anew with his modesty.

A little farther on they met the twenty grooms with their hundred prancing horses. When the grooms were questioned, they answered with a shout:

“We are Mighty Mikko’s men!”

“The Fox certainly spoke the truth,” the King thought to himself, “when he told me of Mikko’s riches!”

A little later the thirty shepherds when they were questioned made answer in a chorus that was deafening to hear:

“We are Mighty Mikko’s men!”

The sight of the thousand sheep that belonged to his son-in-law made the King feel poor and humble in comparison and the courtiers whispered among themselves:

“For all his simple manner, Mighty Mikko must be a richer, more powerful lord than the King himself! In fact it is only a very great lord indeed who could be so simple!”

At last they reached the castle which from the blue smocked soldiers that guarded the gateway they knew to be Mikko’s. The Fox came out to welcome the King’s party and behind him in two rows all the household servants. These, at a signal from the Fox, cried out in one voice:

“We are Mighty Mikko’s men!”

Then Mikko in the same simple manner that he would have used in his father’s mean little hut in the woods bade the King and his followers welcome and they all entered the castle where they found a great feast already prepared and waiting.

The King stayed on for several days and the more he saw of Mikko the better pleased he was that he had him for a son-in-law.

When he was leaving he said to Mikko:

“Your castle is so much grander than mine that I hesitate ever asking you back for a visit.”

But Mikko reassured the King by saying earnestly:

“My dear father-in-law, when first I entered your castle I thought it was the most beautiful castle in the world!”

The King was flattered and the courtiers whispered among themselves:

“How affable of him to say that when he knows very well how much grander his own castle is!”

When the King and his followers were safely gone, the little red Fox came to Mikko and said:

“Now, my master, you have no reason to feel sad and lonely. You are lord of the most beautiful castle in the world and you have for wife a sweet and lovely Princess. You have no longer any need of me, so I am going to bid you farewell.”

Mikko thanked the little Fox for all he had done and the little Fox trotted off to the woods.

So you see that Mikko’s poor old father, although he had no wealth to leave his son, was really the cause of all Mikko’s good fortune, for it was he who told Mikko in the first place to carry home alive anything he might find caught in the snares.

THE THREE CHESTS

There was once an honest old farmer who had three daughters. His farm ran down to the shores of a deep lake. One day as he leaned over the water to take a drink, wicked old Wetehein reached up from the bottom of the lake and clutched him by the beard.

“Ouch! Ouch!” the farmer cried. “Let me go!”

Wetehein only held on more tightly.

“Yes, I’ll let you go,” he said, “but only on this condition: that you give me one of your daughters for wife!”

“Give you one of my daughters? Never!”

“Very well, then I’ll never let go!” wicked old Wetehein declared and with that he began jerking at the beard as if it were a bellrope.

“Wait! Wait!” the farmer spluttered.

Now he didn’t want to give one of his daughters to wicked old Wetehein – of course not! But at the same time he was in Wetehein’s power and he realized that if he didn’t do what the old reprobate demanded he might lose his life and so leave all three of his daughters orphans. Perhaps for the good of all he had better sacrifice one of them.

“All right,” he said, “let me go and I’ll send you my oldest daughter. I promise.”

So Wetehein let go his beard and the farmer scrambled to his feet and hurried home.

“My dear,” he said to his oldest daughter, “I left a bit of the harness down at the lake. Like a good girl will you run down and get it for me.”

The eldest daughter went at once and when she reached the water’s edge, old Wetehein reached up and caught her about the waist and carried her down to the bottom of the lake where he lived in a big house.

At first he was kind to her. He made her mistress of the house and gave her the keys to all the rooms and closets. He went very carefully over the keys and pointing to one he said:

“That key you must never use for it opens the door to a room which I forbid you to enter.”

The eldest daughter began keeping house for old Wetehein and spent her time cooking and cleaning and spinning much as she used to at home with her father. The days went by and she grew familiar with the house and began to know what was in every room and every closet.

At first she felt no temptation to open the forbidden door. If old Wetehein wanted to have a secret room, well and good. But why in the world had he given her the key if he really didn’t want her to open the door? The more she thought about it the more she wondered. Every time she passed the room she stopped a moment and stared at the door. It looked just exactly like the doors that led into all the other rooms.

“I wonder why he doesn’t want me to open just that door?” she kept asking herself.

Finally one day when old Wetehein was away she thought:

“I don’t believe it would matter if I opened that door just a little crack and peeped in once! No one would know the difference!”

For a few moments she hesitated, then mustered up courage enough to turn the key in the forbidden lock and throw open the door.

The room was a storeroom with boxes and chests and old jars piled up around the wall. That was unexciting enough, but in the middle of the floor was something that made her start when she saw what it was. It was blood – that’s what it was, a pool of dark red blood! She was about to slam the door shut when she saw something else that made her pause. This was a lovely shining ring that lay in the midst of the pool.

“Oh!” she thought to herself, “what a beautiful ring! If I had it I’d wear it on my finger!”

The longer she looked at it, the more she wanted it.

“If I’m very careful,” she said, “I know I could reach over and pick it up without touching the blood.”

She tiptoed cautiously into the room, wrapped her skirts tightly about her legs, knelt down on the floor, and stretched her arm over the pool. She picked up the ring very carefully but even so she got a few drops of blood on her fingers.

“No matter!” she thought, “I can wash that off! And see the lovely ring!”

But later, after she had the door again locked, when she tried to wash the blood off, she found she couldn’t. She tried soap, she tried sand, she tried everything she could think of, but without success.

“I don’t care!” she thought to herself. “If Weteheininen sees the blood, I’ll just tell him I cut my finger by accident.”

So when Weteheininen came home, she hid the ring and pretended nothing was the matter.

After supper Weteheininen put his head in her lap and said:

“Now, my dear, scratch my head and make me drowsy for bed.”

She began scratching his head as she had many nights before but, at the first touch of her fingers, he cried out:

“Stop! You’re burning my ear! There must be some blood on your fingers! Let me see!”

He reached up and caught her hand and, when he saw the blood stains, he flew into a towering rage.

“I thought so! You’ve been in the forbidden room!”

He jumped up and without allowing her time to say a word he just cut off her head then and there with no more concern than if she had been a mosquito! After that he took the body and the severed head and threw them into the forbidden room and locked the door.

“Now then,” he growled, “*she* won’t disobey me again!”

This was all very well but now he had no one to keep house for him and cook and scratch his head in the evening and soon he decided he’d have to get another wife. He remembered that the farmer had two more daughters, so he thought to himself that now he’d marry the second sister.

He waited his chance and one day when the farmer was out in his boat fishing, old Weteheininen came up from the bottom of the lake and clutched the boat. When the poor old farmer tried to row back to shore he couldn’t make the boat move an inch. He worked and worked at the oars and wicked old Weteheininen let him struggle until he was exhausted. Then he put his head up out of the water and over the side of the boat and as though nothing were the matter he said:

“Hullo!”

“Oh!” the farmer cried, wishing he were safe on shore, “it’s you, is it? I wondered what was holding my boat.”

“Yes,” wicked old Weteheininen said, “it’s me and I’m going to hold your boat right here on this spot until you promise to give me another of your daughters.”

What could the farmer do? He pleaded with Weteheininen but Weteheininen was firm and the upshot was that before the farmer again walked dry land he had promised Weteheininen his second daughter.

Well, when he got home, he pretended he had forgotten his ax in the boat and sent his second daughter down to the lake to get it. Wicked old Weteheininen caught her as he had caught her sister and carried her home with him to his house at the bottom of the lake.

Weteheininen treated the second sister just exactly as he had the first, making her mistress of the house and telling her she might use every key but one. Like her sister she, too, after a time gave way to the temptation of looking into the forbidden room and when she saw the shining ring lying in the pool of blood of course she wanted it and of course when she reached to get it she dabbled her fingers in the blood. So that was the end of her, too, for wicked old Weteheininen when he saw the blood stains just cut her head right off and threw her body and the severed head into the forbidden room beside the body and head of her sister and locked the door.

Time went by and the farmer was living happily with his youngest daughter when one day while he was out chopping wood he found a pair of fine birch bark brogues. He put them on and instantly found himself walking away from the woods and down to the lake. He tried to stop but he couldn't. He tried to walk in another direction but the brogues carried him straight down to the water's edge and out into the lake until he was in waist deep.

Then he heard a gruff voice saying:

"Hullo, there! What are you doing with my brogues?"

Of course it was wicked old Weteheininen who had played that trick to get the farmer into his power again.

"What do you want this time?" the poor farmer cried.

"I want your youngest daughter," Weteheininen said.

"What! My youngest daughter!"

"Yes."

"I won't give her up!" the farmer declared. "I don't care what you do to me. I won't give her up!"

"Oh, very well!" Weteheininen said, and immediately the brogues which had been standing still while they talked started walking again. They carried the farmer out into the lake farther and farther until the water was up to his chin.

"Wait – wait a minute!" he cried.

The brogues stopped walking and Weteheininen said:

"Well, do you promise to give her to me?"

"No!" the farmer began. "She's my last daughter and –"

Before he could say more, the brogues walked on and the water rose to his nose. In desperation he threw up his hands and shouted:

"I promise! I promise!"

So when he got home that day he said to his youngest daughter whose name was Lisa:

"Lisa, my dear, I forgot my brogues at the lake. Like a good girl won't you run and get them for me?"

So Lisa went to the lake and Weteheininen of course caught her and carried her down to his house as he had her two sisters.

Then the same old story was repeated. Weteheininen made Lisa mistress of the house and gave her keys to all the doors and closets with the same prohibition against opening the door of the forbidden room.

"If I am mistress of the house," Lisa said to herself, "why should I not unlock every door?"

She waited until one day when Weteheininen was away from home, then went boldly to the forbidden room, fitted the key in the lock, and flung open the door.

There lay her two poor sisters with their heads cut off. There in the pool of blood sparkled the lovely ring, but Lisa paid no heed to it.

"Wicked old Weteheininen!" Lisa cried. "I suppose he thinks that ring will tempt me but nothing will tempt me to touch that awful blood!"

Then she rummaged about, opening boxes and chests, and turning things over. In a dark corner she found two pitchers, one marked *Water of Life*, the other *Water of Death*.

"Ha! This is what I want!" she cried, taking the pitcher of the *Water of Life*.

She set the severed heads of her sisters in place and then with the magic water brought them back to life. She used up all the *Water of Life*, so she filled the pitcher marked *Water of Life* with the water from the other pitcher, the *Water of Death*. She hid her sisters each in a big wooden chest, she shut and locked the door of the forbidden room, and Weteheininen when he came home found her working at her spinning wheel as though nothing unusual had happened.

After supper Weteheininen said:

"Now scratch my head and make me drowsy for bed."

So Lisa scratched his wicked old head and she did it so well that he grunted with satisfaction.

“Uh! Uh!” he said. “That’s good! Now just behind my right ear! That’s it! That’s it! You’re a good girl, you are! You’re not like some of them who do what they’re told not to do! Now behind the other ear! Oh, that’s fine! Yes, you’re a good girl and if there’s anything you want me to do just tell me what it is.”

“I want to send a chest of things to my poor old father,” Lisa said. “Just a lot of little nothings – odds and ends that I’ve picked up about the house. I’d be ashamed to have you open the chest and see them. I do wish you’d carry the chest ashore to-morrow and leave it where my father will find it.”

“All right, I will,” Weteheinén promised.

He was true to his word. The next morning he hoisted one of the chests on his shoulder, the one that had in it the eldest sister, he trudged off with it, and tossed it up on shore at a place where he was sure the farmer would find it.

Lisa then wheedled him into carrying up the second chest that had in it the second sister. This time Weteheinén wasn’t so good-natured.

“I don’t know what she can always be sending her father!” he grumbled. “If she sends another chest I’ll have to look inside and see.”

Now Lisa, when the second sister was safely delivered, began to plan her own escape. She pulled out another empty chest and then one evening after she had succeeded in making old Weteheinén comfortable and drowsy she begged him to carry this also to her father. He grumbled and protested but finally promised.

“And you won’t look inside, will you? Promise me you won’t!” Lisa begged.

Weteheinén said he wouldn’t, but he intended to just the same.

Well, the next morning as soon as Weteheinén went out, Lisa took the churn and dressed it up in some of her own clothes. She carried it to the top of the house and perched it on the ridge of the roof before a spinning wheel. Then she herself crept inside the third chest and waited.

When Weteheinén came home he looked up and saw what he thought was Lisa spinning on the roof.

“Hullo!” he shouted. “What are you doing up there?”

Lisa, in the chest, answered in a voice that sounded as if it came from the roof:

“I’m spinning. And you, Weteheinén, my dear, don’t forget the chest that you promised to carry to my poor old father. It’s standing in the kitchen.”

Weteheinén grumbled but because of his promise he hoisted the chest on his shoulder and started off. When he had gone a little way he thought to put it down and take a peep inside. Instantly Lisa’s voice, sounding as if it came from the roof, cried out:

“No! No! You promised not to look inside!”

“I’m not looking inside!” Weteheinén called back. “I’m only resting a minute!”

Then he thought to himself:

“I suppose she’s sitting up there so she can watch me!”

When he had gone some distance farther, he thought again to set down the chest and open the lid but instantly Lisa’s voice, as from a long way off, called out:

“No! No! You promised not to look inside!”

“Who’s looking inside?” he called back, pretending again he was only resting.

Every time he thought it would be safe to put down the chest and open the lid, Lisa’s voice cried out:

“No! No! You promised not to!”

“Mercy on us!” old Weteheinén fumed to himself, “who would have thought she could see so far!”

On the shore of the lake when he threw down the chest in disgust he tried one last time to raise the lid. Instantly Lisa’s voice cried out:

“No! No! You promised not to!”

“I’m not looking inside!” Weteihin roared, and in a fury he left the chest and started back into the water.

All the way home he grumbled and growled:

“A nice way to treat a man, always making him carry chests! I won’t carry another one no matter how much she begs me!”

When he came near home he saw the spinning wheel still on the roof and the figure still seated before it.

“Why haven’t you got my dinner ready?” he called out angrily.

The figure at the spinning wheel made no answer.

“What’s the matter with you?” Weteihin cried. “Why are you sitting there like a wooden image instead of cooking my dinner?”

Still the figure made no answer and in a rage Weteihin began climbing up the roof. He reached out blindly and clutched at Lisa’s skirt and jerked it so hard that the churn came clattering down on his head. It knocked him off the roof and he fell all the way to the ground and cracked his wicked old head wide open.

“Ouch! Ouch!” he roared in pain. “Just wait till I get hold of that Lisa!”

He crawled to the forbidden room and poured over himself the water that was in the pitcher marked *Water of Life*. But it wasn’t the *Water of Life* at all, it was the *Water of Death*, and so it didn’t help his wicked old cracked head at all. In fact it just made it worse and worse *and* worse.

Lisa and her sisters were never again troubled by him nor was any one else that lived on the shores of that lake.

“Wonder what’s become of wicked old Weteihin?” people began saying.

Lisa thought she knew but she didn’t tell.

LOG

There was once a poor couple who had no children. Their neighbors all had boys and girls in plenty but for some reason God didn't send them even one.

"If I can't have a flesh and blood baby," the woman said one day, "I'm going to have a wooden baby."

She went to the woods and cut a log of alder just the size of a nice fat baby. She dressed the log in baby clothes and put it in a cradle. Then for three whole years she and her husband rocked the cradle and sang lullabies to the log baby.

At the end of three years one afternoon, when the man was out chopping wood and the woman was driving the cows home from pasture, the log baby turned into a real baby! It was so strong and hearty that by the time its parents got home it had crawled out of the cradle and was sitting on the floor yelling lustily for food. It ate and ate and ate and the more it ate the faster it grew. It wasn't any time at all in passing from babyhood to childhood, from childhood to youth, and from youth to manhood. From its beginnings it was known in the village as Log and never received any other name.

Log's parents knew from the first that Log was destined to be a great hero. That was why he was so strong and so good. There was no one in the village as strong as he nor any one as kind and gentle.

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