



Ririro

READ ANYWHERE, ANYTIME

The Golden Bird

Brothers Grimm

In ancient times, there was a King who had a beautiful park behind his castle. In the park, there was a tree that bore golden apples. When the apples were ripe, they were counted.

One morning, it was discovered that an apple was missing. The King immediately ordered that a watch be kept under the tree every night.

The King had three sons. At nightfall, he sent his eldest son to guard the tree. But when it became midnight, he could no longer keep his eyes open and fell asleep. The next morning, another apple was missing. The second night, the second son was on watch, but he fared no better.

The third son was not trusted by the King to guard the tree, but he was given the opportunity to do so anyway. He lay down under the tree, determined not to fall asleep. At midnight, he heard a rustling in the air and saw a golden bird flying in the moonlight. The bird perched on a branch and just as it was about to take a bite of an apple, the boy shot an arrow at it. The bird escaped, but it had lost one of its golden feathers.



The boy picked up the feather and brought it to the King the next morning. He told him what had happened during the night. The King called his council together. Everyone agreed that such a feather was worth more than the whole kingdom. "If that feather is so valuable, then I want that bird too," declared the King.

The eldest son set out. He relied on his cunning. He thought he would surely find the Golden Bird. After walking for a while, he saw a Fox sitting on the edge of the forest. He aimed his gun and fired. The Fox cried out: "Don't shoot, I'll give you good advice. You're looking for the Golden Bird, right? Tonight, you'll come to a village. There are two inns opposite each other. Everything is light in one inn, it's merry there, don't go in. Go into the other inn, where it's closed and looks bad."

"How can an animal like that give me good advice?" thought the Prince, and he shot. But he missed. The Fox stretched his tail and walked away.

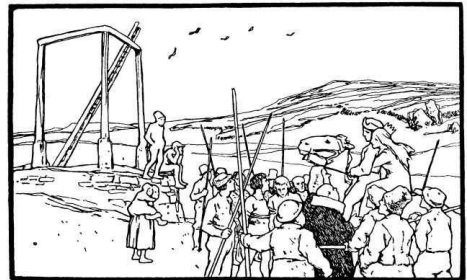
The boy continued on until he came to the village with the two inns in the evening. In one inn, people sang and danced. The other inn looked shabby and boring. "I'd be a fool," he thought, "if I went into that ugly, dull inn." So he went into the cheerful inn and had a great time. This caused him to forget about the Golden Bird. He also forgot his father and all the good things he had learned.

When some time had passed and the eldest son still had not returned, the second son set out to search for the Golden Bird. Like his brother, he met the Fox along the way. The Fox also gave him good advice. But the second son also ignored the Fox's advice. When he arrived at the inns, he saw his brother dancing in front of the window of the cheerful inn. The second son also went inside and had a great time.

Some time later, when the second son did not return either, the younger son wanted to try his luck. "I understand that he wants to go," said the father. "But he won't find the Golden Bird. If an accident happens to him, he will not be able to save himself because he is the youngest."

Finally, when the youngest son would not leave him alone, the father gave his permission. The boy set out.

The Fox was sitting on the edge of the forest again. He again asked not to be shot in exchange for good advice. The youngest son was a good boy and said, "Don't worry, little Fox, I won't harm you." "You won't regret it," said the Fox, "if you want to move faster, just sit on my tail." When he was comfortably seated on the tail, the Fox began to trot. He jumped over sticks and stones, and his hair flew in the wind.



Once they arrived in the village, the boy jumped off the tail. He followed the Fox's good advice and stayed at the shabby inn. He went to sleep peacefully. When he came out the next morning, the Fox was already in front of his door. He said, "I'll tell you what you need to do next. Keep going straight ahead, eventually you'll come to a castle. In front of the castle, there are a lot of soldiers. Don't pay attention to them, all they do is sleep and snore. Go straight through them and go straight into the castle. Go through all the rooms. Eventually, you'll come to a room where a wooden cage with a Golden Bird hangs. Next to the cage is a gold cage. But be careful, don't make the mistake of taking the Golden Bird out of its wooden cage and putting it in the gold one. Otherwise, it will end badly for you."

Immediately the Fox extended his tail and the Prince got on it again. So they continued over sticks and stones, with their hair blowing in the wind. When they

reached the castle, everything happened just as the Fox had predicted. He entered the room where the Golden Bird was in the wooden cage, next to the beautiful golden cage. And there were three golden apples in the room. The Prince thought it was foolish to keep such a beautiful bird in a wooden cage, so he picked it up and put it in the golden cage. At that moment, the Bird let out a piercing scream, the soldiers woke up immediately, stormed into the castle, and threw the Prince into the dungeon.

The next morning, he was brought to trial. When he confessed everything, he was sentenced to death. But the King said he could grant him clemency under one condition: if he found the Golden Horse, which ran faster than the wind, and could ride it, then he would receive the Golden Bird as a reward. The Prince went on his way, sighing and depressed. Where on earth could he find the Golden Horse?

Suddenly he saw his old friend, the Fox, sitting on the edge of the road. "You see", said the Fox, "that's what happens when you don't do what I say. But don't give up. I'll help you get to the Golden Horse. Just go straight ahead, and you'll come to a castle. The horse is in the stable. Soldiers are sleeping and snoring in front of it. Don't mind them, just bring the Golden Horse out on the reins. But you have to be careful. Put on the ordinary saddle of wood and leather. Don't touch the golden saddle next to it. Otherwise, it will go badly for you."

Then the Fox extended his tail again, and the Prince got on it. They continued on, jumping over stones and sticks, with their hair blowing in the wind. Everything happened as the Fox had said. The Prince arrived at the stable where the Golden Horse was. When he wanted to put on the ordinary saddle, he thought it would be a shame not to give such a magnificent animal a golden saddle. He had not touched the golden saddle yet when the horse began to neigh loudly. The soldiers woke up, grabbed the Prince, and threw him in jail.

The next morning, he was sentenced to death. At the last moment, the King granted him clemency again. If he could manage to free the beautiful Princess from the Golden Castle, he would be allowed to live. Depressed, the Prince went on his way. Fortunately, his loyal friend, the Fox, appeared again. "I really should leave you to your fate," said the Fox, "but I feel sorry for you. I'll help you one more time. You can go straight ahead to the Golden Castle. You'll arrive there in the evening. At night, when everything is quiet, the beautiful Princess goes to the bathhouse to bathe. When she enters, jump on her and kiss her. She'll follow you automatically, and you can take her with you. But be careful, don't let her say goodbye to her parents first. Otherwise, it will go badly for you."

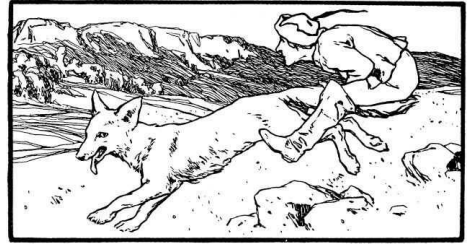
The Fox stretched his tail, the Prince jumped on it, and they flew, with their hair in the wind, over sticks and stones. They thus reached the Golden Castle. It happened just as the Fox had said. He waited until midnight. Everyone was fast asleep. The Princess went to the bathhouse. At that moment, the Prince appeared and kissed her. The Princess wanted to go with him, but she begged him, with thick tears, to let her say goodbye to her parents first. He didn't agree, but she cried so hard and fell on her knees before him. Then he couldn't stand it any longer and gave in. The Princess had just arrived at her father's bedside when he woke up, as did everyone else in the castle. The Prince was caught again and imprisoned.



The next morning, the King said to him, "You have wasted your life. You can only be forgiven if you dig up the mountain that lies before my window. This mountain obstructs my view. This must be done within eight days. If you succeed, you will receive my daughter as a reward." The Prince began the task. He dug and dug without stopping. But after seven days, he saw how little he had dug up and how much more he had to do. He gave up hope. On the evening of the seventh day, the Fox arrived. He said, "You really don't deserve me to do anything else for you, but go to sleep now. I'll do the work for you." The next morning, when the Prince looked outside, the entire mountain had disappeared. He ran to the King, full of joy, to report that the condition had been met. Whether the King liked it or not, he had to keep his word and give his daughter in marriage.

Now the Prince and the Princess could finally go on their way. However, it wasn't long before the faithful Fox reappeared. "You already have the best," said the Fox, "but the Golden Horse belongs to the Princess of the Golden Castle." "How do I get that?" asked the young man. "I'll tell you," said the Fox. "First, you must go to the King who sent you to the Golden Castle. Then, bring the Princess there as well. They will be so happy to see you that they will gladly give you the Golden Horse. Then, jump on the horse and shake everyone's hand as a farewell from the horse. Do this last with the Princess. When you have her, swing her to the front of the horse and spur the horse on. No one can ever catch you because this horse runs faster than the wind." In the end, everything worked out. The Prince rode away with the Princess on the Golden Horse.

But the Fox didn't stay behind. He said to the young man, "Finally, I will also help you get the Golden Bird. When you come near the castle, let the Princess dismount. I'll watch over her while you ride the Golden Horse to the castle square. As soon as they see you, they'll be particularly happy and bring out the Golden Bird. As soon as you have the cage in hand, hurry back to us and get the Princess." Everything went well. When the Prince wanted to ride home with his treasures, the Fox said, "Now you must reward me for all my help." "What do you want in return?" asked the boy. "When we get to the forest," said the Fox, "shoot me and cut off my head and my paws." "A fine reward," said the Prince. "I can't possibly do that to you."



The Fox said, "If you don't want to do it, then I have to leave you now. But before I go, I will give you one last piece of advice. Avoid two things: don't buy meat from the gallows and never sit on the edge of a well." Then he ran into the forest. The young prince thought to himself, "That Fox is such a strange animal with peculiar whims. Who on earth would want to buy meat from the gallows? And I've never even thought about sitting on the edge of a well."

He continued on his journey with the beautiful princess. The road led through a village, the very same village where his two brothers had stayed behind. There was a commotion of people shouting, and when he asked what was going on, he learned that two people were going to be hanged. As he approached, he saw that they were his brothers. They had squandered all their money with their so-called clever tricks. He asked if he could perhaps free them. "If you want to pay their debts," the people said, "but surely you don't want to spend your good money on two worthless fellows like them." The young prince didn't hesitate. He paid their debts, and they were set free. So they all continued on their journey together.

Now they came to the forest where they had all seen the Fox for the first time. It was pleasantly cool there on this summer day. The two brothers said, "Let's rest here by this well and have some food and drink." The young prince thought that was a good idea. But during the meal, he forgot everything and sat carelessly and unsuspectingly on the edge of the well. Then his brothers grabbed him and threw him down the well. Afterward, they ran away with the princess, the horse, and the bird.

When they arrived at their father's castle, they said, "Look, we're not only

bringing you the Golden Bird, but also the Golden Horse and the Princess of the Golden Castle." Everyone in the castle was overjoyed. But the horse wouldn't eat, the bird wouldn't sing, and the beautiful princess just cried.

The youngest brother was fortunately still alive. The well had been dry, and he had fallen onto soft moss without being hurt. But he couldn't get out of the well. However, the faithful Fox had not abandoned him. He jumped down and scolded him severely because he had once again ignored his advice. "But I can't help myself," he said. "I will help you one more time."

"Grab my tail now and hold on tight." So the Fox pulled the prince up. "Be careful, you're still not safe yet. Your brothers weren't sure you were dead, so they've put guards in the forest to kill you in case you were still alive."

Now there was a beggar by the road. The prince exchanged clothes with him and headed for home. No one at the castle recognized him. But the bird suddenly started singing, the horse wanted to eat again, and the beautiful princess dried her tears. The king was surprised and asked, "What does this sudden change mean?" "I don't know," said the princess, "I was so sad and now I'm suddenly so happy. It's as if my own prince has returned." She told the king everything that had happened, even though her brothers had threatened to kill her if she revealed anything. The king immediately summoned everyone present in the castle.

A young man dressed in rags also arrived. But the princess immediately recognized her prince and hugged him. The wicked brothers were caught and killed. The young prince married the princess and became the heir to the kingdom.

And what happened to the poor Fox after that? Some time later, the son of the King was once again in the forest and he encountered the Fox again. The Fox said: "You have everything you could wish for now. But my misfortune continues. Yet you have the power to release me from it."

He begged the Prince again to shoot him and cut off his head and paws. This time, the Prince did it. And when it was done...the Fox turned back into a human! This person was finally freed from his enchantment as a Fox. Now, nobody lacked happiness and they all lived happily ever after.

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