

The Devil with the Three Golden Hairs

There was once a poor woman who gave birth to a little son, and as he came into the world with a **caul** on, it was **predicted** that in his fourteenth year he would have the king's daughter for his wife. It happened that soon afterwards the king came into the village, and no one knew that he was the king, and when he asked the people what news there was, they answered, a child has just been born with a caul on, whatever anyone so born undertakes turns out well. It is **propheisied**, too, that in his fourteenth year he will have the king's daughter for his wife.

The king, who had a bad heart, and was angry about the **prophecy**, went to the parents, and, **seeming** quite friendly, said, you poor people, let me have your child, and I will take care of it. At first they **refused**, but when the stranger offered them a large **amount** of gold for it, and they thought, it is a child of good **fortune**, and everything must turn out well for it, they at last **consented**, and gave him the child.

The king put it in a box and rode away with it until he came to a deep piece of water, then he threw the box into it and thought, I have freed my daughter from her **undesired suitor**.

The box, however, did not sink, but **floated** like a boat, and not a **drop** of water made its way into it. And it floated to within two miles of the king's chief city, where there was a **mill**, and it came to a halt at the mill-dam. A miller's boy, who by good **luck** was standing there, noticed it and pulled it out with a **hook**, thinking that he had found a great **treasure**, but when he opened it there lay a pretty boy inside, quite fresh and lively. He took him to the **mill** and his wife, and as they had no children they were glad, and said, "God has given him to us." They took great care of the **foundling**, and he grew up in all goodness.

It happened that once in a storm, the king went into the mill, and asked the mill-folk if the tall youth were their son. No, answered they, he's a foundling. Fourteen years ago he floated down to the mill-dam in a box, and the mill-boy pulled him out of the water.

Then the king knew that it was none other than the child of good fortune which he had thrown into the water, and he said, my good people, could not the

youth take a letter to the queen. I will give him two gold pieces as a **reward**. Just as the king commands, answered they, and they told the boy to hold himself in **readiness**. Then the king wrote a letter to the queen, wherein he said, as soon as the boy arrives with this letter, let him be killed and **buried**, and all must be done before I come home. The boy set out with this letter, but he **lost** his way, and in the evening came to a large forest. In the darkness he saw a small light, he went towards it and reached a **cottage**. When he went in, an old woman was sitting by the fire quite alone. She started when she saw the boy, and said, **whence** do you come, and **whither** are you going. I come from the mill, he answered, and wish to go to the queen, to whom I am taking a letter, but as I have lost my way in the forest I should like to stay here over night. You poor boy, said the woman, you have come into a **den** of **thieves**, and when they come home they will kill you. Let them come, said the boy, I am not afraid, but I am so tired that I cannot go any farther. And he **stretched** himself upon a **bench** and fell asleep.

Soon afterwards the **robbers** came, and angrily asked what strange boy was lying there. Ah, said the old woman, it is an **innocent** child who has lost himself in the forest, and out of **pity** I have let him come in, he has to take a letter to the queen. The robbers opened the letter and read it, and in it was written that the boy as soon as he arrived should be put to death. Then the hardhearted robbers felt pity, and their leader tore up the letter and wrote another, saying, that as soon as the boy came, he should be married at once to the king's daughter. Then they let him lie quietly on the bench until the next morning, and when he awoke they gave him the letter, and showed him the right way.

And the queen, when she had received the letter and read it, did as was written in it, and had a **splendid** wedding-feast prepared, and the king's daughter was married to the child of good fortune, and as the youth was **handsome** and friendly she lived with him in joy and **contentment**.

After some time the king returned to his palace and saw that the prophecy was fulfilled, and the child married to his daughter. How has that come to pass, said he, I gave quite another order in my letter.

So the queen gave him the letter, and said that he might see for himself what was written in it. The king read the letter and saw quite well that it had been exchanged for the other. He asked the youth what had become of the letter **entrusted** to him, and why he had brought another instead of it. I know nothing about it, answered he, it must have been changed in the night, when I slept in the forest. The king said in a **passion**, you shall not have everything quite so much your own way, **whosoever** marries my daughter must **fetch** me from hell three golden hairs from the head of the devil, bring me what I want, and you shall keep my daughter. In this way the king hoped to be **rid** of him for ever. But the child of good fortune answered, I will fetch the golden hairs, I am not afraid of the devil. **Whereupon** he took leave of them and began his journey.

The road led him to a large town, where the **watchman** by the **gates** asked him what his trade was, and what he knew. I know everything, answered the child of good fortune. Then you can do us a **favour**, said the watchman, if you will tell us why our market **fountain**, which once flowed with wine has become dry, and no longer gives even water. That you shall know, answered he, only wait until I come back.

Then he went farther and came to another town, and there also the **gatekeeper** asked him what was his trade, and what he knew. I know everything, answered he. Then you can do us a favour and tell us why a tree in our town which once bore golden apples now does not even put forth **leaves**. You shall know that, answered he, only wait until I come back.

Then he went on and came to a wide river over which he must cross. The **ferryman** asked him what his trade was, and what he knew. I know everything, answered he. Then you can do me a favour, said the ferryman, and tell me why I must always be **rowing** backwards and forwards, and am never set free. You shall know that, answered he, only wait until I come back.

When he had crossed the water he found the entrance to hell. It was black and **sooty** within, and the devil was not at home, but his grandmother was sitting in a large arm-chair. What do you want, said she to him, but she did not look so very wicked. I should like to have three golden hairs from the devil's head, answered he, else I cannot keep my wife. That is a good deal to ask for, said she, if the devil comes home and finds you, it will cost you

your life, but as I pity you, I will see if I cannot help you.

She changed him into an ant and said, **creep** into the folds of my dress, you will be safe there. Yes, answered he, so far, so good, but there are three things besides that I want to know - why a fountain which once flowed with wine has become dry, and no longer gives even water, why a tree which once bore golden apples does not even put forth leaves, and why a ferryman must always be going backwards and forwards, and is never set free. Those are difficult questions, answered she, but just be silent and quiet and pay attention to what the devil says when I pull out the three golden hairs.

As the evening came on, the devil returned home. No sooner had he entered than he noticed that the air was not **pure**. I smell man's flesh, said he, all is not right here. Then he **pried** into every corner, and searched, but could not find anything. His grandmother **scolded** him. It has just been swept, said she, and everything put in order, and now you are upsetting it again, you have always got man's flesh in your nose. Sit down and eat your supper.

When he had eaten and drunk he was tired, and laid his head in his grandmother's **lap**, and told her she should **louse** him a little. It was not long before he was fast asleep, snoring and breathing heavily. Then the old woman took hold of a golden hair, pulled it out, and laid it down beside her. Oh, cried the devil, what are you doing. I have had a bad dream, answered the grandmother, so I **seized** hold of your hair. What did you dream then, said the devil. I dreamt that a fountain in a market-place from which wine once flowed was dried up, and not even water would flow out of it - what is the cause of it. Oh, ho, if they did but know it, answered the devil, there is a **toad** sitting under a stone in the well - if they killed it, the wine would flow again.

The grandmother loused him again until he went to sleep and snored so that the windows shook. Then she pulled the second hair out. Ha, what are you doing, cried the devil angrily. Do not take it ill, said she, I did it in a dream. What have you dreamt this time, asked he. I dreamt that in a certain kingdom there stood an apple-tree which had once borne golden apples, but now would not even **bear** leaves. What, think you, was the reason. Oh, if they did but know, answered the devil. A mouse is **gnawing** at the root - if they killed it they would have golden apples again, but if it gnaws much longer the tree will **wither** altogether. But I have had enough of

your dreams, if you disturb me in my sleep again you will get a box on the ear.

The grandmother spoke gently to him and picked his **lice** once more until he fell asleep and snored. Then she took hold of the third golden hair and pulled it out. The devil jumped up, **roared** out, and would have treated her ill if she had not quieted him again and said, who can help bad dreams. What was the dream, then, asked he, and was quite curious. I dreamt of a ferryman who complained that he must always ferry from one side to the other, and was never released. What is the cause of it. Ah, the fool, answered the devil, when anyone comes and wants to go across he must put the **oar** in his hand, and the other man will have to ferry and he will be free. As the grandmother had **plucked out** the three golden hairs, and the three questions were answered, she let the old devil alone, and he slept until daybreak.

When the devil had gone out again the old woman took the ant out of the folds of her dress, and gave the child of good fortune his human shape again. There are the three golden hairs for you, said she. What the devil said to your three questions, I suppose you heard. Yes, answered he, I heard, and will take care to remember. You have what you want, said she, and now you can go your way. He thanked the old woman for helping him in his need, and left hell well content that everything had turned out so fortunately.

When he came to the ferryman he was expected to give the promised answer. Ferry me across first, said the child of good fortune, and then I will tell you how you can be set free, and when he reached the opposite shore he gave him the devil's advice. Next time anyone comes, who wants to be ferried over, just put the oar in his hand.

He went on and came to the town wherein stood the unfruitful tree, and there too the watchman wanted an answer. So he told him what he had heard from the devil. Kill the mouse which is gnawing at its root, and it will again bear golden apples. Then the watchman thanked him, and gave him as a reward two **asses** laden with gold, which followed him.

Finally, he came to the town whose well was dry. He told the watchman what the devil had said, a toad is in the well beneath a stone, you must find it and kill it, and the well will again give wine in plenty. The watchman thanked him, and also gave him two asses laden with gold.

At last the child of good fortune got home to his wife, who was heartily glad to see him again, and to hear how well he had **prospered** in everything. To the king he took what he had asked for, the devil's three golden hairs, and when the king saw the four asses laden with gold he was quite content, and said, now all the conditions are fulfilled, and you can keep my daughter.

But tell me, dear son-in-law, where did all that gold come from - this is **tremendous** wealth. I was rowed across a river, answered he, and got it there, it lies on the shore instead of sand. Can I too fetch some of it, said the king, and he was quite eager about it. As much as you like, answered he. There is a ferryman on the river, let him ferry you over, and you can fill your sacks on the other side. The **greedy** king set out in all **haste**, and when he came to the river he **beckoned** to the ferryman to put him across. The ferryman came and **bade** him get in, and when they got to the other shore he put the oar in his hand and sprang over. But from this time forth the king had to ferry, as a punishment for his sins. Perhaps he is ferrying still. If he is, it is because no one has taken the oar from him.

amount -
ass -
to bear -
to beckon -
bench -
to bid -
to bury -
caul -
consent -
contentment -
cottage -
to creep -
den -
drop -
to entrust -
favour -
ferryman -
to fetch -
to float -
fortune -
foundling -
fountain -
gate -
gatekeeper -
to gnaw -
greedy -
handsome -
haste -
hook -
innocent -
lap -
leaf -
lice -
lost -
to louse -
luck -

mill -
miller -
oar -
passion -
pity -
to pluck -
to predict -
prophecy -
to prosper -
to pry -
pure -
readiness -
to refuse -
reward -
to rid -
to roar -
robber -
to row -
to scold -
to seem -
to seize -
sooty -
splendid -
to stretch -
suitor -
thief -
toad -
treasure -
tremendous -
undesired -
watchman -
whence -
whereupon -
whither -
whosoever -
to wither -

amount - Menge, Betrag
ass - Esel
to bear - tragen
to beckon - winken, locken
bench - Bank
to bid - bieten
to bury - begraben
caul - Schafhäutchen
consent - Zustimmung
contentment - Zufriedenheit
cottage - Häuschen
to creep - kriechen
den - Diebesnest, Diebeshöhle
drop - Tropfen
to entrust - anvertrauen
favour - Gefallen, Gunst
ferryman - Fährmann
to fetch - holen
to float - treiben, schweben
fortune - Schicksal, Vermögen
foundling - Findelkind
fountain - Springbrunnen, Quelle
gate - Tor
gatekeeper - Torwächter, Pförtner
to gnaw - nagen
greedy - gierig
handsome - gutaussehend, schön
haste - Eile, Hast
hook - Haken
innocent - unschuldig
lap - Schoss
leaf - Blatt (eines Baumes)
lice - Läuse
lost - verloren, vermisst
to louse - lausen
luck - Glück

mill - Mühle
miller - Müller
oar - Ruder
passion - Leidenschaft
pity - Mitleid, Mitgefühl
to pluck - pflücken
to predict - vorhersagen
prophecy - Prophezeiung
to prosper - gedeihen, Erfolg haben
to pry - neugierig sein
pure - rein
readiness - Bereitschaft
to refuse - ablehnen
reward - Belohnung
to rid - sich von etwas befreien
to roar - brüllen
robber - Räuber
to row - rudern
to scold - schelten, ausschimpfen
to seem - scheinen
to seize - ergreifen
sooty - russig
splendid - grossartig, herrlich
to stretch - strecken
suitor - Freier
thief - Dieb
toad - Kröte
treasure - Schatz
tremendous - gewaltig, enorm
undesired - unerwünscht
watchman - Wachmann
whence - woher
whereupon - worauf
whither - wohin
whosoever - wer auch immer
to wither - verdorren, welken