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READ ANYWHERE, ANYTIME

The Blue Belt

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Once upon a time, there was a beggar woman who wandered the land with her son because they had no home to live in. One day, the son saw a blue belt lying on the ground. The boy wanted the belt, but his mother forbade it because she thought the belt might be enchanted. Nevertheless, the son secretly took the belt and wore it hidden under his shirt. The belt made the boy feel stronger and stronger every day.

One day, the boy and his mother arrived at the house of a troll. The boy asked if they could stay and eat and sleep there. The troll agreed, because he fancied the mother. One day, he asked the mother if she would stay, but they would have to get rid of the boy. The mother agreed. The troll tried to kill the boy in different ways, but the son was so incredibly strong that he easily defeated the troll.

Then the troll sent the boy to a place where he would be awaited by twelve terrible lions that would surely tear him apart. But the boy had so much strength that he immediately killed the biggest and most dangerous lion. The remaining eleven lions had great respect for him and followed the boy. He became their new master. The troll and the mother were terrified when they saw the son with eleven lions. The troll came up with a plan to get rid of him for good. He sent the boy to his two dangerous brothers who would surely kill him if he dared to eat an apple from their orchard.

The mother came up with a plan to get the son to the castle. She said, "Listen, son, I have been very sick for some time. There seem to be apples in the garden of the troll's brothers that contain so many vitamins that they could make me better."

"If that's the case," said the son, "then I will pick some for you."

Then the son, followed by eleven lions, went to the castle of the brothers. There he leisurely picked the apples from the trees. The two trolls became furious when they saw the boy taking their apples. They turned into two wild horses and charged at him. The lions were able to prevent the attack on their master and managed to overpower and kill both trolls. The son was curious about the castle and went inside. There he found a beautiful girl. She was a princess, the daughter of an Arabian king. The trolls had kept her captive in the castle.



The girl was impressed by the boy's strength and asked him to stay in the castle with her. They fell in love and wanted to get married. But after some time, the princess said that she wanted to see her father, because he would probably think she was dead. At that moment, the son realized that he had completely forgotten to bring the apples to his mother. They decided that she would go back to Arabia and that he would go to his mother with the apples. Then he would follow her to her father's kingdom to ask for permission to marry her.

His mother trembled like a reed when her son suddenly stood in front of her again. He gave her the apples, and she wondered how her son had become so big and strong. At dinner, the mother sat next to him and talked with him. "You have become so strong, boy," she said. "How did that all come about? It wasn't long ago that I had to drag you everywhere and help you with almost everything."

"I'll tell you," said the son. "It's all because of that blue belt we saw lying there. You forbade me to pick it up, but since I've been wearing it, I've been getting stronger every day."

"And do you have the belt on now?" asked the woman.

"Yes, I have it," said the boy, and he showed it to her.

Then, before he could stop her, the woman grabbed the belt and tore it from him, and immediately all his strength left him, leaving him helpless before her.

The troll appeared immediately and they both tied him up in a boat, which was carried away by the strong current. He would definitely drown in the water. But the lions swam after him. The boat washed up on shore after a while, and the boy returned to the troll's house. He saw the blue belt hanging on a nail there, and as quickly as he could, he grabbed the belt and put it on.

When the mother saw that he had found and put on the belt, she knew that

nothing would stop him from killing them, and that's what happened.

After that, the boy traveled to Arabia. On the way, he heard rumors that the king's princess had returned after being held captive by trolls for a long time. The king was so afraid of losing her again that he had hidden her. Nobody knew where. When someone came to ask for her hand in marriage, the king said that no one would marry her, except for the one who could find her. Those who failed in this task would be put to death. And so many kings and princes had lost their lives.

One day, the boy met a man who sold bear skins. The boy told the seller about a plan to make a lot of money together. "This is my plan," said the boy. "I will put on one of those bear skins, and then you make a collar around my neck and lead me through the city on a chain, and I will dance and perform tricks." The man liked this plan. So the boy put on a bear skin, and everywhere he danced and performed in such a wonderful way that people were amazed.

After a while, the king heard that there was a beast in the city that not only could dance and perform tricks, but also understood everything that was said to him. The king became very curious and had the man with the animal come to the palace to perform. And the king was very impressed with the performance and invited the man and the bear to spend the night at the palace. They each got a separate bedroom. At night, the king came to pick up the imaginary bear to bring it to his daughter. It would be nice to please her, he thought.

The boy carefully looked under his disguise for the exact way to the princess. The path led through long corridors and cellars until they reached a long pier surrounded by water. Here, the king pulled a rope, and shortly thereafter a small house floated towards them. The king opened the house with a key. And there sat the beautiful princess. The princess was frightened when the king came in. When she saw the bear, she trembled with fear. But the king said she shouldn't be afraid, because it was a very talented bear, and there was no danger. The bear performed tricks and danced to entertain the princess. Then the king said he would leave the bear there until morning because he didn't feel like leading him back through all those corridors and cellars at that time of night.

The princess did not want the bear to stay with her and tried to persuade her father to take the animal away. But while she and her father were talking, the bear crawled into a corner and pretended to sleep. So, the princess agreed to let it stay, but she made the king promise to come and take it away early the next morning. When the king left, closing the door behind him, the bear got up and shed its bear skin, revealing the princess's own beloved husband standing before her. They embraced, and the young man told the princess everything that had happened to him. They spent the night together, very happy.

But at the first light of dawn, the young man put the bear skin back on. When the king returned, he pretended to still be sleeping in his corner, and the princess lay peacefully asleep among her cushions. The king took hold of the chain attached to the bear, asked it to get up and follow him, and then led it out of the house to the pier. The king then took the bear back to its master and gave the man a handful of gold as a reward.

The man and the bear immediately left the palace. When they arrived at the house where they lived, the young man quickly took off his bear skin. It didn't take long for him to return to the palace and ask to speak to the king, as he wanted to ask the princess to marry him.

When the king saw the young man, he felt sorry for him because he was so young and handsome.

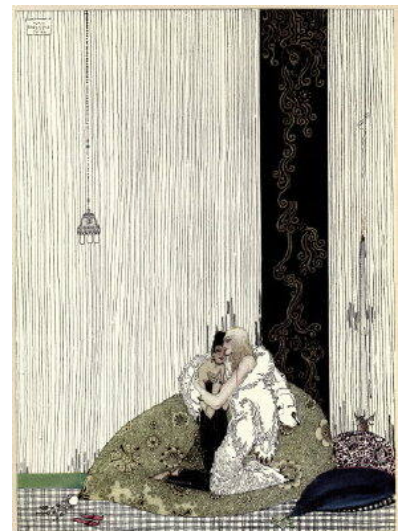
"This is very foolish," he said. "Do you not know how many kings and nobles have lost their lives searching for the princess?"

But the young man would not listen to him, for his heart beat only for the princess.

"Very well," the king finally said.

He then left, and the young man led him through the palace, down corridors and cellars until they emerged together at the long pier. There, the young man began pulling on a rope. Immediately, the houseboat drifted to the pier.

"And now, open the door," the young man shouted. "The princess is here."



The king took out his keys, but it seemed as though he could not open the door with them.

Then the young man made a fist and with one blow, smashed the door open... and there was the princess.

The princess stood up and threw her arms around the young man, kissing him. She told her father that the young man was her true love, who had saved her from the trolls. And now that he had come all the way here to find her, she wanted to marry him more than anything.

When the king heard all this, he could no longer refuse to let her marry the young man. He was very pleased with his son-in-law, who was not only very strong, but also very clever. The young man had told him right away about the trick he had played on him.

The princess and the young man got married and lived happily ever after. They allowed the eleven lions that still lived in the troll's house to come and roam in a park they provided, and they would protect him and the princess against any possible danger for all time.

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