

The Man With His Leg Tied-

Up

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Advanced
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As a punishment for having once upon a time used that foot against a venerable medicine man, Aggo Dah Gauda had one leg looped up to his thigh, so that he was obliged to get along by hopping. By dint of practice he had become very skillful in this exercise, and he could make leaps which seemed almost incredible.

Aggo had a beautiful daughter, and his chief care was to secure her from being carried off by the king of the buffalos, who was the ruler of all the herds of that kind, and had them entirely at his command to make them do as he willed.

Dah Gauda, too, was quite an important person in his own way, for he lived in great state, having a log house of his own, and a court-yard which extended from the sill of his front-door as many hundred miles westward as he chose to measure it.

Although he might claim this extensive privilege of ground, he advised his daughter to keep within doors, and by no means to go far in the neighborhood, as she would otherwise be sure to be stolen away, as he was satisfied that the buffalo-king spent night and day lurking about and lying in wait to seize her.

One sunshiny morning, when there were just two or three promising clouds rolling moistly about the sky, Aggo

prepared to go out a-fishing; but before he left the lodge he reminded her of her strange and industrious lover, whom she had never seen.

“My daughter,” said he, “I am going out to fish, and as the day will be a pleasant one, you must recollect that we have an enemy near, who is constantly going about with two eyes that never close, and do not expose yourself out of the lodge.”

With this excellent advice, Aggo hopped off in high spirits; but he had scarcely reached the fishing-ground when he heard a voice singing, at a distance:

Man with the leg tied up,

Man with the leg tied up,

Broken hip—hip—

Hipped.

Man with the leg tied up,

Man with the leg tied up,

Broken leg—leg—

Legged.

There was no one in sight, but Aggo heard the words quite plainly, and as he suspected the ditty to be the work of his enemies, the buffalos, he hopped home as fast as his one leg could carry him.

Meantime, the daughter had no sooner been left alone in the lodge than she thought with herself:

“It is hard to be thus forever kept in doors. But my father says it would be dangerous to venture abroad. I know what I will do. I will get on the top of the house, and there I can comb and dress my hair, and no one can harm me.”

She accordingly ascended the roof and busied herself in untying and combing her beautiful hair; for it was truly beautiful, not only of a fine, glossy quality, but it was so very long that it hung over the eaves of the house and reached down on the ground, as she sat dressing it.

She was wholly occupied in this employment, without a thought of danger, when, all of a sudden, the king of the buffalos came dashing on with his herd of followers, and making sure of her by means of her drooping tresses, he placed her upon the back of one of his favorite buffalos, and away he cantered over the plains.

Plunging into a river that bounded his land, he bore her safely to his lodge on the other side.

And now the buffalo-king having secured the beautiful person of Aggo Dah Gauda's daughter, he set to work to make her heart his own—a little ceremony which it would have been, perhaps, wiser for his majesty, the king of the buffalos, to have attended to before, for he now worked to little purpose. Although he labored with great zeal to gain her affections, she sat pensive and disconsolate in the lodge, among the other females, and scarcely ever spoke, nor did she take the least interest in the affairs of the king's household.

To the king himself she paid no heed, and although he breathed forth to her every soft and gentle word he could think of, she sat still and motionless for all the world like one of the lowly bushes by the door of her father's lodge, when the summer wind has died away.

The king enjoined it upon the others in the lodge as a special edict, on pain of instant death, to give to Aggo's daughter every thing that she wanted, and to be careful not to displease her. They set before her the choicest food. They gave her the seat of honor in the lodge. The king himself went out hunting to obtain the most dainty meats, both of animals and wild fowl, to pleasure her palate; and he treated her every morning to a ride upon one of the royal buffalos, who was so gentle in his motions as not even to disturb a single one of the tresses of the beautiful hair of Aggo's daughter as she paced along.

And not content with these proofs of his attachment, the king would sometimes fast from all food, and having thus purified his spirit and cleared his voice, he would take his Indian flute, and, sitting before the lodge, give vent to his feelings in pensive echoes, something after this fashion:

My sweetheart,

My sweetheart,

Ah me!

When I think of you,

When I think of you,

Ah me!

What can I do, do, do?

How I love you,

How I love you,

Ah me!

Do not hate me,
Do not hate me,
Ah me!
Speak—e'en berate me.
When I think of you,
Ah me!
What can I do, do, do?

In the mean time, Aggo Dah Gauda had reached home, and finding that his daughter had been stolen, his indignation was so thoroughly awakened that he would have forthwith torn every hair from his head, but, being entirely bald, this was out of the question, so, as an easy and natural vent to his feelings, Aggo hopped off half a mile in every direction. First he hopped east, then he hopped west, next he hopped north, and again he hopped south, all in search of his daughter; till the one leg was fairly tired out. Then he sat down in his lodge, and resting himself a little, he reflected, and then he vowed that his single leg should never know rest again until he had found his beautiful daughter and brought her home. For this purpose he immediately set out.

Now that he proceeded more coolly, he could easily track the buffalo-king until he came to the banks of the river, where he saw that he had plunged in and swam over. There having been a frosty night or two since, the water was so covered with thin ice that Aggo could not venture upon it, even with one leg. He encamped hard by till it became more solid, and then crossed over and pursued the trail.

As he went along he saw branches broken off and strewed behind, which guided him in his course; for these had been purposely cast along by the daughter. And the manner in which she had accomplished it was this. Her hair was all untied when she was caught up, and being very long it took hold of the branches as they darted along, and it was these twigs that she broke off as signs to her father.

When Aggo came to the king's lodge it was evening. Carefully approaching, he peeped through the sides, and saw his daughter sitting disconsolate. She immediately caught his eye, and knowing that it was her father come for her, she all at once appeared to relent in her heart, and, asking for the royal dipper, said to the king, "I will go and get you a drink of water."

This token of submission delighted his majesty, and, high in hope, he waited with impatience for her return.

At last he went out, but nothing could be seen or heard of the captive daughter. Calling together his followers,

they sallied forth upon the plains, and had not gone far when they espied by the light of the moon, which was shining roundly just over the edge of the prairie, Aggo Dah Gauda, his daughter in his arms, making all speed with his one leg toward the west.

The buffalos being set on by their king, raised a great shout, and scampered off in pursuit. They thought to overtake Aggo in less than no time; but although he had a single leg only, it was in such fine condition to go, that to every pace of theirs, he hopped the length of a cedar-tree.

But the buffalo-king was well assured that he would be able to overtake Aggo, hop as briskly as he might. It would be a mortal shame, thought the king, to be outstripped by a man with one leg tied up; so, shouting and cheering, and issuing orders on all sides, he set the swiftest of his herd upon the track, with strict commands to take Aggo dead or alive. And a curious sight it was to see.

At one time a buffalo would gain handsomely upon Aggo, and be just at the point of laying hold of him, when off Aggo would hop, a good furlong, in an oblique line, wide out of his reach; which bringing him nearly in contact with another of the herd, away he would go again, just as far off in another direction.

And in this way Aggo kept the whole company of the buffalos zig-zagging across the plain, with the poor king at their head, running to and fro, shouting among them and hurrying them about in the wildest way. It was an extraordinary road that Aggo was taking toward home; and after a time it so puzzled and bewildered the buffalos that they were driven half out of their wits, and they roared, and brandished their tails, and foamed, as if they would put out of countenance and frighten out of sight the old man in the moon, who was looking on all the time, just above the edge of the prairie.

As for the king himself, losing at last all patience at the absurd idea of chasing a man with one leg all night long, he called his herd together, and fled, in disgust, toward the west, and never more appeared in all that part of the country.

Aggo, relieved of his pursuers, hopped off a hundred steps in one, till he reached the stream, crossed it in a twinkling of the eye, and bore his daughter in triumph to his lodge.

In the course of time Aggo's beautiful daughter married a very worthy young warrior, who was neither a buffalo-king nor so much as the owner of any more of the buffalos than a splendid skin robe which he wore, with great effect, thrown over his shoulders, on his wedding-day. On which occasion, Aggo Dah Gauda hopped about on his one leg livelier than ever.

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