
There once was a king in England who had three daughters. They were stolen from him, and he was very sad. He dreamed one night that he should send a message out into the land and gather the young men. Surely those who could find the princesses would turn up. The king did so, and three young men came there. The oldest was called Jens, the middle, Peder, and the youngest, Kristian. They thought surely they could find the princesses. Kristian told the king that he should build a ship. When it was ready they all three went on board and sailed away.

After sometime passes Jens climbed the mast, but he could not see anything but water. They sailed a time longer, then Peder went up, and he dimly saw land. So they sailed a while further. Then Kristian went up, and he saw the land clearly. When they came to land, they all three left the ship. They came to a large forest and it it they found a large house. The next morning they decided that Peder and Kristian should go out hunting, but Jens would stay in the house and prepare the meal. When he had the meal ready there came a black creature and asked Jens what he wanted in his house. Jens grumbled and said that it could make no difference to him; but the black creature misunderstood and ate all the food. When Peder and Kristian came home they had to go hungry.

The next day Jens and Kristian went hunting and Peder stayed home to cook dinner. At noon the black creature came again and asked what he was doing in his house. Peder said that it was none of his business. But with that the black creature ate all the dinner so that Peder had absolutely nothing for the others when they came home. The third day Jens and Peder went hunting. Kristian remained home to cook dinner. At noon the black creature came and asked what he was doing in his house. Kristian answered that he should not take it ill, that he was cooking dinner, and he asked him to do the honor of helping himself. The black creature ate then, but he left a great deal, and he was well pleased at that. When Jens and Peder came home there was enough for all of them. Since it had gone so well for Kristian they agreed that he should also stay home the fourth day, and the other two would go hunting. The black creature came again at noon. He talked a long time with Kristian, but during the conversation Kristian said that he had something very funny to show him, and he would be able to see it when he stuck his head through a beam. The creature stuck his head through a beam, and Kristian beat him then until he told him that the three princesses were under this castle.

As soon as Jens and Peder came home he told them that he had come across the trail of the three princesses, and they were living here under the castle. Kristian fastened a rope around his waist. Jens and Peder lowered him down, and were to pull him up as soon as he gave them a certain signal. Kristian came to the bottom and entered a room, where he met the youngest princess. She asked how he dared venture to come here, where there had not been Christian blood in so many years. He answered that he had come to rescue her.

Then she showed him her man’s sword and asked if he could lift it. He could certainly lift it, but he could not swing it. Then she gave him a flask and asked him to drink a swallow from it. He did so, and then he could swing the sword. When that was done they heard heavy footsteps. Then the princess hid Kristian under the bed. Then the troll came in and said, “Phew,
it smells of Christian blood here.” But the princess answered that there was a raven that had dropped a human bone down the chimney. Then Kristian stepped forward and cut the head off the troll. He asked the princess for half her gold ring, and he got it. He asked her next where her next oldest sister lived. She answered that she was in the next room, and then Kristian went in there.

There he met the princess. She asked how he dared venture to come here, when there had not been Christian blood here in many years. He answered that he had come here to rescue her. She thought that her man was nasty to take on. He was a black creature with two heads. She asked him to try to budge his sword. He certainly could budge it, but he could not lift it. She gave him a black flask and asked him to drink from it. The first time he drank he could lift it, and the second time he could swing it. They heard now that someone was coming. She hid him under the bed. Then the troll with the two heads came in and said, “Phew, I smell Christian blood.” The princess said there was a raven that had dropped a human bone through the chimney. Then Kristian came out from the bed and cut both heads from the troll. Then he asked the princess for half her gold ring, and he got it. Then he asked her where her oldest sister lived, and she answered that she was in the next room.

When he entered there he found the princess. She asked how he dared venture here when there had not been Christian blood here in many years. Well, he had come to rescue her. Then she told that her man had three heads and that he was a hard fellow to fight with. Then she asked him to see if he could budge his sword, but he could not. So the princess gave him a little flask and asked him to drink from it. He drank once. Then he could budge it. He drank a second time. Then he could lift it, and he drank a third time. Then he could swing it. Then they heard something coming. The princess hid Kristian under the bed. The troll came in and said, “Phew, it smells of Christian blood here.” She answered that it was only a raven that had dropped a human bone through the chimney. Then Kristian stepped out and cut all three heads from the troll. He asked the princess for half her gold ring, and he got it. Then the princesses were rescued.

Kristian tied them to the rope and gave the arranged signal. So the princesses were pulled up, but he himself did not want to follow. He knew for certain that Hans and Peder would kill him and say that they had been the ones to rescue the princesses. When the three princesses came up, Jens and Peder took them to the ship and forced them to swear that they would neither tell nor write to anyone about how they had been rescued.

The youngest princess had a whistle under the castle, but she had forgotten to tell Kristian that he should take and blow into it when he wanted to depart. But after Kristian had wandered about for a while, he found it nonetheless. Then he thought that the ship was probably almost on land, so he blew into the whistle. Then a beast came and said, “What do you command, sir?” “To go to England,” answered Kristian. The beast instantly took him away, and he came to England even before the three princesses.

When Jens and Peder arrived at the castle with the rescued princesses the king became overwhelmingly happy and said that each of them should have one of the princesses. He asked them what had become of Kristian, and they answered that he had deserted them along the road. Meanwhile, Kristian had apprenticed himself to a goldsmith.
Then it happened that the king had proclaimed in all the churches in the land that would give a large reward to whoever could make a match for the gold ring-halves of the princesses. Kristian’s master was also in church. He came home and told what he had heard, but of course it was a fool’s errand that no sensible man would start working on. But Kristian said that it was best that he take on the work. He would certainly attempt to complete it. Then the master went to the king and said that he would attempt to make a match for the rings.

Kristian let the time go by until the evening before the appointed day. Then he asked for light and a private place for his work. He got that, and pretended to be hammering and beating with all his might. After that he went in to the master and gave him the three half rings. He said that he should give them to the king, but he should only request sixteen dollars for them. Then the master went to the king with them, and the king gladly gave the sixteen dollars.

Some time later the king again had proclaimed in all the churches that he would give that man a large reward who could make three gold dresses like those the princesses had before, but which they had forgotten in the castle where they were abducted. In addition a coat should be made like the one that the troll had who was the youngest princess’s husband.

Kristian’s master was also in church that day. He came home again this time and told what he had heard, but it was clearly a fool’s errand to tackle it. Kristian, who had taken the dresses and coat with him, said that he well dared to take on this work, and he kept on talking to his master until he went up to the castle and told the king that he would complete the work. Kristian let the work rest until the evening before the designated day. Then he asked for light and a solitary place. He started smithing and hammering as if his life depended on it. When it seemed to him that it might be enough of that, then he hung up the three gold dresses in the three corners of his master’s living room, and the coat in the fourth. Then he said that his master could take the three dresses and go up with them. He should only ask sixteen dollars for them, but this time he himself wanted permission to follow along. He would, however, remain standing outside the door.

When the master entered the castle with the three dresses there was great astonishment, because they resembled the missing dresses precisely. Then the king asked if he himself had made them. The master denied it; he had a journeyman who worked with him. Could one get to see him? Yes, that was an easy thing, since he was standing outside. The master went out to call him in. But Kristian had put on the troll’s gold coat, and his master could not recognize him at all. He came in with the information that the journeyman had gone his way, but a very fine gentleman stood outside. The youngest princess asked that the stranger be invited in. This was granted her.

When Kristian came in he was recognized immediately by the youngest princess, but she had sworn neither to tell nor to write to anyone about her rescue. She took a piece of paper and with a pin pricked in it a full account of her rescue. She gave it to the king to read, and then it was decided that Kristian should have the youngest princess.

One day shortly thereafter the king asked Kristian if he would not go out to inspect his regiment. Yes, he had a great desire to do that. Along the way the king asked him what punishment Jens and Peder should have. None, answered Kristian. When they had inspected the king’s regiment, Kristian asked the king if he did not have a desire to see his regiment. The king
though this could be magnificent. Kristian blew into his whistle and beasts from all corners of the world flocked around him. With that he blew into the other end. Then all the beasts went away, but one very large beast came to him and asked, “What does my master command?” He answered that it should tear Jens and Peder into little pieces. It did so. Kristian got the youngest princess. The wedding lasted fourteen days.

I was at the wedding, too, and since I had a long way home Kristian blew me here with his whistle. They sent me a pig. My wife made sausages of it, and we kept body and soul together.