



The Hill-Man Invited to the Christening

Brothers Grimm
Scandinavian

Easy
4 min read

Author's note: This story comes from Denmark

The hill-people are excessively frightened during thunder. When, therefore, they see bad weather coming on, they lose no time in getting to the shelter of their hills. This terror is also the cause of their not being able to endure the beating of a drum. They take it to be the rolling of thunder. It is, therefore, a good recipe for banishing them to beat a drum every day in the neighbourhood of their hills, for they immediately pack up, and depart to some quieter residence.

A farmer lived once in great friendship and concord with a hill-man, whose hill was in his lands. One time when his wife was about to have a child, it gave him great perplexity to think that he could not well avoid inviting the hill-man to the christening, which might, not improbably, bring him into ill repute with the priest and the other people of the village. He was going about pondering deeply, but in vain, how he might get out of this dilemma, when it came into his head to ask the advice of the boy that kept his pigs, who had a great head-piece, and had often helped him before. The pig-boy instantly undertook to arrange the matter with the hill-man in such a manner that he should not only stay away without being offended, but, moreover, give a good

christening present.

Accordingly, when it was night, he took a sack on his shoulder, went to the hill-man's hill, knocked, and was admitted. He delivered his message, gave his master's compliments, and requested the honour of his company at the christening. The hill-man thanked him, and said—

“I think it is but right I should give you a christening present.”

With these words he opened his money-chests, bidding the boy hold up his sack while he poured money into it.

“Is there enough now?” said he, when he had put a good quantity into it.

“Many give more, few give less,” replied the boy.

The hill-man once more fell to filling the sack, and again asked—

“Is there enough now?”

The boy lifted the sack a little off the ground to see if he was able to carry any more, and then answered—

“It is about what most people give.”

Upon this the hill-man emptied the whole chest into the bag, and once more asked—

“Is there enough now?”

The guardian of the pigs now saw that there was as much in the sack as he would be able to carry, so he answered—

“No one gives more, most people give less.”

“Come now,” said the hill-man, “let us hear who else is to be at the christening.”

“Ah,” said the boy, “we are to have a great many strangers and great people. First and foremost, we are to have three priests and a bishop.”

“Hem!” muttered the hill-man; “however, those gentlemen usually look only after the eating and drinking; they

will never take any notice of me. Well, who else?”

“Then we have asked St. Peter and St. Paul.”

“Hem! hem! However, there will be a bye-place for me behind the stove. Well, and what then?”

“Then Our Lady herself is coming.”

“Hem! hem! hem! However, guests of such high rank come late and go away early. But tell me, my lad, what sort of music is it you are to have?”

“Music,” said the boy, “why, we are to have drums.”

“Drums!” repeated the troll, quite terrified. “No, no! Thank you. I shall stay at home in that case. Give my best respects to your master, and I thank him for the invitation, but I cannot come. I did but once go out to take a little walk, and some people began to beat a drum. I hurried home, and was but just got to my door when they flung the drum-stick after me, and broke one of my shins. I have been lame of that leg ever since, and I shall take good care in future to avoid that sort of music.”

So saying he helped the boy to put the sack on his back, once more charging him to present his best respects to his master.

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