

安徒生童话(2)

辽宁出版集团电子图书部 编

辽宁电子图书有限责任公司

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by Hans C. Andersen

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1872

FAIRY TALES OF HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN

THE HAPPY FAMILY

by Hans Christian Andersen

THE largest green leaf in this country is certainly the burdock-leaf. If you hold it in front of you, it is large enough for an apron; and if you hold it over your head, it is almost as good as an umbrella, it is so wonderfully large. A burdock never grows alone; where it grows, there are many more, and it is a splendid sight; and all this splendor is good for snails. The great white snails, which grand people in olden times used to have made into fricassees; and when they had eaten them, they would say, "O, what a delicious dish!" for these people really thought them good; and these snails lived on burdock-leaves, and for them the burdock was planted.

There was once an old estate where no one now lived to require

snails; indeed, the owners had all died out, but the burdock still

flourished; it grew over all the beds and walks of the garden-
its

growth had no check- till it became at last quite a forest of
burdocks. Here and there stood an apple or a plum-tree; but for
this, nobody would have thought the place had ever been a garden.
It

was burdock from one end to the other; and here lived the last
two

surviving snails. They knew not themselves how old they were;
but they

could remember the time when there were a great many more of
them, and

that they were descended from a family which came from foreign

lands, and that the whole forest had been planted for them and
theirs.

They had never been away from the garden; but they knew that
another

place once existed in the world, called the Duke's Palace Castle,
in

which some of their relations had been boiled till they became

black, and were then laid on a silver dish; but what was done

afterwards they did not know. Besides, they could not imagine

exactly how it felt to be boiled and placed on a silver dish;
but no

doubt it was something very fine and highly genteel. Neither the

cockchafer, nor the toad, nor the earth-worm, whom they

questioned

about it, would give them the least information; for none of their

relations had ever been cooked or served on a silver dish. The old

white snails were the most aristocratic race in the world,- they

knew that. The forest had been planted for them, and the nobleman's

castle had been built entirely that they might be cooked and laid on

silver dishes.

They lived quite retired and very happily; and as they had no

children of their own, they had adopted a little common snail, which

they brought up as their own child. The little one would not grow, for

he was only a common snail; but the old people, particularly the

mother-snail, declared that she could easily see how he grew; and when

the father said he could not perceive it, she begged him to feel the

little snail's shell, and he did so, and found that the mother was

right.

One day it rained very fast. "Listen, what a drumming there is

on the burdock-leaves; turn, turn, turn; turn, turn, turn," said the

father-snail.

"There come the drops," said the mother; "they are trickling down the stalks. We shall have it very wet here presently. I am very

glad we have such good houses, and that the little one has one of

his own. There has been really more done for us than for any other

creature; it is quite plain that we are the most noble people in the

world. We have houses from our birth, and the burdock forest has been planted for us. I should very much like to know how far it extends, and what lies beyond it."

"There can be nothing better than we have here," said the father-snail; "I wish for nothing more."

"Yes, but I do," said the mother; "I should like to be taken to

the palace, and boiled, and laid upon a silver dish, as was done to

all our ancestors; and you may be sure it must be something very uncommon."

"The nobleman's castle, perhaps, has fallen to decay," said the

snail-father, or the burdock wood may have grown out. You need not

be in a hurry; you are always so impatient, and the youngster is getting just the same. He has been three days creeping to the top of

that stalk. I feel quite giddy when I look at him."

"You must not scold him," said the mother-snail; "he creeps so

very carefully. He will be the joy of our home; and we old folks have nothing else to live for. But have you ever thought where we

are to get a wife for him? Do you think that farther out in the wood

there may be others of our race?"

"There may be black snails, no doubt," said the old snail;

"black snails without houses; but they are so vulgar and conceited

too. But we can give the ants a commission; they run here and there,

as if they all had so much business to get through. They, most likely,

will know of a wife for our youngster."

"I certainly know a most beautiful bride," said one of the ants;

"but I fear it would not do, for she is a queen."

"That does not matter," said the old snail; "has she a house?"

"She has a palace," replied the ant,- "a most beautiful ant-palace

with seven hundred passages."

"Thank-you," said the mother-snail; "but our boy shall not go to

live in an ant-hill. If you know of nothing better, we will give the

commission to the white gnats; they fly about in rain and sunshine;

they know the burdock wood from one end to the other."

"We have a wife for him," said the gnats; "a hundred man-steps

from here there is a little snail with a house, sitting on a

gooseberry-bush; she is quite alone, and old enough to be married.

It is only a hundred man-steps from here."

"Then let her come to him," said the old people. "He has the whole

burdock forest; she has only a bush."

So they brought the little lady-snail. She took eight days to

perform the journey; but that was just as it ought to be; for it

showed her to be one of the right breeding. And then they had a

wedding. Six glow-worms gave as much light as they could; but in

other

respects it was all very quiet; for the old snails could not bear

festivities or a crowd. But a beautiful speech was made by the

mother-snail. The father could not speak; he was too much overcome.

Then they gave the whole burdock forest to the young snails as an

inheritance, and repeated what they had so often said, that it was the

finest place in the world, and that if they led upright and

honorable lives, and their family increased, they and their children

might some day be taken to the nobleman's palace, to be boiled

black, and laid on a silver dish. And when they had finished speaking,

the old couple crept into their houses, and came out no more; for they

slept.

The young snail pair now ruled in the forest, and had a numerous

progeny. But as the young ones were never boiled or laid in silver

dishes, they concluded that the castle had fallen into decay, and that

all the people in the world were dead; and as nobody contradicted

them, they thought they must be right. And the rain fell upon the

burdock-leaves, to play the drum for them, and the sun shone to

paint colors on the burdock forest for them, and they were very happy;

the whole family were entirely and perfectly happy.

THE END

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1872

FAIRY TALES OF HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN

THE ICE MAIDEN

by Hans Christian Andersen

I. LITTLE RUDY

WE will pay a visit to Switzerland, and wander through that country of mountains, whose steep and rocky sides are overgrown with forest trees. Let us climb to the dazzling snow-fields at their summits, and descend again to the green meadows beneath, through which rivers and brooks rush along as if they could not quickly enough reach the sea and vanish. Fiercely shines the sun over those deep valleys, as well as upon the heavy masses of snow which lie on the mountains.

During the year these accumulations thaw or fall in the rolling avalanche, or are piled up in shining glaciers. Two of these glaciers lie in the broad, rocky cliffs, between the Schreckhorn and the Wetterhorn, near the little town of Grindelwald. They are wonderful to

behold, and therefore in the summer time strangers come here from

all parts of the world to see them. They cross snow-covered mountains,

and travel through the deep valleys, or ascend for hours, higher and

still higher, the valleys appearing to sink lower and lower as they

proceed, and become as small as if seen from an air balloon. Over

the lofty summits of these mountains the clouds often hang like a dark

veil; while beneath in the valley, where many brown, wooden houses are

scattered about, the bright rays of the sun may be shining upon a

little brilliant patch of green, making it appear almost

transparent. The waters foam and dash along in the valleys beneath;

the streams from above trickle and murmur as they fall down the rocky mountain's side, looking like glittering silver bands.

On both sides of the mountain-path stand these little wooden houses; and, as within, there are many children and many mouths to

feed, each house has its own little potato garden. These children rush

out in swarms, and surround travellers, whether on foot or in

carriages. They are all clever at making a bargain. They offer for

sale the sweetest little toy-houses, models of the mountain cottages

in Switzerland. Whether it be rain or sunshine, these crowds of children are always to be seen with their wares.

About twenty years ago, there might be seen occasionally, standing

at a short distance from the other children, a little boy, who was

also anxious to sell his curious wares. He had an earnest,

expressive countenance, and held the box containing his carved toys

tightly with both hands, as if unwilling to part with it. His

earnest look, and being also a very little boy, made him noticed by

the strangers; so that he often sold the most, without knowing why. An

hour's walk farther up the ascent lived his grandfather, who cut and

carved the pretty little toy-houses; and in the old man's room stood a

large press, full of all sorts of carved things- nut-crackers,

knives and forks, boxes with beautifully carved foliage, leaping

chamois. It contained everything that could delight the eyes of a

child. But the boy, who was named Rudy, looked with still greater

pleasure and longing at some old fire-arms which hung upon the

rafters, under the ceiling of the room. His grandfather promised him

that he should have them some day, but that he must first grow big and

strong, and learn how to use them. Small as he was, the goats were

placed in his care, and a good goat-keeper should also be a good

climber, and such Rudy was; he sometimes, indeed, climbed higher

than the goats, for he was fond of seeking for birds'-nests at the top

of high trees; he was bold and daring, but was seldom seen to smile,

excepting when he stood by the roaring cataract, or heard the

descending roll of the avalanche. He never played with the other

children, and was not seen with them, unless his grandfather sent

him down to sell his curious workmanship. Rudy did not much like

trade; he loved to climb the mountains, or to sit by his grandfather

and listen to his tales of olden times, or of the people in Meyringen,

the place of his birth.

"In the early ages of the world," said the old man, "these people could not be found in Switzerland. They are a colony from the north, where their ancestors still dwell, and are called Swedes."

This was something for Rudy to know, but he learnt more from other sources, particularly from the domestic animals who belonged to the house. One was a large dog, called Ajola, which had belonged to his father; and the other was a tom-cat. This cat stood very high in Rudy's favor, for he had taught him to climb.

"Come out on the roof with me," said the cat; and Rudy quite understood him, for the language of fowls, ducks, cats, and dogs, is as easily understood by a young child as his own native tongue. But it must be at the age when grandfather's stick becomes a neighing horse, with head, legs, and tail. Some children retain these ideas later than others, and they are considered backwards and childish for their age. People say so; but is it so?

"Come out on the roof with me, little Rudy," was the first thing