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IMAGINATION OVER KNOWLEDGE

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The Princess on the Glass Hill

Once upon a time, there was a farmer with three sons. The farmer owned a meadow that was situated on a mountainside. In the middle of the meadow stood a barn where the farmer stored his hay. But the farmer had not been there for two years. That was because his grassland was mysteriously stripped bare every year on St. John's Eve. He had no idea how it happened. The grass was simply gone.

On the day before St. John's Day, the farmer thought that his three sons should solve this strange occurrence. One of his three children would have to sleep in the barn on the night of the St. John's feast to find out exactly what was happening to the grass on this night. The eldest son offered himself. He was determined to find out who was eating their grass. No human, no animal, and not even the devil would he allow to steal a single blade of grass.

So, the eldest son left for the barn that evening and set up his sleeping place. But he was suddenly startled by a deafening noise, and it seemed like the earth began to shake. The eldest son became



very frightened and ran away as fast as he could. That year too, the grass was gone, and the hay barn remained empty.

The following year, the second son wanted to show his father that he was not a coward. On the evening before St. John's Day, he settled himself in the barn and waited to see what would happen. And a lot did happen. There was a lot of noise, and the ground shook even more than it had the year before. The second son also ran away as fast as he could, and that year too, the hay barn remained empty.

The next year, it was the turn of the third and youngest son. His name was Boots, but his brothers contemptuously called him Assepasser. When he got ready to leave, his brothers laughed at him. But Assepasser didn't care.

So, on the evening before St. John's Day, Assepasser also went to the barn and made his bed. Not long after, he heard a terrifying noise, and the ground began to shake. But Assepasser shrugged his shoulders and said, "Oh, if that's all, then it's not so bad." After a brief moment of silence, the noise and shaking repeated, and Assepasser was thrown around by everything that was lying around.

"Oh, if it doesn't get worse, then it's not so bad," Assepasser said now. For a moment, it was silent again, but this time, Assepasser heard a strange sound. It seemed like a horse was grazing outside the barn. And it was. But it was so big and muscular that he had never seen a horse like it before, and it was equipped with a copper armor.

"Ha, so you're the thief of our grass," exclaimed the boy excitedly. He took out his tinderbox. This is a box that was used to make fire in the past. A kind of lighter.

The spark from the tinderbox gave him power over animals. When Assepasser struck a spark on the horse, he could do with the animal whatever he wanted, and he brought it to a place that only he knew and tied the animal here.

Then the boy went home, where he was laughed at by his brothers. "You weren't in the barn for very long, or you weren't there at all, were you?" they said.

"Oh, yes, I was there, and I don't understand what you were so afraid of," Assepasser said.

When the brothers went to check the next morning, they saw that the grass was still there, exactly as much as every day before.

The next evening, Assepasser went to guard the meadow again. And once again, the same thing happened. This time, there was a larger horse, saddled and equipped, and this time with a silver armor. The boy once again took the horse to his secret place to tie him up there.

The brothers went to the meadow again the next day to see that the grass was still as high as the day before.

On the third evening, Assepasser went to the barn again. Again, the boy braved three earthquakes, one of which was so violent that he flew through the hayloft. But Assepasser quickly got back up and saw another horse. This one was even bigger and more muscular



than the previous horses, and his equipment was made of gold this time. Assepasser was able to bring this horse to his secret place just as easily thanks to his tinderbox.

When the brothers went to check the meadow again the next day, they were amazed to see that the grass was still there, just as green, just as high, and just as tender.

In the land, there was a king who had a daughter. The king thought it was time for her to get married and put her with three apples in her lap on top of a towering glass hill with slopes as slippery as ice. The man who could reach her would get the apples and a marriage to the princess and half the kingdom. This news quickly spread and knights and princes from all lands came to try. The princess was also very beautiful. On the day of the competition, a large crowd had gathered at the foot of the glass hill. The two brothers of Assepasser had joined the knights and princes, but they had not taken their youngest brother with them. They said they were ashamed of him because he was always covered in ash and that's why they called him Assepasser.

"Then I'll go alone," thought Assepasser.

When the two brothers arrived at the glass hill, the competition had already begun. Many knights and princes made frantic attempts to ride up the hill, but no

one succeeded. The king was about to announce that the competition would continue the next day until a knight appeared on the most beautiful horse that anyone in that land had ever seen. The horse had a complete outfit of copper. The knight trotted up the slope as if it were effortless. But when he had climbed a third of the hill, he turned around and rode back down. The princess thought she had never seen such a handsome knight and she fervently hoped that he would reach the top. But when he turned around, she threw an apple at him. It landed in one of his boots. The knight rode away without looking back, and no one knew where he had gone.

That evening, the brothers told what they had seen that day. "A handsome knight appeared on a beautiful horse. He could easily have reached the top," they said, "but apparently he didn't feel like it."

"Oh, I would have loved to see that," said Assepasser.

The next day, the two brothers went back to the hill.

"Please take me with you," begged Assepasser, but they said they found him too dirty.

"Then I'll go alone," thought Assepasser.

The princes and knights tried once again to climb the glass hill that day, but again they failed. Just as the king was about to close the competition, a knight on a horse appeared, even more beautiful than the horse of the copper knight. This horse was equipped in silver. He rode up the glass hill as if it were nothing, but when he had reached two thirds of the way, he turned around and rode back down with his horse. The princess threw an apple to this knight as well. It disappeared into one

of the stranger's boots, and shortly after he had disappeared from everyone's sight.

That evening, the brothers told the remarkable story of the knight on the silver horse at the table.

"Oh, how I would have loved to have seen that," said Boots.

The third day was just like the first and the second. At the end of the afternoon, a knight on a horse with a golden outfit appeared. This time, the knight climbed the hill with his horse in one go, and it happened so fast that the princess didn't even have time to hope that he would reach the top. The knight took the last golden apple from the princess's lap and rode back down without saying a word and disappeared just as quickly as he had come.

That same evening, the two brothers told the story of the amazing knight at the table. "What a great guy, that knight," they said. "Knights like this are very rare." "Oh, how I would have loved to have seen that," said the youngest brother.

The next day, the king asked all the knights and princes to come to him. He wanted to know who had the last golden apple. Since no one came forward to the king, he gave an order. Every man in the kingdom had to come to the palace and show if he had one of the golden apples. One after another came, but no one could show the king a golden apple. After a long time, the brothers of Assepasser appeared before the throne. They were the last two men, and since no one could show the king the golden apples, the king asked if he might have forgotten someone in the country. The

brothers said, "We have a younger brother, but it is impossible that he has a golden apple. He stayed home all those days."

"That doesn't matter," said the king, "let him come too." When the youngest brother came to the king, he showed him the golden apples. And at that moment, he threw off his dirty rags and before the king stood a handsome young man, dressed in a beautiful, golden armor.

"You shall marry my daughter and you shall have half of my kingdom," said the king.

Soon after, there was a wedding and Assepasser married the princess, and everyone was happy. Even though it was impossible for the princes and knights to climb the glass hill, they were all excellent at celebrating!