

The Mount of the Golden Queen

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Swedish

Intermediate
7 min read

Once upon a time a lad who tended the cattle in the wood was eating his noon-tide meal in a clearing in the forest. As he was sitting there he saw a rat run into a juniper-bush. His curiosity led him to look for it; but as he bent over, down he went, head over heels, and fell asleep. And he dreamed that he was going to find the princess on the Mount of the Golden Queen; but that he did not know the way.

The following day he once more pastured his cattle in the wood, when he came to the same clearing, and again ate his dinner there. And again he saw the rat and went to look for it, and again when he bent down he went head over heels, and fell fast asleep. And again he dreamed of the princess on the Mount of the Golden Queen, and that in order to get her he would need seventy pounds of iron and a pair of iron shoes. He awoke and it was all a dream; but by now he had made up his mind to find the Mount of the Golden Queen, and he went home with his herd. On the third day, when he led out his cattle, he could not reach the clearing of his happy dream too soon. Again the rat showed itself and when he went to look for it, he fell asleep as he had done each preceding day. And again he dreamed of the princess on the Mount of the Golden Queen, and that she came to him, and laid a letter and a band of gold in his pocket. Then he awoke and to his indescribable surprise, he found in his pocket both of the things of which he had dreamed, the letter and the band. Now he had no time to attend to the cattle any longer, but drove them straight home. Then he went into the stable, led out a horse, sold it, and bought seventy pounds of iron and a pair of iron shoes with the money. He made the thole-pins out of the iron, put on his iron shoes, and set forth. For a time he traveled by land; but at last he came to the lake which he had to cross. He saw naught but water before and behind him, and rowing so long and steadily that

he wore out one thole-pin after another, he at length reached land, and a green meadow, where no trees grew. He walked all around the meadow, and at last found a mound of earth from which smoke was rising. When he looked more closely, out came a woman who was nine yards long. He asked her to tell him the way to the Mount of the Golden Queen. But she replied: "That I do not know. Go ask my sister, who is nine yards taller than I am, and who lives in an earth-mound which you can find without any trouble."

So he left her and came to a mound of earth that looked just like the first, and from which smoke was also rising. A woman at once came out who was tremendously tall, and of her he asked the way to the Mount of the Golden Queen. "That I do not know," said she. "Go ask my brother, who is nine yards taller than I am, and who lives in a hill a little further away."

So he came to the hill, from which smoke was also rising, and knocked. A man at once came out who was a veritable giant, for he was twenty-seven yards in length, and of him he asked the way to the Mount of the Golden Queen. Then the giant took a whistle and whistled in every direction, to call together all the animals to be found on the earth. And all the animals came from the woods, foremost among them a bear.

The giant asked him about the Mount of the Golden Queen, but he knew nothing of it. Again the giant blew his whistle in every direction to call together all the fishes to be found in the waters. They came at once, and he asked them about the Mount of the Golden Queen; but they knew nothing of it. Once more the giant blew his whistle in every direction, and called together all the birds of the air. They came, and he asked the eagle about the Mount of the Golden Queen, and whether he knew where it might be.

The eagle said: "Yes!" "Well then, take this lad there," said the giant "but do not treat him unkindly!" This the eagle promised, allowed the youth to seat himself on his back, and then off they were through the air, over fields and forests, hill and dale, and before long they were above the ocean, and could see nothing but sky and water. Then the eagle dipped the youth in the ocean up to his ankles and asked: "Are you afraid?" "No," said the youth. Then the eagle flew on a while, and again dipped the youth into the water, up to his knees and said: "Are you afraid?" "Yes," answered the youth, "but the giant said you were not to treat me unkindly." "Are you really afraid?" asked the eagle once more. "Yes," answered the youth. Then the eagle said: "The fear you now feel is the very same fear I felt when the princess thrust the letter and the golden band into your pocket."

And with that they had reached a large, high mountain in one side of which was a great iron door. They

knocked, and a serving-maid appeared to open the door and admit them. The youth remained and was well received; but the eagle said farewell and flew back to his native land. The youth asked for a drink, and he was at once handed a beaker containing a refreshing draught. When he had emptied it and returned the beaker, he let the golden band drop into it. And when the maid brought back the beaker to her mistress—who was the princess of the Mount of the Golden Queen—the latter looked into the beaker, and behold, there lay a golden band which she recognized as her own. So she asked: “Is there some one here?” and when the maid answered in the affirmative, the princess said: “Bid him come in!” And as soon as the youth entered she asked him if he chanced to have a letter. The youth drew out the letter he had received in so strange a manner, and gave it to the princess. And when she had read it she cried, full of joy: “Now I am delivered!” And at that very moment the mountain turned into a most handsome castle, with all sorts of precious things, servants, and every sort of convenience, each for its own purpose. (Whether the princess and the youth married the story does not say; yet we must take for granted that a wedding is the proper end for the fairy-tale).

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