



Ririro

READ ANYWHERE, ANYTIME

The Master Maid

Henry Beston

Once upon a time, there was a king who had many sons. One day, the youngest prince went on a journey.

Along the way, he applied for work at a giant's house.

In the morning, the giant went outside to let his goats graze. As he left the house, he told the prince to clean the stable. "And after you've done that," he said, "you don't have to work anymore today because you have come to the kindest master you will ever find. Under no circumstances are you to enter any of the four rooms that open onto your bedroom because if you do, I will take your life."

"Well, cleaning a stable is not much work," thought the king's son. "I have plenty of time to look around the house. I'm really curious about those rooms because there must be something that the giant is afraid I will see, since he forbids me from entering them."

So, he went to the first room. There was a pot boiling. In the second room, there was another pot in the same way. In a third room, there was yet another pot. "Not really very special," the king's son thought to himself. "Will it be different in the fourth room?" In the fourth room was a girl, so incredibly beautiful. The prince had never seen such a beautiful girl before.

"Oh! What are you doing here?" said the girl. "I work here in the giant's service," said the prince. "Oh, poor you," said the girl. "Well, it's not so bad," said the prince. "He's a very kind master, he doesn't make me work hard at all." "What do you have to do for him?" asked the girl. "I have to clean the stable," said the prince.

"Make sure you don't use the pitchfork in the normal way, but use it upside down. You will see that you can clean it that way. If you do it the usual way, you will never get the stable clean," said the girl. "I'll do that," said the prince. Then they talked for hours. She told him that she was the Master Maid. The prince fell madly in love with her and they agreed to marry.



The prince went to the stable hours later and soon noticed that the Master Maid was right. He couldn't clean the stable with the pitchfork in the normal way, but using it upside down, it was as if it cleaned itself. Then the giant came home. "Did you clean the stable?" asked the giant. "Yes, it's clean now, master," said the king's son.

"You must have talked to my Master Maid, otherwise, you would never have succeeded," said the giant. "Master Maid? Who is that?" said the prince, pretending he didn't know anything.

On the second morning, the giant went out with his goats again, so he told the prince to get his horse from the mountainside and bring it home. "I'll do that," said the prince and he looked forward to going to the Master Maid again. She asked him what he had to do that day. "Oh, not very dangerous work," said the king's son. "I just have to go up the mountainside and bring the horse back to the stable."

"But it's not as easy as you think," said the Master Maid. "Unless you do it the way I tell you." Then the prince stayed with her for hours. Until she said he'd better get the horse before the giant came back. By evening, the giant came home. "Did you get the horse from the mountainside?" he asked. "Yes, master," said the prince.

"I'll see about that," said the giant and went to the stable, but the horse was there exactly as the prince had described. "You must have talked to my Master Maid, otherwise you could never have done it," the giant said again. And the prince pretended he had no idea what the giant was talking about. On the morning of the third day, the giant had to take the goats into the woods again. "Today, you have to fetch my taxes from underground," he said to the prince.

The Master Maid told him what to do. When the giant returned home in the evening, he asked, "Did you go for the taxes?" "Yes, master," said the prince. "The bag of gold is on the bench over there." "I'll see about that," said the giant, and went to the bench where the bag was indeed filled with gold. "You must have talked to my Master Maid!" said the giant. "And if you did, I'll break your neck."

"I really have no idea what you're talking about," said the prince. The next day, the giant took him to the Master Maid. The giant said to her, "Now you cook him in the big pot. Call me when you're done." Then the giant went to sleep on the bench.

The Master Maid took a knife and made a small cut in the prince's hand. Three drops of blood fell on a wooden stool. She took a golden apple and two golden chickens and fled with the prince. When they reached the sea, they took a boat and sailed away. When the giant had slept for a long time, he began to stretch.

"Is it done?" he asked.

"It's just beginning," said the first drop of blood on the stool.

So the giant went back to sleep. After a long time, he woke up and asked, "Is it done now?" "It's halfway there!" said the second drop of blood, and the giant believed it was the voice of the Master Maid. When he had slept for many more hours, he asked again, "Is it done now?"

"It's completely done," said the third drop of blood. Then he called the Master Maid, but no one answered. The giant went to the pot to taste it, but he realized he had been tricked by the Master Maid and the prince. Furious, he went after them, but they were so far away that he couldn't catch them.

The Master Maid and the prince decided to go to the prince's house. The prince asked her to wait for him on the beach until he fetched a carriage with horses. He didn't want her to walk to the castle on foot. "Oh no, don't go without me," said the Master Maid. "Because I foresee that you will forget me when you get home." But the prince insisted that it had to be that way, and the Master Maid said, "Fine, but promise me that you won't eat anything when you get to the palace. Your family will insist, but don't take a single bite. If you do, you'll forget about me immediately."

The prince promised. When he arrived home, exactly what the Master Maid had said happened. That same day, the oldest brother was going to get married, so he was invited to the feast. But the prince went straight to the horses in the stable. Eventually, the bride's sister rolled an apple across the yard to him and said, "You must be hungry after such a long journey." The prince took the apple and took a bite. Immediately, he forgot about the Master Maid and thought, "What am I going to do with the horses? My brother is getting married!"

One morning, the sheriff came by and was surprised to see that the old woman's cottage had transformed into a golden hut. When he saw the beautiful Master Maid, he fell in love with her instantly and proposed to her. She asked him if he had enough money, and he went home to gather all his savings to show her.

"I forgot to tend to the fire," said the Master Maid. "Shall I do it?" the sheriff asked. "Yes, get the shovel to put the coals in the fire," said the Master Maid. The sheriff did so, but when he grabbed the shovel, he couldn't let go of it. He spent the whole day with the shovel stuck to his hands, putting coals in the fire. The sheriff begged the Master Maid to release him, and eventually, she did.

The next day, a lawyer came to the golden hut and fell in love with the Master Maid, proposing to her almost immediately. She asked him if he had enough money, and he went to get it for her. Then, she said that she had forgotten to lock the veranda door, and the lawyer offered to do it for her. As he grabbed the

doorknob, it wouldn't let go of him, and the door swung open and shut, making the lawyer sick. He begged the Master Maid to release him, and she did.

On the third day, a high official came to the hut and also fell in love with the Master Maid, showing her that he had plenty of savings. She told him that she had forgotten to bring the calf inside, which urgently needed to go to the stable. The official offered to do it for her, but when he caught the calf, it wouldn't let go of him, and he couldn't release it. The calf ran over hills and valleys, and the official begged the Master Maid to release him, and she did.

The next day, one of the prince's older brothers was getting married. The brothers were going to ride to pick up the bride and take her to their father's castle. However, the carriage broke one of the wheel's pins, and all the spare pins also weren't strong enough. The sheriff, who was there, suggested that the handle of the Master Maid's shovel might be strong enough. They sent messengers, and she gave them the shovel.

But then, the bottom of the carriage fell apart, and no matter what wood the men chose to fix it, it broke apart. The lawyer, who was also there, suggested they could use the door of the Master Maid's hut, which might be strong enough. The Master Maid gave them the door.

As they set out again, the horses couldn't pull the carriage anymore. The high official who was also in the carriage suggested asking the Master Maid, who had a calf as strong as ten horses, to lend it to them. The calf was brought along, and the carriage continued.

When they arrived at the palace, the king heard about the Master Maid's help and invited her to the feast. He said, "It's only right that we invite the girl who saved us from all these obstacles to the celebration. Without her, you would never have made it on time."

Everyone agreed, and five of the king's best men were sent to bring her to the palace. The Master Maid immediately went with them, and the king gave her a place at the table next to his youngest son. She then took out the chickens and the golden apple from her bag and put them on the table. The chickens immediately began to fight over the golden apple.

"Oh! Look how those two chickens are fighting over the golden apple," said the king's son.

"Yes, that's how we fought to escape from the giant," said the Master Maid. Immediately, the prince recognized her, and you can imagine how happy he was. That day, not one but two weddings were celebrated, and everyone lived happily ever after.

Stories help us explore cultures, learn moral lessons, connect with nature — or simply have fun. That's why ririro.com offers 3,000+ free stories — fairy tales, fables, bedtime stories, myths and more — for every age, in 13 languages, with free printable PDFs and often audio. Reading should be a right, not a privilege. Share

ririro.com and spread the joy of reading.
Instagram: @ririro_reading · Pinterest: pinterest.com/ririrocom