



Tales of the Trolls

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Swedish

Intermediate
3 min read

I

A peasant from Jursagard in the parish of Hanger had gone to the forest the day before Christmas, and started out for home late in the evening. He had just about reached the Klintaberg when he heard some one call out: "Tell the malt-swine to come home, for her child has fallen into the fire!" When the peasant reached home, there stood his wife, who had been brewing the Yuletide ale, and she was complaining that though she brewed and brewed, it did not have the right flavor. Then he told her what had been shouted at him from the hill, and that very moment a troll-witch, whom they had not noticed before, darted down from the stove and made off in a great hurry. And when they looked closer, they found that she had left behind a great kettle full of the best malt, which she had gathered during the brewing. And that was the reason the poor woman had not been able to give her brew the right flavor. The kettle was large, made of ornamented metal, and was long preserved in Hanger. It was at length sold at auction in 1838, and melted down.

II

In former days, when a child came into the world, his mother was known as a "heathen," until she could take him to church to be christened. And it was not safe for her to leave the house unless she carried steel about her in some shape or form. Now once there was one of these "heathen" women in Norra Ryd, in the parish of Hanger, who prepared lunch for the mowers, and went out and called them in to eat. Then one of the mowers

said to her: "I cannot come, for my sheaf is not yet bound." "I will bind it for you," said the woman. The mowers went in and ate, but saw no more of her. They went back into the field, and were about to take up their work again, but still neither saw nor heard her. They began to search, and hunted for a number of days; but all in vain. Time passed, till it was late in the fall. One day the weather was clear and sunny. To this very day there is a cotter's hut, called Kusabo, that stands on a hill named Kusas, and the cotter who lived there went to look for a horse. And there on the hillside he saw the woman sitting who had disappeared, and she was sewing. It was not far from Kusabo to Norra Ryd, so he recognized her at once. He said "O, you poor thing, and here you sit!" "Yes," said she, "but you must never mention it to Lars"—that was her husband—"for I shall never return from this place. Even now I am only allowed to sit outside for a little while."

III

Once upon a time a girl was hunting for berries on Kusabo mountain, and was taken into the hill. But she wept, night and day, which disgruntled the trolls, and they let her out again. But just as they were letting her out, one of the trolls hit her such a blow on the back that she was hump-backed for the rest of her life. She herself used to tell how she had been kept in the hill.

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