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**EAST OF THE SUN
AND WEST OF THE
MOON: OLD TALES
FROM THE NORTH**

Peter Asbjørnsen

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Moon: Old Tales from the North**

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East of the Sun and West of the Moon: Old Tales from the North

PREFACE

A folk-tale, in its primitive plainness of word and entire absence of complexity in thought, is peculiarly sensitive and susceptible to the touch of stranger hands; and he who has been able to acquaint himself with the *Norske Folkeeventyr* of Asbjørnsen and Moe (from which these stories are selected), has an advantage over the reader of an English rendering. Of this advantage Mr. Kay Nielsen has fully availed himself: and the exquisite *bizarrerie* of his drawings aptly expresses the innermost significance of the old-world, old-wives' fables. For to term these legends, Nursery Tales, would be to curtail them, by nine-tenths, of their interest. They are the romances of the childhood of Nations: they are the never-failing springs of sentiment, of sensation, of heroic example, from which primeval peoples drank their fill at will.

The quaintness, the tenderness, the grotesque yet realistic intermingling of actuality with supernaturalism, by which the original *Norske Folkeeventyr* are characterised, will make an appeal to all, as represented in the pictures of Kay Nielsen. And these imperishable traditions, whose bases are among the very roots of all antiquity, are here reincarnated in line and colour, to the delight of all who ever knew or now shall know them.

Permission to reprint the Stories in this book, which originally appeared in Sir G. W. Dasent's "Popular Tales from the Norse," has been obtained from Messrs. George Routledge & Sons, Ltd. The Three Princesses in the Blue Mountain is printed by arrangement with Messrs. David Nutt; and Prince Lindworm is newly translated for this volume.

EAST OF THE SUN AND WEST OF THE MOON

Once on a time there was a poor husbandman who had so many children that he hadn't much of either food or clothing to give them. Pretty children they all were, but the prettiest was the youngest daughter, who was so lovely there was no end to her loveliness.

So one day, 'twas on a Thursday evening late at the fall of the year, the weather was so wild and rough outside, and it was so cruelly dark, and rain fell and wind blew, till the walls of the cottage shook again. There they all sat round the fire, busy with this thing and that. But just then, all at once something gave three taps on the window-pane. Then the father went out to see what was the matter; and, when he got out of doors, what should he see but a great big *White Bear*.

"Good-evening to you!" said the *White Bear*.

"The same to you!" said the man.

"Will you give me your youngest daughter? If you will, I'll make you as rich as you are now poor," said the *Bear*.

Well, the man would not be at all sorry to be so rich; but still he thought he must have a bit of a talk with his daughter first; so he went in and told them how there was a great *White Bear* waiting outside, who had given his word to make them so rich if he could only have the youngest daughter.

The lassie said "No!" outright. Nothing could get her to say anything else; so the man went out and settled it with the *White Bear* that he should come again the next Thursday evening and get an answer. Meantime he talked his daughter over, and kept on telling her of all the riches they would get, and how well off she would be herself; and so at last she thought better of it, and washed and mended her rags, made herself as smart as she could, and was ready to start. I can't say her packing gave her much trouble.

Next Thursday evening came the *White Bear* to fetch her, and she got upon his back with her bundle, and off they went. So, when they had gone a bit of the way, the *White Bear* said:

"Are you afraid?"

"No," she wasn't.

"Well! mind and hold tight by my shaggy coat, and then there's nothing to fear," said the *Bear*.

So she rode a long, long way, till they came to a great steep hill. There, on the face of it, the *White Bear* gave a knock, and a door opened, and they came into a castle where there were many rooms all lit up; rooms gleaming with silver and gold; and there, too, was a table ready laid, and it was all as grand as grand could be. Then the *White Bear* gave her a silver bell; and when she wanted anything, she was only to ring it, and she would get it at once.

Well, after she had eaten and drunk, and evening wore on, she got sleepy after her journey, and thought she would like to go to bed, so she rang the bell; and she had scarce taken hold of it before she came into a chamber where there was a bed made, as fair and white as any one would wish to sleep in, with silken pillows and curtains and gold fringe. All that was in the room was gold or silver; but when she had gone to bed and put out the light, a man came and laid himself alongside her. That was the *White Bear*, who threw off his beast shape at night; but she never saw him, for he always came after she had put out the light, and before the day dawned he was up and off again. So things went on happily for a while, but at last she began to get silent and sorrowful; for there she went about all day alone, and she longed to go home to see her father and mother and brothers and sisters. So one day, when the *White Bear* asked what it was that she lacked, she said it was so dull and lonely there, and how she longed to go home to see her father and mother and brothers and sisters, and that was why she was so sad and sorrowful, because she couldn't get to them.

"Well, well!" said the *Bear*, "perhaps there's a cure for all this; but you must promise me one thing, not to talk alone with your mother, but only when the rest are by to hear; for she'll take you

by the hand and try to lead you into a room alone to talk; but you must mind and not do that, else you'll bring bad luck on both of us."

So one Sunday the *White Bear* came and said, now they could set off to see her father and mother. Well, off they started, she sitting on his back; and they went far and long. At last they came to a grand house, and there her brothers and sisters were running about out of doors at play, and everything was so pretty, 'twas a joy to see.

"This is where your father and mother live now," said the *White Bear*; "but don't forget what I told you, else you'll make us both unlucky."

"No! bless her, she'd not forget;" – and when she had reached the house, the *White Bear* turned right about and left her.

Then, when she went in to see her father and mother, there was such joy, there was no end to it. None of them thought they could thank her enough for all she had done for them. Now, they had everything they wished, as good as good could be, and they all wanted to know how she got on where she lived.

Well, she said, it was very good to live where she did; she had all she wished. What she said beside I don't know, but I don't think any of them had the right end of the stick, or that they got much out of her. But so, in the afternoon, after they had done dinner, all happened as the *White Bear* had said. Her mother wanted to talk with her alone in her bedroom; but she minded what the *White Bear* had said, and wouldn't go upstairs.

"Oh! what we have to talk about will keep!" she said, and put her mother off. But, somehow or other, her mother got round her at last, and she had to tell her the whole story. So she said, how every night when she had gone to bed a man came and lay down beside her as soon as she had put out the light; and how she never saw him, because he was always up and away before the morning dawned; and how she went about woeful and sorrowing, for she thought she should so like to see him; and how all day long she walked about there alone; and how dull and dreary and lonesome it was.

"My!" said her mother; "it may well be a Troll you slept with! But now I'll teach you a lesson how to set eyes on him. I'll give you a bit of candle, which you can carry home in your bosom; just light that while he is asleep, but take care not to drop the tallow on him."

Yes! she took the candle and hid it in her bosom, and as night drew on, the *White Bear* came and fetched her away.

But when they had gone a bit of the way, the *White Bear* asked if all hadn't happened as he had said.

"Well, she couldn't say it hadn't."

"Now, mind," said he, "if you have listened to your mother's advice, you have brought bad luck on us both, and then, all that has passed between us will be as nothing."

"No," she said, "she hadn't listened to her mother's advice."

So when she reached home, and had gone to bed, it was the old story over again. There came a man and lay down beside her; but at dead of night, when she heard he slept, she got up and struck a light, lit the candle, and let the light shine on him, and so she saw that he was the loveliest *Prince* one ever set eyes on, and she fell so deep in love with him on the spot, that she thought she couldn't live if she didn't give him a kiss there and then. And so she did; but as she kissed him, she dropped three hot drops of tallow on his shirt, and he woke up.

"What have you done?" he cried; "now you have made us both unlucky, for had you held out only this one year, I had been freed. For I have a step-mother who has bewitched me, so that I am a *White Bear* by day, and a *Man* by night. But now all ties are snapt between us; now I must set off from you to her. She lives in a Castle which stands *East of the Sun and West of the Moon*, and there, too, is a *Princess*, with a nose three ells long, and she's the wife I must have now."

She wept and took it ill, but there was no help for it; go he must.

Then she asked if she mightn't go with him.

No, she mightn't.

"Tell me the way, then," she said, "and I'll search you out; *that* surely I may get leave to do."

"Yes," she might do that, he said; "but there was no way to that place. It lay *East of the Sun and West of the Moon*, and thither she'd never find her way."

So next morning, when she woke up, both *Prince* and castle were gone, and then she lay on a little green patch, in the midst of the gloomy thick wood, and by her side lay the same bundle of rags she had brought with her from her old home.

So when she had rubbed the sleep out of her eyes, and wept till she was tired, she set out on her way, and walked many, many days, till she came to a lofty crag. Under it sat an old hag, and played with a gold apple which she tossed about. Here the lassie asked if she knew the way to the Prince, who lived with his step-mother in the Castle, that lay *East of the Sun and West of the Moon*, and who was to marry the *Princess* with a nose three ells long.

"How did you come to know about him?" asked the old hag; "but maybe you are the lassie who ought to have had him?"

Yes, she was.

"So, so; it's you, is it?" said the old hag. "Well, all I know about him is, that he lives in the castle that lies *East of the Sun and West of the Moon*, and thither you'll come, late or never; but still you may have the loan of my horse, and on him you can ride to my next neighbour. Maybe she'll be able to tell you; and when you get there, just give the horse a switch under the left ear, and beg him to be off home; and, stay, this gold apple you may take with you."

So she got upon the horse, and rode a long, long time, till she came to another crag, under which sat another old hag, with a gold carding-comb. Here the lassie asked if she knew the way to the castle that lay *East of the Sun and West of the Moon*, and she answered, like the first old hag, that she knew nothing about it, except it was east of the sun and west of the moon.

"And thither you'll come, late or never, but you shall have the loan of my horse to my next neighbour; maybe she'll tell you all about it; and when you get there, just switch the horse under the left ear, and beg him to be off home."

And this old hag gave her the golden carding-comb; it might be she'd find some use for it, she said. So the lassie got up on the horse, and rode a far, far way, and a weary time; and so at last she came to another great crag, under which sat another old hag, spinning with a golden spinning-wheel. Her, too, she asked if she knew the way to the *Prince*, and where the castle was that lay *East of the Sun and West of the Moon*. So it was the same thing over again.

"Maybe it's you who ought to have had the *Prince*?" said the old hag.

Yes, it was.

But she, too, didn't know the way a bit better than the other two. "East of the sun and west of the moon it was," she knew – that was all.

"And thither you'll come, late or never; but I'll lend you my horse, and then I think you'd best ride to the East Wind and ask him; maybe he knows those parts, and can blow you thither. But when you get to him, you need only give the horse a switch under the left ear, and he'll trot home of himself."

And so, too, she gave her the gold spinning-wheel. "Maybe you'll find a use for it," said the old hag.

Then on she rode many many days, a weary time, before she got to the East Wind's house, but at last she did reach it, and then she asked the East Wind if he could tell her the way to the *Prince* who dwelt east of the sun and west of the moon. Yes, the East Wind had often heard tell of it, the *Prince* and the castle, but he couldn't tell the way, for he had never blown so far.

"But, if you will, I'll go with you to my brother the West Wind, maybe he knows, for he's much stronger. So, if you will just get on my back, I'll carry you thither."

Yes, she got on his back, and I should just think they went briskly along.

So when they got there, they went into the West Wind's house, and the East Wind said the lassie he had brought was the one who ought to have had the *Prince* who lived in the castle *East of the Sun and West of the Moon*; and so she had set out to seek him, and how he had come with her, and would be glad to know if the West Wind knew how to get to the castle.

"Nay," said the West Wind, "so far I've never blown; but if you will, I'll go with you to our brother the South Wind, for he's much stronger than either of us, and he has flapped his wings far and wide. Maybe he'll tell you. You can get on my back, and I'll carry you to him."

Yes! she got on his back, and so they travelled to the South Wind, and weren't so very long on the way, I should think.

When they got there, the West Wind asked him if he could tell her the way to the castle that lay *East of the Sun and West of the Moon*, for it was she who ought to have had the *Prince* who lived there.

"You don't say so! That's she, is it?" said the South Wind.

"Well, I have blustered about in most places in my time, but so far have I never blown; but if you will, I'll take you to my brother the North Wind; he is the oldest and strongest of the whole lot of us, and if he don't know where it is, you'll never find any one in the world to tell you. You can get on my back, and I'll carry you thither."

Yes! she got on his back, and away he went from his house at a fine rate. And this time, too, she wasn't long on her way.

So when they got to the North Wind's house, he was so wild and cross, cold puffs came from him a long way off.

"Blast you both, what do you want?" he roared out to them ever so far off, so that it struck them with an icy shiver.

"Well," said the South Wind, "you needn't be so foul-mouthed, for here I am, your brother, the South Wind, and here is the lassie who ought to have had the *Prince* who dwells in the castle that lies *East of the Sun and West of the Moon*, and now she wants to ask you if you ever were there, and can tell her the way, for she would be so glad to find him again."

"Yes, I know well enough where it is," said the North Wind; "once in my life I blew an aspen-leaf thither, but, I was so tired I couldn't blow a puff for ever so many days, after. But if you really wish to go thither, and aren't afraid to come along with me, I'll take you on my back and see if I can blow you thither."

Yes! with all her heart; she must and would get thither if it were possible in any way; and as for fear, however madly he went, she wouldn't be at all afraid.

"Very well, then," said the North Wind, "but you must sleep here to-night, for we must have the whole day before us, if we're to get thither at all."

Early next morning the North Wind woke her, and puffed himself up, and blew himself out, and made himself so stout and big, 'twas gruesome to look at him; and so off they went high up through the air, as if they would never stop till they got to the world's end.

Down here below there was such a storm; it threw down long tracts of wood and many houses, and when it swept over the great sea, ships foundered by hundreds.

So they tore on and on – no one can believe how far they went – and all the while they still went over the sea, and the North Wind got more and more weary, and so out of breath he could scarce bring out a puff, and his wings drooped and drooped, till at last he sunk so low that the crests of the waves dashed over his heels.

"Are you afraid?" said the North Wind.

"No!" she wasn't.

But they weren't very far from land; and the North Wind had still so much strength left in him that he managed to throw her up on the shore under the windows of the castle which lay *East of the Sun and West of the Moon*; but then he was so weak and worn out, he had to stay there and rest many days before he could get home again.

Next morning the lassie sat down under the castle window, and began to play with the gold apple; and the first person she saw was the *Long-nose* who was to have the *Prince*.

“What do you want for your gold apple, you lassie?” said the *Long-nose*, and threw up the window.

“It’s not for sale, for gold or money,” said the lassie.

“If it’s not for sale for gold or money, what is it that you will sell it for? You may name your own price,” said the *Princess*.

“Well! if I may get to the *Prince*, who lives here, and be with him to-night, you shall have it,” said the lassie whom the North Wind had brought.

Yes! she might; that could be done. So the *Princess* got the gold apple; but when the lassie came up to the *Prince*’s bed-room at night he was fast asleep; she called him and shook him, and between whiles she wept sore; but all she could do she couldn’t wake him up. Next morning, as soon as day broke, came the *Princess* with the long nose, and drove her out again.

So in the daytime she sat down under the castle windows and began to card with her carding-comb, and the same thing happened. The *Princess* asked what she wanted for it; and she said it wasn’t for sale for gold or money, but if she might get leave to go up to the *Prince* and be with him that night, the *Princess* should have it. But when she went up she found him fast asleep again, and all she called, and all she shook, and wept, and prayed, she couldn’t get life into him; and as soon as the first gray peep of day came, then came the *Princess* with the long nose, and chased her out again.

So, in the daytime, the lassie sat down outside under the castle window, and began to spin with her golden spinning-wheel, and that, too, the *Princess* with the long nose wanted to have. So she threw up the window and asked what she wanted for it. The lassie said, as she had said twice before, it wasn’t for sale for gold or money; but if she might go up to the *Prince* who was there, and be with him alone that night, she might have it.

Yes! she might do that and welcome. But now you must know there were some Christian folk who had been carried off thither, and as they sat in their room, which was next the *Prince*, they had heard how a woman had been in there, and wept and prayed, and called to him two nights running, and they told that to the *Prince*.

That evening, when the *Princess* came with her sleepy drink, the *Prince* made as if he drank, but threw it over his shoulder, for he could guess it was a sleepy drink. So, when the lassie came in, she found the *Prince* wide awake; and then she told him the whole story how she had come thither.

“Ah,” said the *Prince*, “you’ve just come in the very nick of time, for to-morrow is to be our wedding-day; but now I won’t have the *Long-nose*, and you are the only woman in the world who can set me free. I’ll say I want to see what my wife is fit for, and beg her to wash the shirt which has the three spots of tallow on it; she’ll say yes, for she doesn’t know ’tis you who put them there; but that’s a work only for Christian folk, and not for such a pack of Trolls, and so I’ll say that I won’t have any other for my bride than the woman who can wash them out, and ask you to do it.”

So there was great joy and love between them all that night. But next day, when the wedding was to be, the *Prince* said:

“First of all, I’d like to see what my bride is fit for.”

“Yes!” said the step-mother, with all her heart.

“Well,” said the *Prince*, “I’ve got a fine shirt which I’d like for my wedding shirt, but somehow or other it has got three spots of tallow on it, which I must have washed out; and I have sworn never to take any other bride than the woman who’s able to do that. If she can’t, she’s not worth having.”

Well, that was no great thing they said, so they agreed, and she with the long-nose began to wash away as hard as she could, but the more she rubbed and scrubbed, the bigger the spots grew.

“Ah!” said the old hag, her mother, “you can’t wash; let me try.”

But she hadn't long taken the shirt in hand before it got far worse than ever, and with all her rubbing, and wringing, and scrubbing, the spots grew bigger and blacker, and the darker and uglier was the shirt.

Then all the other Trolls began to wash, but the longer it lasted, the blacker and uglier the shirt grew, till at last it was as black all over as if it had been up the chimney.

"Ah!" said the *Prince*, "you're none of you worth a straw; you can't wash. Why there, outside, sits a beggar lassie, I'll be bound she knows how to wash better than the whole lot of you. Come in, Lassie!" he shouted.

Well, in she came.

"Can you wash this shirt clean, lassie you?" said he.

"I don't know," she said, "but I think I can."

And almost before she had taken it and dipped it in the water, it was as white as driven snow, and whiter still.

"Yes; you are the lassie for me," said the *Prince*.

At that the old hag flew into such a rage, she burst on the spot, and the *Princess* with the long nose after her, and the whole pack of Trolls after her – at least I've never heard a word about them since.

As for the *Prince* and *Princess*, they set free all the poor Christian folk who had been carried off and shut up there; and they took with them all the silver and gold, and flitted away as far as they could from the Castle that lay *East of the Sun and West of the Moon*.

THE BLUE BELT

Once on a time there was an old beggar-woman, who had gone out to beg. She had a little lad with her, and when she had got her bag full she struck across the hills towards her own home. So when they had gone a bit up the hill-side, they came upon a little *Blue Belt* which lay where two paths met, and the lad asked his mother's leave to pick it up.

"No," said she, "maybe there's witchcraft in it;" and so with threats she forced him to follow her. But when they had gone a bit further, the lad said he must turn aside a moment out of the road; and meanwhile his mother sat down on a tree-stump. But the lad was a long time gone, for as soon as he got so far into the wood that the old dame could not see him, he ran off to where the *Belt* lay, took it up, tied it round his waist, and lo! he felt as strong as if he could lift the whole hill. When he got back, the old dame was in a great rage, and wanted to know what he had been doing all that while. "You don't care how much time you waste, and yet you know the night is drawing on, and we must cross the hill before it is dark!" So on they tramped; but when they had got about half-way, the old dame grew weary, and said she must rest under a bush.

"Dear mother," said the lad, "mayn't I just go up to the top of this high crag while you rest, and try if I can't see some sign of folk hereabouts?"

Yes! he might do that; so when he had got to the top he saw a light shining from the north. So he ran down and told his mother.

"We must get on, mother; we are near a house, for I see a bright light shining quite close to us in the north." Then she rose and shouldered her bag, and set off to see; but they hadn't gone far, before there stood a steep spur of the hill, right across their path.

"Just as I thought!" said the old dame, "now we can't go a step farther; a pretty bed we shall have here!"

But the lad took the bag under one arm, and his mother under the other, and ran straight up the steep crag with them.

"Now, don't you see? Don't you see that we are close to a house? Don't you see that bright light?"

But the old dame said those were no Christian folk, but *Trolls*, for she was at home in all that forest far and near, and knew there was not a living soul in it, until you were well over the ridge and had come down on the other side. But they went on, and in a little while they came to a great house which was all painted red.

"What's the good?" said the old dame. "We daren't go in, for here the *Trolls* live."

"Don't say so; we must go in. There must be men where the lights shine so," said the lad. So in he went, and his mother after him, but he had scarce opened the door before she swooned away, for there she saw a great stout man, at least twenty feet high, sitting on the bench.

"Good evening, grandfather!" said the lad.

"Well, here I've sat three hundred years," said the man who sat on the bench, "and no one has ever come and called me grandfather before." Then the lad sat down by the man's side, and began to talk to him as if they had been old friends.

"But what's come over your mother?" said the man, after they had chatted a while. "I think she swooned away; you had better look after her."

So the lad went and took hold of the old dame, and dragged her up the hall along the floor. That brought her to herself, and she kicked and scratched, and flung herself about, and at last sat down upon a heap of firewood in the corner; but she was so frightened that she scarce dared to look one in the face.

After a while, the lad asked if they could spend the night there.

"Yes, to be sure," said the man.

So they went on talking again, but the lad soon got hungry, and wanted to know if they could get food as well as lodging.

“Of course,” said the man, “that might be got too.” And after he had sat a while longer, he rose up and threw six loads of dry pitch-pine on the fire. This made the old hag still more afraid.

“Oh! now he’s going to roast us alive,” she said, in the corner where she sat.

And when the wood had burned down to glowing embers, up got the man and strode out of his house.

“Heaven bless and help us! what a stout heart you have got!” said the old dame. “Don’t you see we have got amongst *Trolls*?”

“Stuff and nonsense!” said the lad; “no harm if we have.”

In a little while, back came the man with an ox so fat and big, the lad had never seen its like, and he gave it one blow with his fist under the ear, and down it fell dead on the floor. When that was done, he took it up by all the four legs and laid it on the glowing embers, and turned it and twisted it about till it was burnt brown outside. After that, he went to a cupboard and took out a great silver dish, and laid the ox on it; and the dish was so big that none of the ox hung over on any side. This he put on the table, and then he went down into the cellar and fetched a cask of wine, knocked out the head, and put the cask on the table, together with two knives, which were each six feet long. When this was done he bade them go and sit down to supper and eat. So they went, the lad first and the old dame after, but she began to whimper and wail, and to wonder how she should ever use such knives. But her son seized one, and began to cut slices out of the thigh of the ox, which he placed before his mother. And when they had eaten a bit, he took up the cask with both hands, and lifted it down to the floor; then he told his mother to come and drink, but it was still so high she couldn’t reach up to it; so he caught her up, and held her up to the edge of the cask while she drank; as for himself, he clambered up and hung down like a cat inside the cask while he drank. So when he had quenched his thirst, he took up the cask and put it back on the table, and thanked the man for the good meal, and told his mother to come and thank him too, and, a-feared though she was, she dared do nothing else but thank the man. Then the lad sat down again alongside the man and began to gossip, and after they had sat a while the man said:

“Well! I must just go and get a bit of supper too;” and so he went to the table and ate up the whole ox – hoofs, and horns, and all – and drained the cask to the last drop, and then went back and sat on the bench.

“As for beds,” he said, “I don’t know what’s to be done. I’ve only got one bed and a cradle; but we could get on pretty well if you would sleep in the cradle, and then your mother might lie in the bed yonder.”

“Thank you kindly, that’ll do nicely,” said the lad; and with that he pulled off his clothes and lay down in the cradle; but, to tell you the truth, it was quite as big as a four-poster. As for the old dame, she had to follow the man who showed her to bed, though she was out of her wits for fear.

“Well!” thought the lad to himself, “twill never do to go to sleep yet. I’d best lie awake and listen how things go as the night wears on.”

So, after a while, the man began to talk to the old dame, and at last he said:

“We two might live here so happily together, could we only be rid of this son of yours.”

“But do you know how to settle him? Is that what you’re thinking of?” said she.

“Nothing easier,” said he; at any rate he would try. He would just say he wished the old dame would stay and keep house for him a day or two, and then he would take the lad out with him up the hill to quarry corner-stones, and roll down a great rock on him. All this the lad lay and listened to.

Next day the *Troll* – for it was a *Troll* as clear as day – asked if the old dame would stay and keep house for him a few days; and as the day went on he took a great iron crowbar, and asked the lad if he had a mind to go with him up the hill and quarry a few corner-stones. With all his heart, he said, and went with him; and so, after they had split a few stones, the *Troll* wanted him to go down below

and look after cracks in the rock; and while he was doing this the *Troll* worked away, and wearied himself with his crowbar till he moved a whole crag out of its bed, which came rolling right down on the place where the lad was; but he held it up till he could get on one side, and then let it roll on.

“Oh!” said the lad to the *Troll*, “now I see what you mean to do with me. You want to crush me to death; so just go down yourself and look after the cracks and refts in the rock, and I’ll stand up above.”

The *Troll* did not dare to do otherwise than the lad bade him, and the end of it was that the lad rolled down a great rock, which fell upon the *Troll* and broke one of his thighs.

“Well! you *are* in a sad plight,” said the lad, as he strode down, lifted up the rock, and set the man free. After that he had to put him on his back and carry him home; so he ran with him as fast as a horse, and shook him so that the *Troll* screamed and screeched as if a knife were run into him. And when he got home, they had to put the *Troll* to bed, and there he lay in a sad pickle.

When the night wore on, the *Troll* began to talk to the old dame again, and to wonder how ever they could be rid of the lad.

“Well,” said the old dame, “if you can’t hit on a plan to get rid of him, I’m sure I can’t.”

“Let me see,” said the *Troll*; “I’ve got twelve lions in a garden; if they could only get hold of the lad, they’d soon tear him to pieces.”

So the old dame said it would be easy enough to get him there. She would sham sick, and say she felt so poorly, nothing would do her any good but lion’s milk. All that the lad lay and listened to; and when he got up in the morning his mother said she was worse than she looked, and she thought she should never be right again unless she could get some lion’s milk.

“Then I’m afraid you’ll be poorly a long time, mother,” said the lad, “for I’m sure I don’t know where any is to be got.”

“Oh! if that be all,” said the *Troll*, “there’s no lack of lion’s milk, if we only had the man to fetch it;” and then he went on to say how his brother had a garden with twelve lions in it, and how the lad might have the key if he had a mind to milk the lions. So the lad took the key and a milking pail, and strode off; and when he unlocked the gate and got into the garden, there stood all the twelve lions on their hind-paws, rampant and roaring at him. But the lad laid hold of the biggest, and led him about by the fore-paws, and dashed him against stocks and stones till there wasn’t a bit of him left but the two paws. So when the rest saw that, they were so afraid that they crept up and lay at his feet like so many curs. After that they followed him about wherever he went, and when he got home, they lay down outside the house, with their fore-paws on the door sill.

“Now, mother, you’ll soon be well,” said the lad, when he went in, “for here is the lion’s milk.”

He had just milked a drop in the pail.

But the *Troll*, as he lay in bed, swore it was all a lie. He was sure the lad was not the man to milk lions.

When the lad heard that, he forced the *Troll* to get out of bed, threw open the door, and all the lions rose up and seized the *Troll*, and at last the lad had to make them leave their hold.

That night the *Troll* began to talk to the old dame again. “I’m sure I can’t tell how to put this lad out of the way – he is so awfully strong; can’t you think of some way?”

“No,” said the old dame, “if you can’t tell, I’m sure I can’t.”

“Well!” said the *Troll*, “I have two brothers in a castle; they are twelve times as strong as I am, and that’s why I was turned out and had to put up with this farm. They hold that castle, and round it there is an orchard with apples in it, and whoever eats those apples sleeps for three days and three nights. If we could only get the lad to go for the fruit, he wouldn’t be able to keep from tasting the apples, and as soon as ever he fell asleep my brothers would tear him in pieces.”

The old dame said she would sham sick, and say she could never be herself again unless she tasted those apples; for she had set her heart on them.

All this the lad lay and listened to.

When the morning came the old dame was so poorly that she couldn't utter a word but groans and sighs. She was sure she should never be well again, unless she had some of those apples that grew in the orchard near the castle where the man's brothers lived; only she had no one to send for them.

Oh! the lad was ready to go that instant; but the eleven lions went with him. So when he came to the orchard, he climbed up into the apple tree and ate as many apples as he could, and he had scarce got down before he fell into a deep sleep; but the lions all lay round him in a ring. The third day came the *Troll's* brothers, but they did not come in man's shape. They came snorting like man-eating steeds, and wondered who it was that dared to be there, and said they would tear him to pieces, so small that there should not be a bit of him left. But up rose the lions and tore the *Trolls* into small pieces, so that the place looked as if a dung heap had been tossed about it; and when they had finished the *Trolls* they lay down again. The lad did not wake till late in the afternoon, and when he got on his knees and rubbed the sleep out of his eyes, he began to wonder what had been going on, when he saw the marks of hoofs. But when he went towards the castle, a maiden looked out of a window who had seen all that had happened, and she said:

"You may thank your stars you weren't in that tussle, else you must have lost your life."

"What! I lose my life! No fear of that, I think," said the lad.

So she begged him to come in, that she might talk with him, for she hadn't seen a Christian soul ever since she came there. But when she opened the door the lions wanted to go in too, but she got so frightened that she began to scream, and so the lad let them lie outside. Then the two talked and talked, and the lad asked how it came that she, who was so lovely, could put up with those ugly *Trolls*. She never wished it, she said; 'twas quite against her will. They had seized her by force, and she was the King of Arabia's daughter. So they talked on, and at last she asked him what he would do; whether she should go back home, or whether he would have her to wife. Of course he would have her, and she shouldn't go home.

After that they went round the castle, and at last they came to a great hall, where the *Trolls'* two great swords hung high up on the wall.

"I wonder if you are man enough to wield one of these," said the *Princess*.

"Who? I?" said the lad. "Twould be a pretty thing if I couldn't wield one of these."

With that he put two or three chairs one a-top of the other, jumped up, and touched the biggest sword with his finger tips, tossed it up in the air, and caught it again by the hilt; leapt down, and at the same time dealt such a blow with it on the floor that the whole hall shook. After he had thus got down, he thrust the sword under his arm and carried it about with him.

So, when they had lived a little while in the castle, the *Princess* thought she ought to go home to her parents, and let them know what had become of her; so they loaded a ship, and she set sail from the castle.

After she had gone, and the lad had wandered about a little, he called to mind that he had been sent out on an errand thither, and had come to fetch something for his mother's health; and though he said to himself, "After all the old dame was not so bad but she's all right by this time" – still he thought he ought to go and just see how she was. So he went and found both the man and his mother quite fresh and hearty.

"What wretches you are to live in this beggarly hut," said the lad. "Come with me up to my castle, and you shall see what a fine fellow I am."

Well! they were both ready to go, and on the way his mother talked to him, and asked how it was he had got so strong.

"If you must know it came of that blue belt which lay on the hill-side that time when you and I were out begging," said the lad.

"Have you got it still?" asked she.

"Yes" – he had. It was tied round his waist.

"Might she see it?"

“Yes” – she might; and with that he pulled open his waistcoat and shirt to show it to her. Then she seized it with both hands, tore it off, and twisted it round her fist.

“Now,” she cried, “what shall I do with such a wretch as you? I’ll just give you one blow, and dash your brains out!”

“Far too good a death for such a scamp,” said the *Troll*. “No! let’s first burn out his eyes, and then turn him adrift in a little boat.”

So they burned out his eyes and turned him adrift, in spite of his prayers and tears; but, as the boat drifted, the lions swam after, and at last they laid hold of it and dragged it ashore on an island, and placed the lad under a fir tree. They caught game for him, and they plucked the birds and made him a bed of down; but he was forced to eat his meat raw and he was blind. At last, one day the biggest lion was chasing a hare which was blind, for it ran straight over stock and stone, and the end was, it ran right up against a fir-stump and tumbled head over heels across the field right into a spring; but lo! when it came out of the spring it saw its way quite plain, and so saved its life.

“So, so!” thought the lion, and went and dragged the lad to the spring, and dipped him over head and ears in it. So, when he had got his sight again, he went down to the shore and made signs to the lions that they should all lie close together like a raft; then he stood upon their backs while they swam with him to the mainland. When he had reached the shore he went up into a birchen copse, and made the lions lie quiet. Then he stole up to the castle, like a thief, to see if he couldn’t lay hands on his belt; and when he got to the door, he peeped through the keyhole, and there he saw his belt hanging up over a door in the kitchen. So he crept softly in across the floor, for there was no one there; but as soon as he had got hold of the belt, he began to kick and stamp about as though he were mad. Just then his mother came rushing out:

“Dear heart, my darling little boy! do give me the belt again,” she said.

“Thank you kindly,” said he. “Now you shall have the doom you passed on me,” and he fulfilled it on the spot. When the old *Troll* heard that, he came in and begged and prayed so prettily that he might not be smitten to death.

“Well, you may live,” said the lad, “but you shall undergo the same punishment you gave me;” and so he burned out the *Troll’s* eyes, and turned him adrift on the sea in a little boat, but he had no lions to follow him.

Now the lad was all alone, and he went about longing and longing for the *Princess*; at last he could bear it no longer; he must set out to seek her, his heart was so bent on having her. So he loaded four ships and set sail for Arabia.

For some time they had fair wind and fine weather, but after that they lay wind-bound under a rocky island. So the sailors went ashore and strolled about to spend the time, and there they found a huge egg, almost as big as a little house. So they began to knock it about with large stones, but, after all, they couldn’t crack the shell. Then the lad came up with his sword to see what all the noise was about, and when he saw the egg, he thought it a trifle to crack it; so he gave it one blow and the egg split, and out came a chicken as big as an elephant.

“Now we have done wrong,” said the lad; “this can cost us all our lives;” and then he asked his sailors if they were men enough to sail to Arabia in four-and-twenty hours if they got a fine breeze. Yes! they were good to do that, they said, so they set sail with a fine breeze, and got to Arabia in three-and-twenty hours. As soon as they landed, the lad ordered all the sailors to go and bury themselves up to the eyes in a sandhill, so that they could barely see the ships. The lad and the captains climbed a high crag and sate down under a fir.

In a little while came a great bird flying with an island in its claws, and let it fall down on the fleet, and sunk every ship. After it had done that, it flew up to the sandhill and flapped its wings, so that the wind nearly took off the heads of the sailors, and it flew past the fir with such force that it turned the lad right about, but he was ready with his sword, and gave the bird one blow and brought it down dead.

After that he went to the town, where every one was glad because the *King* had got his daughter back; but now the *King* had hidden her away somewhere himself, and promised her hand as a reward to any one who could find her, and this though she was betrothed before. Now as the lad went along he met a man who had white bear-skins for sale, so he bought one of the hides and put it on; and one of the captains was to take an iron chain and lead him about, and so he went into the town and began to play pranks. At last the news came to the *King's* ears, that there never had been such fun in the town before, for here was a white bear that danced and cut capers just as it was bid. So a messenger came to say the bear must come to the castle at once, for the *King* wanted to see its tricks. So when it got to the castle every one was afraid, for such a beast they had never seen before; but the captain said there was no danger unless they laughed at it. They mustn't do that, else it would tear them to pieces. When the *King* heard that, he warned all the court not to laugh. But while the fun was going on, in came one of the *King's* maids, and began to laugh and make game of the bear, and the bear flew at her and tore her, so that there was scarce a rag of her left. Then all the court began to bewail, and the captain most of all.

"Stuff and nonsense," said the *King*; "she's only a maid, besides it's more my affair than yours."

When the show was over, it was late at night. "It's no good your going away, when it's so late," said the *King*. "The bear had best sleep here."

"Perhaps it might sleep in the ingle by the kitchen fire," said the captain.

"Nay," said the *King*, "it shall sleep up here, and it shall have pillows and cushions to sleep on." So a whole heap of pillows and cushions was brought, and the captain had a bed in a side room.

But at midnight the *King* came with a lamp in his hand and a big bunch of keys, and carried off the white bear. He passed along gallery after gallery through doors and rooms, up-stairs and down-stairs, till at last he came to a pier which ran out into the sea. Then the *King* began to pull and haul at posts and pins, this one up and that one down, till at last a little house floated up to the water's edge. There he kept his daughter, for she was so dear to him that he had hid her, so that no one could find her out. He left the white bear outside while he went in and told her how it had danced and played its pranks. She said she was afraid, and dared not look at it; but he talked her over, saying there was no danger if she only wouldn't laugh. So they brought the bear in, and locked the door, and it danced and played its tricks; but just when the fun was at its height, the *Princess's* maid began to laugh. Then the lad flew at her and tore her to bits, and the *Princess* began to cry and sob.

"Stuff and nonsense," cried the *King*; "all this fuss about a maid! I'll get you just as good a one again. But now I think the bear had best stay here till morning, for I don't care to have to go and lead it along all those galleries and stairs at this time of night."

"Well!" said the *Princess*, "if it sleeps here, I'm sure I won't."

But just then the bear curled himself up and lay down by the stove; and it was settled at last that the *Princess* should sleep there too, with a light burning. But as soon as the *King* had well gone, the white bear came and begged her to undo his collar. The *Princess* was so scared she almost swooned away; but she felt about till she found the collar, and she had scarce undone it before the bear pulled his head off. Then she knew him again, and was so glad there was no end to her joy, and she wanted to tell her father at once that her deliverer was come. But the lad would not hear of it; he would earn her once more, he said. So in the morning when they heard the *King* rattling at the posts outside, the lad drew on the hide and lay down by the stove.

"Well, has it lain still?" the king asked.

"I should think so," said the *Princess*; "it hasn't so much as turned or stretched itself once."

When they got up to the castle again, the captain took the bear and led it away, and then the lad threw off the hide, and went to a tailor and ordered clothes fit for a prince; and when they were fitted on he went to the *King*, and said he wanted to find the *Princess*.

"You're not the first who has wished the same thing," said the *King*, "but they have all lost their lives; for if any one who tries can't find her in four-and-twenty hours his life is forfeited."

Yes; the lad knew all that. Still he wished to try, and if he couldn't find her, 'twas his look-out. Now in the castle there was a band that played sweet tunes, and there were fair maids to dance with, and so the lad danced away.

When twelve hours were gone, the *King* said:

"I pity you with all my heart. You're so poor a hand at seeking; you will surely lose your life."

"Stuff!" said the lad; "while there's life there's hope! So long as there's breath in the body there's no fear; we have lots of time!" and so he went on dancing till there was only one hour left.

Then he said he would begin to search.

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