

WITCH AND JOHNNY

There was an old man and an old woman, they had a child named Johnny. [1] The old woman shortly died, and the old man took another wife [2] The stepmother did not love Johnny and beat him often. The old man grew sorry for his child, so he seated him on a board and set him out to float around on a lake. [3] Having brought food, he would call him,

"Johnny, Johnny, come to shore, come to shore - I brought cheese, butter, sweet milk!"

Upon being called, Johnny would come to shore, take the meal from his father, and go back out to the lake. [4]

A fairy witch heard how the father calls his child, went to the lake and called out herself,

"Johnny, Johnny, come to shore, come to shore - I brought cheese, butter, sweet milk!"

Johnny came to shore, the fairy witch grabbed him and, having put him in a bag, is taking him home. [5] While carrying him she got tired, set down her burden, lay down to rest and fell asleep. [6] Johnny climbed out from the bag, filled it with rocks, and as for himself he went back to the lake, found his board and swam off. Having had her sleep, the witch picked up the bag and came home all happy, [7]

"Daughter, I have brought back a full bag of meat - I will invite everyone I know and throw a feast."

She untied the bag, she's about to take Johnny, why she sees, there is nothing but rocks. [8] Furious she at once ran to the lake and called out again,

"Johnny, Johnny, come to shore, come to shore - I brought cheese, butter, sweet milk!"

Johnny came to shore. The witch, having grabbed him, put him in the bag and this time carried him without stopping for rest, and afterwards kept him for several days more - gave him everything to eat and drink, whatever Johnny wanted. [9]

One day the witch really heated up the oven and says to her daughter,

"Daughter, I will go to invite the guests, you sweep out the oven, bake Johnny and, having put him in the bowls, place them on the table."

Johnny was playing by the door and heard everything. As soon as the witch left, the daughter at once swept out the oven, took the oven's peel and calls to Johnny [10],

"Johnny, Johnny, sit on the peel - I'll drive you around the kitchen."

Johnny, knowing what she was up to [11], replied,

"You sit, I'll drive you around first"

"You won't be able to," replied the little witch. [12]

"I will, too," said Johnny

The little witch sat down [13], and Johnny just popped her into the

oven! He baked the meat, having cut it up, put it in the bowls and placed them on the table, as the old witch had ordered; having cut off the head, he put it under the blankets so that the top and the braids could be seen, and as for himself he ran off and crept into the well. [14]

"Where is my daughter?" asked the witch, having returned and walked in with the guests into the cottage.

"Why, here she is sleeping, under the blankets," replied the guests. [15]

"We must wake her."

"No, let her sleep," [16] say the guests: "You know, she got tired by the time she stuffed such a thing into the oven, cut it up and put it in the bowls."

The witch agreed [17] and, having seated the guests, started to eat the meat without her daughter. Having eaten their fill [18] the guests thought of having something to drink. Again the witch wanted to wake her daughter, so that she would fetch some water, [19] but the guests forbade her.

"Better," they say, "that we go ourselves."

The witch listened to them again, and taking the yoke, went herself to fetch some water. [20] As she walked she sang:

"I walk, I walk for water
With buckets of copper,
With handles of gold,
I had my fill of Johnny's meat,
I drank of his blood ..." [21]

Johnny replied from the well:

"You walk, you walk for water
With buckets of copper,
With handles of gold,
You had your fill of your daughter's meat,
You drank of her blood ..."

Hearing that, the witch rushed to the cottage, flung the blankets and saw that of her daughter there was but the head. [22] Then she understood, that it was not Johnny's, but her daughter's meat of which she had eaten her fill. [23] She ran at once to the well to look for Johnny, and Johnny meanwhile climbed out of the well and into a tree. [24] Running to the well, the witch did not find him, but taking a look around she saw him sitting in a tree. All of the guests scattered, and the witch, determined in her desire to catch Johnny, took to gnawing away at the tree in which he sat. [25] As she gnawed, a wolf ran by.

"What are you doing, old friend?" he asked the witch.

The witch told him what the story was [26] and the wolf, as if feeling sorry for her, said,

"You, old friend, are probably quite exhausted - lay down, rest for a bit, and I will gnaw in your place."

The witch heeded him, lay down and at once fell asleep. [27] The

wolf ran around the tree several times, and it became as thick as before; afterwards he went off into the woods. Upon waking the witch saw, that she had been tricked, and she started to gnaw away again. [28] As she gnawed, a hare runs by.

"What are you doing, old friend?" he asked, just as the wolf.

The witch told him as well about her misfortune, but when the hare said that he would gnaw for her, so that she might take a nap, the witch at first refused.

"No," she says, "You won't trick me. The wolf in just this way promised to gnaw for me and he just tricked me: neither gnawed, nor helped at all." [29]

"Such a scoundrel that wolf!" said the hare, as if feeling sorry for her. "I, old friend, never wish harm on anybody - you can be sure to trust in me ..."

The witch trusted him - lay down for a nap, and the hare, having done just as the wolf, ran off. Upon awaking the witch saw again that she had been tricked and started to gnaw even harder. [30] As she gnawed like so, a fox runs by.

"What are you doing, old friend?" she asks the witch.

"This and that," the witch complained. [31]

"Oh, old friend, how unhappy you are! Perhaps you are tired from gnawing? Let me, I will gnaw, and you, old friend, get some sleep, get some rest - where has it been seen that one should gnaw down such a tree all by themselves ..."

"Oh, no, I can't," said the witch, "You will do just as the wolf and the hare." [32]

"Well, what did those scoundrels do?"

"Why they offered, just like you, to gnaw, and they neither gnawed, nor anything at all," said the witch. [33]

"Such scoundrels! Did you, old friend, not know until now that they are great tricksters? They wish good for noone! Whereas I, old friend, never do any bad to anyone, and if you don't believe me, you can stay awake and watch - you will see, how I will gnaw."

The witch listened - she lay down and at once fell asleep [34], whereas the fox ran three times around the tree, and it once again became just as before. Upon waking the witch saw again, that she had been tricked [35]; terribly furious, she started to gnaw herself all the faster. Soon there was not much to go - now the tree swayed, it is about to fall, now Johnny is shaking, sitting in the tree. [36] At this time geese flew by him. Johnny took to asking,

"Geese, swans,

Throw me at least a feather apiece.

When I return to my father's estate,

I will serve you new wine,

I will feed you grains of wheat."

The geese threw down a feather each, but it was still not enough

[37]; ducks flew by, and they threw down a feather each, - and Johnny flew off to his father's estate. [38] His father was overjoyed and threw a great feast. I was also there, I drank beer and mead, it ran down my beard, but not in my mouth. [39] Then they put me in a wooden clog, fired me from the clog, and I flew over here. [40]

Eglė, Queen of the Sea Serpents (Lithuania)

Once upon a time, long, long ago, there lived an old man and his wife. They had twelve sons and three daughters. The youngest was named Eglė.

One summer evening all three sisters went bathing. After splashing around and washing, they returned to shore to dress. Suddenly the youngest sees a sea serpent coiled in the sleeve of her blouse. What to do? The oldest sister grabbed a stick and was ready to drive the serpent away, but he turned to the youngest and began speaking in a human voice:

“Dear Egle,” he says, - give me your word that you will marry me and I will leave peaceably!”

Eglė began crying. After all, how can she marry a serpent! Then she spoke up angrily: „Give me back my blouse and go back unhurt where you came from!”

But the sea serpent didn’t budge: “Give me your word,” says he, “that you will marry me and I will leave peaceably.”

“Go ahead and promise, little Egle. You don’t really believe you’ll have to marry him?!” said the oldest sister scornfully.

So Eglė promised to marry the sea serpent.

After returning home they forgot about the serpent. Three days went by. They hear a commotion in the yard. They look - a throng of sea serpents are slithering into their yard. Frightened, they watch the serpents swarm toward their house, climb and wriggle up its sides, coil around the porch posts. The matchmakers simply barged into the house to negotiate with the oldsters and the young bride. At first the parents tried to brush them off, they can’t believe their ears. But eventually, with such a teeming throng of serpents, they are forced to agree that they would give away their youngest and prettiest daughter. However, secretly they don’t intend to give in. They tell the serpents to wait a bit. They go to an old neighbor and tell her the whole story. She says: “It’s easy to fool a serpent: instead of your daughter, give them a goose and tell the messengers to leave.”

That’s what they did. They dressed up a white goose, and the matchmakers set out with it. Soon they heard a cuckoo in a birch:

Cuckoo, cuckoo,
They fooled you: -
Instead of the bride they gave you a white goose.
Cuckoo, cuckoo!

The sea serpents return, angrily throw out the goose and demand the bride. The parents, advised by the old neighbor, dress up and hand over a white ewe. As they pass by, the cuckoo again sings out:

Cuckoo, cuckoo,
They fooled you: -
Instead of the bride they gave you a white ewe.
Cuckoo, cuckoo!

The sea serpents return, hissing, and again demand the bride. This time they gave them a white cow. But the cuckoo alerted them once again and they returned, wrathful, threatening drought and famine if they do not honor the given word. The family mourned Eglė, cried over her, and gave her away to the sea serpents. As they escort Eglė, the cuckoo calls by the wayside:

Ride, make haste,
The groom awaits his dear bride!

Finally Eglė and her whole escort reached the seashore. There she met a handsome young man who was awaiting her. He said he was that selfsame sea serpent who had crawled into her blouse sleeve. They all crossed over to a nearby island, where they descended underground, below sea level, to the beautiful castle of the sea serpent. Here they feasted - three weeks they drank, danced, made merry.

In the castle of the sea serpent there was an abundance of everything and soon Eglė settled down, became happy and soon forgot her home.

Nine years went by and Eglė had three sons: Ažuolas (Eng. "Oak"), Uosis (Eng. "Ash-tree"), Beržas (Eng. "Birch") and one daughter - Drebulė (Eng. "Aspen"). She was the youngest. One day, while playing, the oldest son asked Eglė: "Mother, where do your parents live? Let's visit them some day."

And then it all came back to her - her parents, brothers, sisters, all her relatives. And a longing grew in her to see how they are doing: are they healthy, are they still alive, or perhaps they are dead. And so she yearns to go, to go see her home. So many years she has been away, hasn't seen her family, she misses them terribly. But Žaltys (Eng. "Sea Serpent", i.e., "Lord of the Sea Serpents") doesn't even want to listen.

"All right," he says. "I'll let you go visit them, but first spin this tuft of silk into thread." And he showed her a spinning wheel.

Žaltienė (Eng. "Mrs. Žaltys") began spinning. She worked day and night. She spun and spun, but the tuft of silk did not get any smaller. She realized that this must be a trick, the tuft of silk must be enchanted. You can spin all you like, but will never finish spinning it into thread. So Eglė went to an old woman, who lived nearby - a sorceress and enchantress. Arriving, she begins to complain: "Dear mother, dear heart, teach me how to spin this tuft of silk into thread."

"Throw it into the fire," she says, "otherwise, you'll never finish spinning it."

Upon returning, Eglė threw the tuft into the oven, in which the fire had been lit for baking. The tuft of silk immediately fell away and Eglė saw the distaff, which was actually a wriggling toad: it was the toad that had been supplying the unending tuft of silk she had tried to spin. Now Eglė was able to finish the task and once again she begs the sea serpent to let her visit her parents for a few days. Now her husband pulled out a pair of iron shoes from under a bench and says: "You can leave when you wear these out."

Putting on the shoes she began walking, stepping, scraping them across the tiles, against the stones, wherever, but the shoes are thick, hard, and are not even beginning to wear out. You can step all you like, - they will last a lifetime. Again she goes to the old woman for advice. The old woman teaches her: "Take the shoes to the blacksmith and ask him to heat them up in the forge."

That's what she did. The shoes were heated up very well and Eglė was able to wear them out in three days.

Having worn them through, again she begs her husband to let her go visit her parents. "Alright," says the serpent, "but first at least you have to bake them a cake, what else will you give the children of your brothers and other relatives as a homecoming present?"

But he ordered that all the cookware be hidden, so Eglė could not possibly bake anything. Eglė tries to figure out how to fetch water without a pail and how to mix dough without a bowl. Again she drags herself to the old woman. The old woman says: "Spread sour dough on a sieve, then use the sieve to fetch the water and to mix the dough."

That's what Žaltienė (Eng. "Mrs. Žaltys") did: she mixed the dough, baked it and so she had a cake. Now she bid farewell to her husband and left for home with her children. Žilvinas accompanied them, carried them across the sea and told them not to be gone for more than nine days.

"When you return," he says, "come alone with the children and, standing on the seashore, call me this way: "O Žilvinas, dear Žilvinas, If you're alive, - milky foam, If you're not, - bloody foam..."

"And if you see milky foam coming toward you on the sea," he says, "then you will know I am still alive, but if you see bloody foam, you will know that I have died. And you, children, tell no one how to call me."

So saying, he bade them all farewell and wished them a happy sojourn and a happy return.

When Eglė arrived at the homestead, there was great happiness: the whole family, all their relatives and all their neighbors gathered to see her. They all asked how it had been living with the sea serpents. She talked and talked. Everyone wanted to entertain her, to make her feel at home, and she didn't even notice when nine days flew by.

Meanwhile, her brothers, sisters and parents were trying to figure out what to do so she wouldn't have to leave. And they decided: they would force the children to tell them how their mother will call her husband at the shore of the sea and then they would return to the shore, call him and kill him.

Having decided, they first called Eglė's oldest son Ažuolas to the forest. They surrounded him and began to question him, but he pretended to know nothing. They beat him with switches, but to no avail. As they let him go, they warned him not to say anything about it to his mother. The second day they took Uosis, then Beržas, but could get no information from them. Finally, they lured Eglė's youngest, Drebulė, into the woods. At first she, too, said she knew nothing, but when she saw the switches sticking out from under their coats, she told them everything.

Then all twelve brothers took their scythes and left for shore. Standing on the shore they begin to call:

"O Žilvinas, dear Žilvinas, If you're alive, - milky foam, If you're not, - bloody foam..."

The minute he swam up, all the men immediately attacked him and cut him dead. When they returned home, they didn't tell Eglė anything about what they had done.

The nine days went by. Eglė bid farewell to everyone, went to the seashore and begins calling Žilvinas: “O Žilvinas, dear Žilvinas, If you’re alive, - milky foam, If you’re not, - bloody foam...”

The glittering sea welled up from its very depths and Eglė saw coming toward her, heaving, wave upon wave crowned bloody foam. And she heard her husband’s voice: “Your twelve brothers cut me to death with their scythes, Drebulė, our most beloved little daughter, betrayed my watchword!”

Overcome with sorrow, Eglė began to cry and, turning to her children, said:
“Who will meet us now in this dark night? We have no home, we have no home.”

To Drebulė -
“Turn into an aspen,
Tremble day and night,
The rain will wash your dear little face,
The wind will comb your tresses!”...

To her sons -
“Dear sons, stand by my side as strong trees - I, your poor mother, will be a dark, gloomy fir in your midst!...”

It was as she said. And now the oak, ash and birch are the strongest among all our trees, while the aspen to this day trembles at the smallest breath of wind. She trembles because she trembled before her uncles, betraying her true father and mother. And the waves of the sea wash the shore at their feet forever and ever.

Translated by Mirga Girniuvienė with small changes from “Lietuvių literatūra” by Vida Augulytė and Juozas Masilionis.

Beauty and Pock Face (China)

Wikipedia

Once upon a time, a man married two wives, and each bore a baby girl. The child of the first wife was beautiful and was called Beauty, but her sister who was a year younger than her, had a pocked face and was called Pock Face. Pock Face was the second wife's daughter. The wicked stepmother was jealous of her stepdaughter's loveliness so she abused Beauty and made her do all of the dirty tasks in the house. Beauty's mother, who died of childbirth, returned in the shape of a yellow cow. The yellow cow did all of the work for her, but the stepmother found out and had the cow killed. Beauty collected the bones and put them in a pot.

One day, there was a festival in town. Her stepmother clothed Pock Face nicely, but refused to take the poor Beauty along with her. Beauty out of rage broke everything in house, even the pot, and when she did that a horse, a dress, and a lovely pair of shoes came out. She dressed herself and rode the horse, and off she went to the festival.

She lost one of her lovely shoes in a ditch, and afraid to get her clothes dirty asked three men to get the shoe. Each one agreed if she would marry him. She refused a fishmonger for smelling of fish, a rich merchant for being covered with dust, and an oil trader for being greasy. But she consented with a wealthy scholar, for he was neither smelly, dusty nor greasy, but just right.

Three days after the wedding, Beauty went to pay her respects to her parents. Pock Face lured her near a well, pushed her in, and then sent word to the scholar that Beauty had caught smallpox. After a time, she went herself and explained her looks by the illness. Beauty, however, shapeshifted into a sparrow and came to taunt Pock Face while she was combing her hair; Pock Face taunted her back. The scholar heard Beauty and asked her to fly into a golden cage if she were his wife; she duly came. Pock Face then killed the sparrow and buried it. Bamboo shot up on the grave. The shoots tasted delicious to the scholar but gave Pock Face ulcers on her tongue. Pock Face cut the bamboo down and had a bed made from it, but though the scholar found it comfortable, it poked Pock Face with needles, so she threw it out. An old woman took it home. The old woman found that dinner was cooked for her whenever she came home. In time, she caught Beauty's spirit at work. Beauty then had the old woman give her some magical ingredients: a bowl for her stomach, some chopsticks for her bones, and some juice for her blood. Beauty thus, became flesh and blood again.

Beauty gave the old woman a bag to sell by her husband's mansion. When she did so, the scholar questioned Beauty and brought her back home. Pock Face proposed tests to determine who was the genuine wife. First they walked on eggs; Beauty did not break any, and Pock Face broke them all, but she would not admit it. Then they climbed a ladder of knives; Beauty did not cut her feet, and Pock Face did, but she would not admit it. Finally, they jumped into boiling oil; Beauty emerged alive, but Pock Face died. Beauty sent her body back to her stepmother, but her stepmother thought it was carp. When she saw it was her daughter, she fell down dead.

The Three Princes and Their Beasts (Lithuania)

The Violet Fairy Book (1901) edited by Andrew Lang

Once on a time there were three princes, who had a step-sister. One day they all set out hunting together. When they had gone some way through a thick wood they came on a great grey wolf with three cubs. Just as they were going to shoot, the wolf spoke and said, 'Do not shoot me, and I will give each of you one of my young ones. It will be a faithful friend to you.'

So the princes went on their way, and a little wolf followed each of them.

Soon after they came on a lioness with three cubs. And she too begged them not to shoot her, and she would give each of them a cub. And so it happened with a fox, a hare, a boar, and a bear, till each prince had quite a following of young beasts padding along behind him.

Towards evening they came to a clearing in the wood, where three birches grew at the crossing of three roads. The eldest prince took an arrow, and shot it into the trunk of one of the birch trees. Turning to his brothers he said:

'Let each of us mark one of these trees before we part on different ways. When any one of us comes back to this place, he must walk round the trees of the other two, and if he sees blood flowing from the mark in the tree he will know that that brother is dead, but if milk flows he will know that his brother is alive.'

So each of the princes did as the eldest brother had said, and when the three birches were marked by their arrows they turned to their step-sister and asked her with which of them she meant to live.

'With the eldest,' she answered. Then the brothers separated from each other, and each of them set out down a different road, followed by their beasts. And the step-sister went with the eldest prince.

After they had gone a little way along the road they came into a forest, and in one of the deepest glades they suddenly found themselves opposite a castle in which there lived a band of robbers. The prince walked up to the door and knocked. The moment it was opened the beasts rushed in, and each seized on a robber, killed him, and dragged the body down to the cellar. Now, one of the robbers was not really killed, only badly wounded, but he lay quite still and pretended to be dead like the others. Then the prince and his step-sister entered the castle and took up their abode in it.

The next morning the prince went out hunting. Before leaving he told his step-sister that she might go into every room in the house except into the cave where the dead robbers lay. But as soon as his back was turned she forgot what he had said, and having wandered through all the other rooms she went down to the cellar and opened the door. As soon as she looked in the robber who had only pretended to be dead sat up and said to her:

'Don't be afraid. Do what I tell you, and I will be your friend.

If you marry me you will be much happier with me than with your brother. But you must first go into the sitting-room and look in the cupboard. There you will find three bottles. In one of them there is a healing ointment which you must put on my chin to heal the wound; then if I drink the contents of the second bottle it will make me well, and the third bottle will make me stronger than I ever was before. Then, when your brother comes back from the wood with his beasts you must go to him and say,

"Brother, you are very strong. If I were to fasten your thumbs behind your back with a stout silk cord, could you wrench yourself free?" And when you see that he cannot do it, call me.'

When the brother came home, the step-sister did as the robber had told her, and fastened her brother's thumbs behind his back. But with one wrench he set himself free, and said to her, 'Sister, that cord is not strong enough for me.'

The next day he went back to the wood with his beasts, and the robber told her that she must take a much stouter cord to bind his thumbs with. But again he freed himself, though not so easily as the first time, and he said to his sister:

'Even that cord is not strong enough.'

The third day, on his return from the wood he consented to have his strength tested for the last time. So she took a very strong cord of silk, which she had prepared by the robber's advice, and this time, though the prince pulled and tugged with all his might, he could not break the cord. So he called to her and said: 'Sister, this time the cord is so strong I cannot break it. Come and unfasten it for me.'

But instead of coming she called to the robber, who rushed into the room brandishing a knife, with which he prepared to attack the prince.

But the prince spoke and said:

'Have patience for one minute. I would like before I die to blow three blasts on my hunting horn--one in this room, one on the stairs, and one in the courtyard.'

So the robber consented, and the prince blew the horn. At the first blast, the fox, which was asleep in the cage in the courtyard, awoke, and knew that his master needed help. So he awoke the wolf by flicking him across the eyes with his brush. Then they awoke the lion, who sprang against the door of the cage with might and main, so that it fell in splinters on the ground, and the beasts were free. Rushing through the court to their master's aid, the fox gnawed the cord in two that bound the prince's thumbs behind his back, and the lion flung himself on the robber, and when he had killed him and torn him in pieces each of the beasts carried off a bone.

Then the prince turned to the step-sister and said:

'I will not kill you, but I will leave you here to repent.' And he fastened her with a chain to the wall, and put a great bowl in front of her and said, 'I will not see you again till you have filled this bowl with your tears.'

So saying, he called his beasts, and set out on his travels. When he had gone a little way he came to an inn. Everyone in the inn seemed so sad that he asked them what was the matter.

'Ah,' replied they, 'to-day our king's daughter is to die. She is to be handed over to a dreadful nine-headed dragon.'

Then the prince said: 'Why should she die? I am very strong, I will save her.'

And he set out to the sea-shore, where the dragon was to meet the princess. And as he waited with his

beasts round him a great procession came along, accompanying the unfortunate princess: and when the shore was reached all the people left her, and returned sadly to their houses. But the prince remained, and soon he saw a movement in the water a long way off. As it came nearer, he knew what it was, for skimming swiftly along the waters came a monster dragon with nine heads. Then the prince took counsel with his beasts, and as the dragon approached the shore the fox drew his brush through the water and blinded the dragon by scattering the salt water in his eyes, while the bear and the lion threw up more water with their paws, so that the monster was bewildered and could see nothing. Then the prince rushed forward with his sword and killed the dragon, and the beasts tore the body in pieces.

Then the princess turned to the prince and thanked him for delivering her from the dragon, and she said to him:

'Step into this carriage with me, and we will drive back to my father's palace.' And she gave him a ring and half of her handkerchief. But on the way back the coachman and footman spoke to one another and said:

'Why should we drive this stranger back to the palace? Let us kill him, and then we can say to the king that we slew the dragon and saved the princess, and one of us shall marry her.'

So they killed the prince, and left him dead on the roadside. And the faithful beasts came round the dead body and wept, and wondered what they should do. Then suddenly the wolf had an idea, and he started off into the wood, where he found an ox, which he straightway killed. Then he called the fox, and told him to mount guard over the dead ox, and if a bird came past and tried to peck at the flesh he was to catch it and bring it to the lion. Soon after a crow flew past, and began to peck at the dead ox. In a moment the fox had caught it and brought it to the lion. Then the lion said to the crow:

'We will not kill you if you will promise to fly to the town where there are three wells of healing and to bring back water from them in your beak to make this dead man alive.'

So the crow flew away, and she filled her beak at the well of healing, the well of strength, and the well of swiftness, and she flew back to the dead prince and dropped the water from her beak upon his lips, and he was healed, and could sit up and walk.

Then he set out for the town, accompanied by his faithful beasts.

And when they reached the king's palace they found that preparations for a great feast were being made, for the princess was to marry the coachman.

So the prince walked into the palace, and went straight up to the coachman and said: 'What token have you got that you killed the dragon and won the hand of the princess? I have her token here--this ring and half her handkerchief.'

And when the king saw these tokens he knew that the prince was speaking the truth. So the coachman was bound in chains and thrown into prison, and the prince was married to the princess and rewarded with half the kingdom.

One day, soon after his marriage, the prince was walking through the woods in the evening, followed by his faithful beasts. Darkness came on, and he lost his way, and wandered about among the trees looking for the path that would lead him back to the palace. As he walked he saw the light of a fire, and

making his way to it he found an old woman raking sticks and dried leaves together, and burning them in a glade of the wood.

As he was very tired, and the night was very dark, the prince determined not to wander further. So he asked the old woman if he might spend the night beside her fire.

'Of course you may,' she answered. 'But I am afraid of your beasts. Let me hit them with my rod, and then I shall not be afraid of them.'

'Very well,' said the prince, 'I don't mind'; and she stretched out her rod and hit the beasts, and in one moment they were turned into stone, and so was the prince.

Now soon after this the prince's youngest brother came to the cross-roads with the three birches, where the brothers had parted from each other when they set out on their wanderings. Remembering what they had agreed to do, he walked round the two trees, and when he saw that blood oozed from the cut in the eldest prince's tree he knew that his brother must be dead. So he set out, followed by his beasts, and came to the town over which his brother had ruled, and where the princess he had married lived. And when he came into the town all the people were in great sorrow because their prince had disappeared.

But when they saw his youngest brother, and the beasts following him, they thought it was their own prince, and they rejoiced greatly, and told him how they had sought him everywhere. Then they led him to the king, and he too thought that it was his son-in-law. But the princess knew that he was not her husband, and she begged him to go out into the woods with his beasts, and to look for his brother till he found him.

So the youngest prince set out to look for his brother, and he too lost his way in the wood and night overtook him. Then he came to the clearing among the trees, where the fire was burning and where the old woman was raking sticks and leaves into the flames. And he asked her if he might spend the night beside her fire, as it was too late and too dark to go back to the town.

And she answered: 'Certainly you may. But I am afraid of your beasts. May I give them a stroke with my rod, then I shall not be afraid of them.'

And he said she might, for he did not know that she was a witch. So she stretched out her rod, and in a moment the beasts and their master were turned into stone.

It happened soon after that the second brother returned from his wanderings and came to the cross-roads where the three birches grew. As he went round the trees he saw that blood poured from the cuts in the bark of two of the trees. Then he wept and said:

'Alas! both my brothers are dead.' And he too set out towards the town in which his brother had ruled, and his faithful beasts followed him. When he entered the town, all the people thought it was their own prince come back to them, and they gathered round him, as they had gathered round his youngest brother, and asked him where he had been and why he had not returned. And they led him to the king's palace, but the princess knew that he was not her husband. So when they were alone together she besought him to go and seek for his brother and bring him home. Calling his beasts round him, he set out and wandered through the woods. And he put his ear down to the earth, to listen if he could hear the sound of his brother's beasts. And it seemed to him as if he heard a faint sound far off, but he did not

know from what direction it came. So he blew on his hunting horn and listened again. And again he heard the sound, and this time it seemed to come from the direction of a fire burning in the wood. So he went towards the fire, and there the old woman was raking sticks and leaves into the embers. And he asked her if he might spend the night beside her fire. But she told him she was afraid of his beasts, and he must first allow her to give each of them a stroke with her rod.

But he answered her:

'Certainly not. I am their master, and no one shall strike them but I myself. Give me the rod'; and he touched the fox with it, and in a moment it was turned into stone. Then he knew that the old woman was a witch, and he turned to her and said:

'Unless you restore my brothers and their beasts back to life at once, my lion will tear you in pieces.'

Then the witch was terrified, and taking a young oak tree she burnt it into white ashes, and sprinkled the ashes on the stones that stood around. And in a moment the two princes stood before their brother, and their beasts stood round them.

Then the three princes set off together to the town. And the king did not know which was his son-in-law, but the princess knew which was her husband, and there were great rejoicings throughout the land.

The Boy and the Wolves, or the Broken Promise (Native American)

The Yellow Fairy Book (1894) edited by Andrew Lang

Once upon a time an Indian hunter built himself a house in the middle of a great forest, far away from all his tribe; for his heart was gentle and kind, and he was weary of the treachery and cruel deeds of those who had been his friends. So he left them, and took his wife and three children, and they journeyed on until they found a spot near to a clear stream, where they began to cut down trees, and to make ready their wigwam. For many years they lived peacefully and happily in this sheltered place, never leaving it except to hunt the wild animals, which served them both for food and clothes. At last, however, the strong man felt sick, and before long he knew he must die.

So he gathered his family round him, and said his last words to them. 'You, my wife, the companion of my days, will follow me ere many moons have waned to the island of the blest. But for you, O my children, whose lives are but newly begun, the wickedness, unkindness, and ingratitude from which I fled are before you. Yet I shall go hence in peace, my children, if you will promise always to love each other, and never to forsake your youngest brother.

'Never!' they replied, holding out their hands. And the hunter died content.

Scarcely eight moons had passed when, just as he had said, the wife went forth, and followed her husband; but before leaving her children she bade the two elder ones think of their promise never to forsake the younger, for he was a child, and weak. And while the snow lay thick upon the ground, they tended him and cherished him; but when the earth showed green again, the heart of the young man stirred within him, and he longed to see the wigwams of the village where his father's youth was spent.

Therefore he opened all his heart to his sister, who answered: 'My brother, I understand your longing for our fellow-men, whom here we cannot see. But remember our father's words. Shall we not seek our own pleasures, and forget the little one?'

But he would not listen, and, making no reply, he took his bow and arrows and left the hut. The snows fell and melted, yet he never returned; and at last the heart of the girl grew cold and hard, and her little boy became a burden in her eyes, till one day she spoke thus to him: 'See, there is food for many days to come. Stay here within the shelter of the hut. I go to seek our brother, and when I have found him I shall return hither.'

But when, after hard journeying, she reached the village where her brother dwelt, and saw that he had a wife and was happy, and when she, too, was sought by a young brave, then she also forgot the boy alone in the forest, and thought only of her husband.

Now as soon as the little boy had eaten all the food which his sister had left him, he went out into the woods, and gathered berries and dug up roots, and while the sun shone he was contented and had his fill. But when the snows began and the wind howled, then his stomach felt empty and his limbs cold, and he hid in trees all the night, and only crept out to eat what the wolves had left behind. And by-and-by, having no other friends, he sought their company, and sat by while they devoured their prey, and they grew to know him, and gave him food. And without them he would have died in the snow.

But at last the snows melted, and the ice upon the great lake, and as the wolves went down to the shore, the boy went after them. And it happened one day that his big brother was fishing in his canoe near the shore, and he heard the voice of a child singing in the Indian tone--

'My brother, my brother! I am becoming a wolf, I am becoming a wolf!'

And when he had so sung he howled as wolves howl. Then the heart of the elder sunk, and he hastened towards him, crying, 'Brother, little brother, come to me;' but he, being half a wolf, only continued his song. And the louder the elder called him, 'Brother, little brother, come to me,' the swifter he fled after his brothers the wolves, and the heavier grew his skin, till, with a long howl, he vanished into the depths of the forest.

So, with shame and anguish in his soul, the elder brother went back to his village, and, with his sister, mourned the little boy and the broken promise till the end of his life.

The Death of Koschei the Deathless, or Marya Moryevna (Russia)

Russian folk-tales compiled by Alexander Afanasev

In a certain kingdom, in a certain state, there once lived Ivan Tsarevich, who had three sisters : one was called Marya Tsarevna, the second Olga Tsarevna, and the third Anna Tsarevna. Their mother and father had died. When they were dying they bade the son, " Whoever come first as a suitor for your sisters' hands, let them take them ; do not keep them long with you. The Tsarevich buried his parents ; and, in his grief, went with his sisters to walk in a green garden. Then a dark cloud appeared in the sky, and a fearful clap of thunder was heard. " Let us go home, sisters," said Ivan Tsarevich.

Soon they reached the palace : the thunder rattled and the ceiling fell down, and the ceiling divided into two. And a clear-eyed Hawk came into the room, struck the ground, and turned himself into a fair, doughty youth : " Hail, Ivan Tsarevich ! before, I came to you as a guest, now I am coming to ask for your sister's hand : I wish to marry Marya Tsarevna."

"If you wish my sister, I will not say you nay : take her with God's blessing."

Marya Tsarevna agreed, and the Hawk married her and took her away to his own kingdom.

Then day followed day and hour followed hour. One whole year went by unheeded. Ivan Tsarevich stayed with his sisters in the green garden. Then there came a cloud and there was thunder and lightning. " Let us go home, sisters," said the Tsarevich.

When they came to the palace there was a thunderclap, and the roof fell in and the ceiling was cleft in two, and an Eagle flew in, struck the ground and turned himself into a doughty youth, and said, " Hail, Ivan Tsarevich ! formerly I came to you as a guest, now I come to you as a suitor." And he asked for the hand of Olga.

And Ivan Tsarevich answered, "If Olga Tsarevna pleases you, she may go to you I will not withstand your will."

Olga Tsarevna was willing, and married the Eagle: the Eagle laid hold of her and took her to his own kingdom.

One year further went by, and Ivan Tsarevich said to his youngest sister, " Let us go and have a walk in the green garden," and they went for a little walk. And a cloud came over the sky with thunder and lightning. " Let us turn back, sister, home ! "

So they turned back home, and they had hardly sat down when the thunder clapped and the ceiling was divided into two, and a Crow flew in. And the Crow struck the ground and turned himself into a doughty youth. The former suitors were fair enough in themselves, but he was fairer still. " Formerly I came to you as a guest, but now I come to you as a suitor : give me your sister Anna."

"I will not withstand my sister's will ; if you are in love with her she may have you."

And Anna Tsarevna went with the Crow, and he took her to his own kingdom.

So Ivan Tsarevich was there alone, and for one whole year he lived there without any sisters, and began to feel melancholy. " I will go," he said, " and seek my sisters." So he started out on the road. He went

on and on and on. And there lay on the field an army of a great host conquered. And Ivan asked them : "If there be any man alive here, let him call ! Who slew this mighty host ? "

And one man who was still alive replied : " All this mighty host was conquered by Marya Moryevna, the fair princess."

And Ivan Tsarevich went on yet further, and he came upon white tents, and Marya Moryevna came to meet him, the fair queen.

"Hail," she said, " Tsarevich ! where is God taking you ? Is it at your will or perforce ? "

And Ivan Tsarevich answered her : "Doughty youths do not go perforce."

"Well, if you have no quest to accomplish, come and stay in my tents."

And Ivan Tsarevich was glad of this, and he stayed two nights in the tents, fell in love with Marya Moryevna, and married her.

Marya Moryevna took him with her to her own kingdom, and they lived together for some time ; and they thought of making ready for war ; and so she handed all of her possessions over to Ivan, and said : "Go everywhere, look at everything, only into this lumber-room you must not look."

But he was impatient : as soon as Marya Moryevna's back was turned, he at once opened the lumber-room, opened the door and looked in, and there Koshchey the Deathless was hanging.

Koshchey asked Ivan Tsarevich, " Have pity on me: give me something to eat. I have been tortured here for ten years. I have eaten nothing, I have drunken nothing, and my throat is all dried up." Ivan Tsarevich gave him a whole gallon of water : he drank it at a single gulp, and he still asked, " I am still thirsty: give me a gallon," and Ivan gave him a second gallon, and yet a third. And when he had drunk the third, he recovered all his former strength, broke all his chains, shattered them all, all the twelve chains. " Thank you, Ivan Tsarevich," Koshchey the Deathless said. " Now you will never again see Marya Moryevna any more ! " and with a fearful flash of lightning he flew into the country, gathered up Marya Moryevna on the road, the fair Queen, snatched her up and took her to himself.

Ivan Tsarevich wept bitterly, got ready and started on his road : " Come what may, I will seek out Marya Moryevna." And he went one day, and he went another day, and on the dawning of the third day he saw a wonderful palace, and in front of the palace there was an oak, and on the oak there sat a clear-eyed hawk.

And the Hawk flew down from the oak, struck the ground, turned into a doughty youth, and cried out,

O my beloved brother : how is the Lord dealing with you ? "

And Marya Tsarevna came out, went to meet Ivan Tsarevich, asked him how he was, and began to tell him all her own story.

So the Tsarevich abode as their guest for three days, and then said, " I cannot stay with you any longer : I am going to seek my wife Marya Moryevna the fair Queen."

" This will be a hard search for you," answered the Hawk. " At least leave a silver spoon here ; we can gaze on it and think of you."

Ivan Tsarevich left his silver spoon with them, and set out on his road.

So he went on one day and a second day, and at the dawning of the third day he saw a palace fairer than the first, and in front of the palace there was an oak, and an eagle sat on the oak : the Eagle flew down from the tree, struck the earth, turned into a doughty youth and cried : " Rise, Olga Tsarevna, our dear brother has arrived."

Olga Tsarevna at once came to meet him, began kissing and welcoming him, asking how he was, and they told of all they had lived and done.

Ivan Tsarevich stayed with them three little days, and then said, " I can no longer be your guest : I am going seeking my wife, Marya Moryevna the fair Princess."

And the Eagle answered : " It will be an evil quest. Leave us your silver fork we will look at it and think of you."

So he left his silver fork, and he went on the road.

And a day went by and a second, and at the dawn of the third day he saw a palace fairer than the first two. And in front of the palace there was an oak, and on the oak there perched a crow. And the Crow flew down from the oak, struck the earth, turned into a doughty youth, and cried out, "Anna Tsarevna, come out as fast as you can : our brother has arrived."

Then Anna Tsarevna came out, met him joyously, began to kiss and to welcome him, asking him how he was. And they spoke of all they had lived and done.

After three days Ivan Tsarevich said, " I can stay no longer with you ; I am going to seek my wife, Marya Moryevna, the fair Queen."

" This will be a hard search for you," the Crow said. " At least leave us your silver snuff-box ; we can gaze on it and think of you."

So Ivan Tsarevich left them his silver snuff-box, and set out on his road.

Then a day went and another day, and on the third day he at last reached Marya Moryevna. When she saw her beloved through the window, she rushed out to him, flung herself at his neck, wept, and said, " Oh ! Ivan Tsarevich, why did you not obey me ? Why did you look into the lumber-room and let Koshchey the Deathless out ? "

" Forgive me, Marya Moryevna ; let bygones be bygones : come away with me now, whilst Koshchey the Deathless is away : possibly he may not catch us up."

So they went away.

Now Koshchey was out hunting. Towards evening he returned home, and his horse stumbled. " Why, you sorry jade, are you stumbling, or is it some evil that you fear ? "

And the horse replied : " Ivan Tsarevich has arrived, and has taken away Marya Moryevna." .

" Can one catch them up ? "

You can sow wheat, wait until it grows up, harvest it, thresh it, turn it into flour, make five stones of bread, eat the bread, and then set out on the hunt, and we shall succeed."

Koshchey leapt on the horse, caught up Ivan Tsarevich. " Now," he said, " for the first time I will let you go for your doughtyhood, as you fed me with water ; for the second time I will let you go ; for the third time, take care : I will tear you to morsels." And he took Marya Moryevna from him, took her away, and Ivan Tsarevich sat on the stone and cried.

And he cried and he cried, and again came back to Marya Moryevna. Koshchey the Deathless was not at home : " Let us start, Marya Moryevna."

" Oh, Ivan Tsarevich, he will catch us up."

" Well, let him ; still we shall have one or two hours together."

So they started, and off they went.

Koshchey the Deathless came back home, and his good horse stumbled under him. " Why, you sorry jade, are you stumbling, or is it some evil thing which you fear ? "

And the horse answered, " Ivan Tsarevich has again arrived, and has taken Marya Moryevna away."

" Can one catch them up ? "

" It would be possible to sow barley and to wait until it grows up, reap it, thresh it, to brew beer, drink it until you were drunk, sleep out your sleep and then to go on the hunt, and we should still succeed."

Koshchey leaped on his horse, caught up Ivan Tsarevich, and said, " I said you were not to see anything more of Marya Moryevna ! " and he took her away with him.

So Ivan Tsarevich was again left alone, and he wept bitterly ; and once again he returned to Marya Moryevna, and this time too Koshchey was not at home. " Let us go, Marya Moryevna ! "

" Oh, Ivan Tsarevich, he will catch us up and he will tear you to bits."

" Let him tear me to bits ; I cannot live without you."

So they got ready, and off they went.

Koshchey the Deathless returned home, and under him his good horse stumbled. " Why do you stumble, you sorry jade, or is it some evil that you fear ? "

" Ivan Tsarevich has arrived, and has taken Marya Moryevna with him."

Koshchey leaped on his horse, caught up Ivan Tsarevich, broke him up into tiny bits, put them into a tar cask, took this cask, locked it with iron bolts and threw it into the blue sea. And he took Marya Moryevna away with him.

At the same time the brothers-in-law of Ivan Tsarevich looked at their silver ornaments and found they had turned black. " Oh," they said, " evidently some disaster has befallen him ! " The Eagle rushed into the blue sea, dragged out the cask to the shore, and the Hawk flew for the Water of Life, and the Crow flew for the Water of Death. Then they all three met at a single spot and broke up the cask, took out the bits of Ivan Tsarevich, washed them, laid them together as was fit : then the Crow sprinkled him with the Water of Death, and the body grew together and was one ; and the Hawk sprinkled him with the Water of Life, and Ivan Tsarevich shivered, sat up and said, " Oh, what a long sleep I have had ! "

" But your sleep would have been very much longer if we had not been there," answered the brothers-in-law. " Now you must come and be our guest ! "

" No, brothers, I must go and seek Marya Moryevna."

So he came to her and said, " Go and find out from Koshchey the Deathless where he got such a fine horse ! "

Then Marya Moryevna looked out for a good opportunity, and asked Koshchey the Deathless.

Koshchey answered, " Beyond thrice-nine lands, in the thrice-tenth kingdom, beyond the river of fire, lives the Baba Yaga. She has a mare on which every day she rides round the whole of the world. She has many splendid mares. I was there for three days as a herd, and she would not let me have the mare ; but she gave me one of the foals."

" How can one cross the river of fire ? "

" I have a kerchief : if you shake it to the right three times a lofty bridge rises and the fires cannot overreach it."

Marya Moryevna listened, told Ivan Tsarevich all about it, and he took the cloth away. Ivan Tsarevich crossed the river of fire and he reached the Baba Yaga : but journeying afar, neither eating nor drinking. A sea-bird came to meet him with her young. Ivan Tsarevich asked if he might eat one of her chicks.

" Do not eat it," the sea-bird said ; " at some time I shall be of service to you, Ivan Tsarevich."

Then he went farther, and he was in a wood, and he saw a bee-hive. " Perhaps," he said, " I may take a little honey."

Then the queen-bee answered him, " Do not touch my honey, Ivan Tsarevich; at some time or other I shall be of service to you."

So he did not touch the honey, but went farther. Then he met a lioness with her whelps. " May I eat this lion-whelp ? I am so hungry ? "

" Do not touch it, Ivan Tsarevich," the lioness said ; " at some time or other I shall be of service to you."

" Very well ; it shall be as you will."

So he went on hungry, and he went on and on and on, and at last he reached the house of the Baba Yaga. Round the house there were twelve poles, and on eleven of the poles there were the skulls of men : only one as yet was untenanted.

" Hail, babushka ! " he said.

" Hail, Ivan Tsarevich ! " she replied : " what have you come for ? By your own good will or for need ?"

" I have come to earn of you a knightly horse."

" Very well, Ivan Tsarevich : you are to serve me not one year, but only three days. If you can guard my mares, I will give you a knightly horse ; if you cannot, do not be angry, but your head must also lie on the last of the stakes."

Ivan Tsarevich agreed, and Baba Yaga gave him drink and food and bade him set to work. As soon as ever he had driven the mares into the field, they all turned their tails and ran in the meadows so far that the Tsarevich could not trace them with his eyes : and thus they were all lost. Then he sat down and wept, and became melancholy, and sat down on a stone and went to sleep.

The sun was already setting when the sea-bird flew to him, woke him up and said, " Arise, Ivan Tsarevich all the mares have gone home."

The Tsarevich got up, turned back home ; but Baba Yaga was angry with her mares. " Why have you all come home ? "

" Why should we not come home ? the birds flew down from every quarter of the sky and almost clawed out our eyes."

" Well, to-morrow do not stray in the meadows, but scatter into the dreamy forest."

So Ivan Tsarevich passed that night ; and next day Baba Yaga said to him, " Look, Ivan Tsarevich, if you do not keep the mares well, if you lose one, then your false head shall nod up and down on the stake."

So then he drove all the mares to the field, and this time they turned their tails, and they ran into the dreamy woods. And once again the Tsarevich sat on the stone and wept and wept and went to sleep, and the sun began to rest on the woods when the lioness ran up and said, " Get up, Ivan Tsarevich all the mares have been collected." Then Ivan Tsarevich got up and went home.

And Baba Yaga was angry that the mares had come home, and she called out to her mares, " Why have you all come home ? "

And they answered, " How should we not come home ? wild feasts from all the four quarters of the world assembled round us and almost tore us to bits."

" Well, you go to-morrow into the blue sea."

Once again Ivan passed the night there, and the next day Baba Yaga sent her mares to feed. " If you do not guard them, then your bold head shall hang on the pole."

He drove the mares into the field, and they at once turned tail and vanished from his eyes and ran into the blue sea and stood up to their necks in the water. So Ivan Tsarevich sat on the stone, wept and went to sleep. And the sun was already setting on the woods when the bee flew up to him and said : " Get up, Ivan Tsarevich all the mares have been gathered together. But, when you return home, do not appear before Baba Yaga ; go into the stable and hide behind the crib. There there is a mangy foal who will be rolling in the dung : steal him ; and, at the deep of midnight, leave the house."

Ivan Tsarevich got up, went into the stable, and lay behind the crib.

Baba Yaga made a tremendous stir and cried out to her mares : " Why did you come back ? "

" How should we not come back ? all the bees from every part of the world, visible and invisible, flew round us, and they stung us till our blood flowed."

Baba Yaga went to sleep ; and that same night Ivan Tsarevich stole the mangy steed from its stall, mounted it and flew to the fiery river. He reached that river, waved the cloth three times to the right ; and, at once, from some strange source, a lofty, splendid bridge hung all the way over. The Tsarevich crossed the bridge, waved the cloth to the left twice, and all that was left of the bridge was a thin thread.

In the morning Baba Yaga woke up and she could not see the mangy foal, so she hunted to the chase : with all her strength she leapt into her iron mortar and she chased after with the pestle, and very soon she was on their track. When she came to the river of fire, she looked across and thought, " Ah ha ha ! a fine bridge ! " Then she went on to the bridge ; but as soon as she got on to the bridge it snapped, and Baba Yaga slipped into the river, and it was a savage death she had.

Ivan Tsarevich fed his foal on the green, and a splendid horse grew out of him ; then the Tsarevich arrived at the palace of Marya Moryevna. She rushed out, fell upon his neck and said, " How has God blessed you ? " And he told her how it had gone with him. " I am frightened, Ivan Tsarevich ; if Koshchey catches us up you will again be torn to atoms."

" No, he will not catch us up now ; I have a fine knightly horse which flies like a bird." So they sat on the horse and went.

Koshchey the Deathless came back home, and his horse stumbled. " Oh, you sorry jade, why do you stumble, or is it that you fear some evil ? "

" Ivan Tsarevich has arrived, and has taken away Marya Moryevna."

" Can one catch them up ? "

" God knows ; now Ivan Tsarevich has a knightly horse better than me."

" No, I will not stand it," Koshchey the Deathless said. " We will up and after him ! "

And, sooner or later, so soon he caught up Ivan Tsarevich, and he leapt to him and was going to cleave him with his curved sabre ; but then the steed of Ivan Tsarevich kicked Koshchey the Deathless with all his might, and clove in his head, and the Tsarevich struck him down with his club. Then the Tsarevich gathered together a mass of timber, set fire to it, burnt Koshchey the Deathless on the pile and scattered the dust to the winds.

Marya Moryevna then sat on Koshchey's steed, and Ivan Tsarevich on his own, and the two went and stayed as guests, first of all with the Crow, then with the Eagle, and lastly with the Hawk. Wherever they went they were joyously received. " Oh ! Ivan Tsarevich, I am so glad to see you ! We never expected to see you back. And your work has not been in vain ; such a beauty as Marya Moryevna might be sought for all over the world and you would not have found any other."

So they were as guests and junketed well, and arrived into their own kingdom, reached it and began to live a life of joy enduring and to drink good mead.