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Soria Moria castle

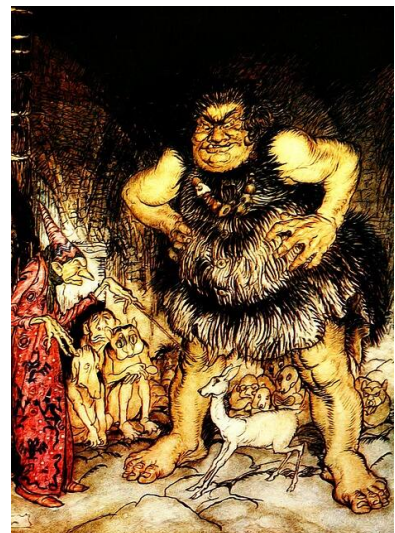
Peter Christen Asbjørnsen & Jørgen Moe

Once upon a time there was an old couple with a son named Halvor. He was a good-for-nothing, good for nothing. Every time he found work somewhere, it wasn't more than three days before he was sent away again.

One day a skipper asked Halvor to join him on a sea voyage. Halvor agree to join. But during the voyage a great storm came and the ship was driven to a strange shore. Halvor left the ship and set out to explore the strange land. However, no one seemed to live there at all. After walking around for days without seeing anyone, Halvor arrived at a large castle. The kitchen was huge and Halvor was starting to get very hungry. But no one was there, so Halvor walked on and opened a door where a princess sat behind a spinning wheel.

"What are you doing here?" asked the princess. "Nobody has ever been here who dared to visit the castle. There lives here a mean troll with three heads. Watch out! If he sees you, you won't survive! The troll has kept me captive here for years."

The princess begged Halvor to leave the castle, but Halvor didn't want to hear of it. "Give me something to eat and I'll see what I can do for you." The princess fed him and asked him to remove the sword from the wall. But no matter how hard Halvor tried, he couldn't get the sword off the wall. The princess asked him to take a sip from a bottle. It would give him strength to use the sword. Indeed, its contents gave Halvor so much power that grabbing the sword was no problem at all and he could swing it around with ease.



The door opened and the troll poked his head through the door. "Do I smell human flesh here?" asked the troll, and before he knew it Halvor had killed him with the sword.

Then the princess told that she had two more sisters, who were also both held captive by trolls, each in a different castle. Halvor promised to save the princesses, because now that he felt so strong, it seemed no problem at all. And

he also killed the two trolls, one with six heads and one with nine heads.

Then the two sisters came with them to the first castle, which was called Soria Moria Castle. All three of them adored Halvor and Halvor adored the princesses. They decided that one of them would marry Halvor and Halvor chose the youngest princess. And so Halvor lived with the princesses for a while, but he became silent. He missed his parents and he wanted to visit them again and tell them how he was doing.



The princesses told him this wouldn't be a problem.

"You will go to your parents and return here again. But you must take our advice," said the princesses. They dressed Halvor in expensive royal clothes and put a ring on him. It was the ring with which Halvor could wish his way back and forth. But he was not to speak a word of the princesses, for then his power would end and he would never see them again.

"If only I were home, I'd be happy," Halvor said, and it happened as he wished. In an instant Halvor was standing at the door of his parents' cottage. It was already getting dark and the parents didn't see that it was Halvor, but thought it was a distinguished noble gentleman. Halvor asked if he could stay the night, but his parents said he couldn't.

"We don't have a place for you to sleep," his mother said. "We don't even have a chair you could sit in. We think you'd better go to the farm down the road. At least they have a decent bed to sleep in there."

But Halvor wouldn't hear of it and persuaded his parents to spend the night in the corner in front of the chimney. His mother made a fire in the fireplace and Halvor watched without lifting a hand, as he always did when he used to be at home, stretching his lazy bones. Halvor understood that his parents didn't realize it was him, so he asked his parents, "Do you have children?"

"Yes, we had a boy named Halvor," his father said. "But we don't know where he went and we can't even say if he's dead or alive."

"Can't I be your son?" Halvor asked.

His mother stood up and said, "Our Halvor would rather be lazy than tired. He never did anything for us and only took advantage of the work of others. He looks nothing like you, such a fine man with fine clothes."

Then the woman walked to the hearth to fan the fire, and when the light from

the fire fell on Halvor's face, she recognized him instantly.

"It's you, Halvor," she cried in tears of happiness, and the hug went on forever. He told her how he had been and the old lady was so proud of him! She wanted to go to the farmer on the farm to tell them how well her son had been, the boy, who was always bullied by the farmer's daughters because they thought he was a good-for-nothing. So the next morning they walked to the farm to tell them that he was doing so well and that he was now wearing beautiful clothes.

The farmer's daughters became curious and went outside with the mother to see Halvor with their own eyes. His mother left them alone and went back home in the hope that a daughter would now want to marry him. When the farmer's daughters saw him, the girls were all very impressed and ashamed of their past behavior.

Halvor thought he should go the extra mile and told the girls that he had rescued a princess who was so beautiful that these girls would pale in comparison to her. He told about his adventure and that he was going to marry the youngest princess. Then he said, "I wish they were here so you could see how beautiful they are."

Scarcely had he uttered these words, and they stood there. But Halvor was immediately very sorry, because he had forgotten to follow the advice of the princesses.

"I'm sorry," Halvor said. But the princesses said they wanted to go with him to his parents. On the way, they stopped at a large lake just outside the farm. Close to the water was a beautiful green bank. The princesses wanted to stay there for a while to enjoy the view. So they sat there and the youngest princess said, "Shall I comb your hair a little?"

Halvor laid his head on her lap and she combed his handsome locks. It wasn't long before Halvor fell into a deep sleep. Then she took the ring from his finger and slid another in its place. Then she said, "Let us princesses be back in Soria Moria Castle."

When Halvor awoke, he immediately understood that he had lost the princesses and began to cry. His mother and father could not comfort him and he decided to look for the youngest princess' castle, because he could not stay with his parents. If he couldn't find the youngest princess anymore, he didn't think it was worth living.

On the way Halvor bought a horse, with which he alternated between walking and riding. In the night he saw a light in the distance and he decided to go to it. The light appeared to come from an old house. A very old couple lived there. They were as gray as doves and the woman had a very long nose.

"Good evening," Halvor said.

"Good evening," said the old woman.

"What can we do for you?" asked the woman, "we haven't had visitors in ages."

"I'm looking for the way to Soria Moria Castle," said Halvor. "Do you have any idea where the castle is?"

"No," said the old woman, "but we can ask the moon. She will know, for she shines her light on the earth and sees all that is on earth."

"Moon! Moon!" cried the old woman. "Can you tell me the way to Soria Moria Castle?"

"No," said the moon, "I cannot. The last time I shone there, there was a cloud over it."

"The old woman was not discouraged and said, 'Maybe the west wind knows.'

Then she saw the horse standing outside. "You brought a horse?" she asked. "Let the poor creature eat some grass from our garden." Then she walked on and asked Halvor to trade the horse for a pair of old boots. "You can walk on it at lightning speed, and you'll be able to put that to good use, if you want to keep up with the west wind," she said. "You can sleep here and I'll wake you up when the west wind comes."

After a while the west wind came and the woman walked out.

"West Wind! West wind!" cried the woman. "Can you tell me the way to Soria Moria Castle? Here is someone who likes to go there."

"Yes, I'm just going there to dry clothes for the wedding to come. If he's fast, he can come with me."

And Halvor went along, and the old boots helped him keep up with the wind pretty well until they arrived at the edge of a forest.

"I'll leave you here now," said the west wind, "because I have something to do quickly before I go to the laundry room to blow dry the clothes. If you see the washerwomen, tell them I'll be back in time. They will show you further the way to the castle, which is not so far away then."

Halvor did indeed meet the washerwomen on the way. They asked him if he had seen the west wind. "Yes," said Halvor, "he said he would be back in time to dry the clothes for the wedding." The washerwomen then told him the way to the castle.

When he got there, there were a lot of people. They were all nicely dressed and Halvor realized that his clothes were all dirty and torn from the grueling west

wind journey. So he decided that he would not show up until the last day when the wedding would take place. The day the "yes" word was to be given, Halvor sat down at a table. His glass was poured by a servant. Then Halvor put his ring in there and asked the servant to take it to the bride. So the servant did, and when the princess saw the ring, she got up and looked around.

"Who shall I marry?" she asked her sisters. "With him who delivered us from the trolls? Or he who sits here beside me as a bridegroom?"

The sisters immediately agreed that it must be Halvor and when he heard that, instead of his rags, he suddenly wore beautiful clothes. Perfect for getting married. And so they did and they lived happily ever after.

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