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Torre Jeppe

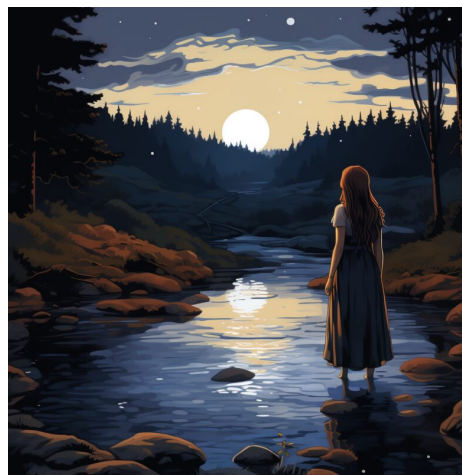
Unknown writer

In a church-nave a specter sat night by night, and the specter's name was Torre Jeppe. He was a dried-up corpse that could not decay. One night three tailors were working at a farmstead in the neighborhood. They were laughing and joking, and among other things they asked the girl in the house, who was known to be brave, what they would have to give her to go to church and fetch back Torre Jeppe. She could trust herself to do it, was her answer; but they must give her a dress of home-spun wool for her trouble. That she should surely have, said the tailors, for they did not believe the girl would dare such a venture. Yet she took the tailors at their word and really went.

When she reached the church, she took Torre Jeppe on her back, carried him home and sat him down on the bench beside the tailors. They timidly moved away; but Torre Jeppe moved after them, and looked at them with his big eyes until they nearly lost their reason. In their terror they begged the girl in the name of God to deliver them from the specter. They would gladly give her another dress if she would only carry the dead man away again. They had no need to tell her twice, for she took Torre Jeppe on her back, and dragged him away again.

But when she tried to set him down in the place where she had found him, he did not want to let her go; but clasped his arms firmly about her neck. In vain she said to him several times: "Torre Jeppe, let me go!" At last he said: "I will not let you go until you promise me that you will go this very night to the brook and ask three times: 'Anna Perstochter, do you forgive Torre Jeppe?'" The girl promised to do as he said, and he at once released her. The brook was a good mile off; but she went there and asked three times in a loud voice, as she had promised: "Anna Perstochter, do you forgive Torre Jeppe?" And when she had called the third time a woman's voice replied from out of the water: "If God has forgiven him, then I, too, forgive him!"

When the girl came back to the church Torre Jeppe asked eagerly: "What did she say?" "Well, if God has forgiven you, then she, too, will forgive you!" Then Torre Jeppe thanked her and said: "Come back again before sunrise, and you shall receive your reward for the service you have done me." The girl went back at sunrise, and in the place where the phantom had been sitting she found a bushel of silver coin. In addition she received the two dresses promised her by the tailors. But Torre Jeppe was never seen again.



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