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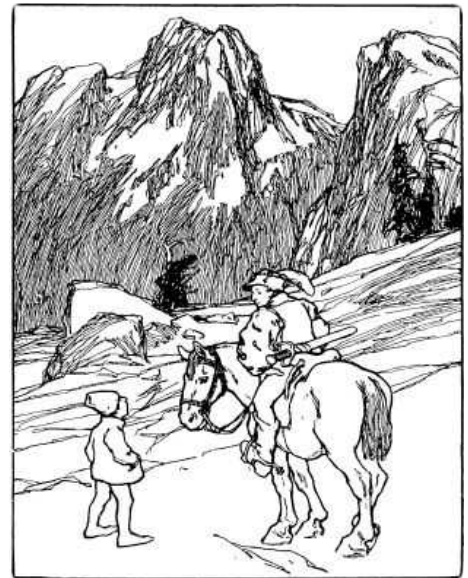
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IMAGINATION OVER KNOWLEDGE

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The Water of Life

Once upon a time there was an old, ill king with three sons. One day the sons met an old man who said: 'Only the water of life can save your father. But it's really hard to find.' The oldest son begged his father for permission to go look for the water. 'I think it's too dangerous', said the king, 'but I know I can't stop you.' Though the prince acted as if he was a brave saviour, he thought to himself: 'If I'm the one who gets the water, our father will appreciate me most and I will inherit the kingdom after he dies.' So he went on his way and after a while he came across a dwarf who asked him: 'Where are you heading to with such haste?' 'It's none of your business!', answered the prince. The dwarf didn't like this and wished for bad things to happen to the prince' Not long after, the prince got stuck with his horse in a valley between two mountains.



In the meantime the king was waiting in vain for his son. 'Then I shall go and find the water', said the second son. He also wanted to become the new heir of the kingdom. After a while this prince also ran into a

dwarf who asked him: 'Where are you travelling to with such haste?' 'It's none of your business!', the second son responded. The dwarf cursed him too and he also got stuck in the valley.

When the second son also didn't return, the youngest son decided to go out and look for the water of life. Just like his brothers he also met the dwarf who asked him: 'Where are you heading to in such a hurry?' 'I'm looking for the water of life, because my father is sick', answered the prince. 'Do you know where to find it?', asked the dwarf. 'No', said the prince. 'I shall tell you, because you have spoken to me kindly', said the dwarf. 'From the well of an enchanted castle you can get the water of life', the dwarf continued. 'To get there I shall give you an iron rod and two pieces of bread. When you hit the castle gates with the rod three times, the gates will open. You shall see two lions that will roar loudly, but if you give them the bread you can get the water without issues. But you will have to be quick, when the clock strikes twelve, the gates will shut and you shall be trapped in the enchanted castle.'

The prince thanked the dwarf and went into the castle without trouble. He walked into a room where he saw a beautiful princess, who saw him as a saviour, she kissed him and promised to marry him the next year. She also told him where the water of life was, but also that he had to hurry and just before the clock struck twelve he had left the castle with the water for his ill father. In a great mood he headed home and again met the dwarf who said: 'You did well. With the sword you can

defeat armies and the bread will regenerate itself.' The prince said: 'My dear friend, I don't want to arrive at my father without my brothers, can you tell me where they are?' 'They are trapped between two mountains, because they were so rude to me. I shall free them for



you, but they have bad hearts. You have been warned', answered the dwarf.

The youngest brother was happy to see his brothers again and together they travelled home. On their way they crossed a country where there was war and hunger. Without doubt he gave his sword and bread to the local king so he could handle his problems. In a second and third country where

they travelled through, the same thing happened, the prince had saved three kingdoms.

After that the fellowship continued by ship and the two older brothers got jealous. 'The youngest has found the water and will be rewarded with the inheritance', they said to each other. To prevent this they forged a plan. They waited until the brother slept and stole the water of life and put sea water in his flask.

Upon arrival the youngest son gave the water of life to the king. But after drinking it he only got sicker, because he drank salty sea water. Then the oldest brothers stepped forward and said: 'He tried to take the credit, but we have the real water of life.' And the

king only needed one sip of the water and he was as healthy and strong as in his youth.

Because the king thought that his youngest son had betrayed him, he gave a hunter the order to kill him. Luckily the hunter liked the prince and let him live. A little while later three wagons with money, gold and gems arrived at the king as a reward for the help his youngest son gave the three kingdoms. This made his father think and he deemed his son innocent. 'Oh! What have I done? If only he was still alive...', the king cried.

'Then I made the right decision', said the hunter. 'Your son is still alive.' This overjoyed the king and he made it known that his son could return. The princess in the meantime had paved a gold road and said: 'He, who will drive straight over the path to the kingdom, is the real one. He, who will drive next to the path, is a cheat.' First the oldest brother tried, but when he saw the gold path he thought: 'It's a waste of the gold.' So he drove next to the path and was rejected by the princess. The second brother did the same and was also rejected.

When the year passed, the youngest brother appeared and his mind was so occupied with the princess that he didn't even notice the path was made of gold. His horse drove straight on the path and when he arrived at the gate,



the princess welcomed him with open arms: 'You are my saviour and lord of the kingdom.'

The wedding was grand and majestic. After the party was over, the princess told her husband that the king realised his mistake and he could go home. He went to his father and told him how his brothers had deceived him and how he didn't want to tell on them. The king wanted to punish them, but they had fled over sea and were never seen again.