

A Gift from Frigga

Foster & Cummings

NordicScandinavian

Advanced
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Long years ago there lived a peasant and his wife, who led a quiet, busy life on their little farm at the foot of a mountain. While the wife was busy indoors with her housework, her husband watched his flocks in the fields, or sometimes wandered up the mountain-side to hunt for game, which he would carry home for dinner.

One day he had strayed farther than usual, and found himself on the top of the mountain, where the ground was covered with ice and snow. All at once he came upon a high arched doorway opening into a great glacier, and he passed through to see whither it might lead.

The passageway widened out into a wonderful cavern, like a broad hall, sparkling with precious stones, and long, shining stalactites, that looked like icicles of marble. In the midst stood a beautiful goddess, surrounded by fair maidens, all dressed in silvery robes, and crowned with flowers.

The shepherd was so overcome by the wonder of this sight that he sank upon his knees. Then the goddess stretched forth her hands and gave him her blessing, telling him to choose whatever he wished, to carry home from the cavern. The man was no longer afraid when he heard her kind voice speaking to him, so he looked about, and at last humbly asked to have the pretty blue flowers which the fair one held in her hand.

The lovely goddess Frigga, or Holda, as the German people called her, smiled kindly, and told the poor shepherd he had made a wise choice. She gave him her bunch of blue flowers, with a measure of seed, saying to him, "You will live and be prosperous so long as the flowers do not fade."

The peasant bowed thankfully before the goddess, and when he rose she had vanished, and he was alone on the mountain-side, just as usual, with no cavern, no sparkling stones, and no fair maidens to be seen. If it had not been for the pretty blue flowers and the measure of seed in his hand, he would have thought it all a dream.

He hurried homeward to tell his wife, who was angry when she heard the story, for she thought he had made such a foolish choice. "How much better it would have been," said she, "if you had brought home some of those precious stones you tell about, which are worth money, instead of these good-for-nothing flowers!"

The poor man bore her angry words quietly, and made the best of what he had. He went to work at once to sow his seeds, which he found, to his surprise, were enough to plant several fields.

Every morning before he led his flock to pasture, and on his way home at night, he watched the little green shoots growing in his fields. Even his wife was pleased when she saw the lovely blue blossoms of the flax opening; then, after they had withered and fallen, the seeds formed. Sometimes it seemed to the good man, as he stood in the twilight looking over his field, that he saw a misty form, like the beautiful goddess, stretching out her hands over the field of flax, to give it her blessing.

When at length the seeds had ripened, Frigga came again to show the peasant how to gather his harvest of flax, and to teach his wife to spin and weave it into fine linen, which she bleached in the sun. The people came from far and near to buy the linen, and the peasant and his wife found themselves busy and happy, with money enough and to spare.

When they had lived many years, and were growing old among their children and grandchildren, the peasant noticed one day that the bunch of blue flowers, given to him so many years before, and which had always kept bright, were beginning to fade; then he knew he had not much longer to stay.

He climbed slowly up the mountain-side, and found the door of the cavern open. A second time he went in, and the kind goddess Frigga took the peasant by the hand, and led him away to stay with her, where she always took care of him.

Frigga was the queen of the gods, and she helped her husband, Odin, govern the world. It was her part to look

after the children, and help the mothers take care of their families.

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