



GEORGE WITH THE GOAT



SIXTY TALES FROM EXCLUSIVELY SLAVONIC SOURCES

There was a king who had a daughter who never could be induced to laugh; she was always sad. So the king proclaimed that she should be given to any one who could cause her to laugh. There was also a shepherd who had a son named George.

He said: "Daddy! I, too, will go to see whether I can make her laugh. I want nothing from you but the goat."

His father said, "Well, go."

The goat was of such a nature that, when her master wished, she detained everybody, and that person was obliged to stay by her.

So he took the goat and went, and met a man who had a foot on his shoulder. George said: "Why have you a foot on your shoulder?"

He replied: "If I take it off, I leap a hundred miles."

"Whither are you going?"

"I am going in search of service, to see if any one will take me."

"Well, come with us."

They went on, and again met a man who had a bandage on his eyes. "Why have you a bandage on your eyes?"

He answered, "If I remove the bandage, I see a hundred miles."

"Whither are you going?"

"I am going in search of service, if you will take me."

"Yes, I'll take you. Come also with me."

They went on a bit farther, and met another fellow, who had a bottle under his arm, and, in-

stead of a stopper, held his thumb in it. "Why do you hold your thumb there?"

"If I pull it out, I squirt a hundred miles, and besprinkle everything that I choose. If you like, take me also into your service; it may be to your advantage and ours too."

George replied: "Well, come, too!"

Afterward they came to the town where the king lived, and bought a silken riband for the goat. They came to an inn, and orders had already been given there beforehand, that when such people came, they were to give them what they liked to eat and drink—the king would pay for all. So they tied the goat with that very riband and placed it in the innkeeper's room to be taken care of, and he put it in the side room where his daughters slept. The innkeeper had three maiden daughters, who were not yet asleep.

So Manka said: "Oh! If I, too, could have such a riband! I will go and unfasten it from that goat."

The second, Dodla, said: "Don't; he'll find it out in the morning."

But she went notwithstanding. And when Manka did not return for a long time, the third, Kate, said: "Go, fetch her."

So Dodla went, and gave Manka a pat on the back. "Come, leave it alone!"

And now she, too, was unable to withdraw herself from her. So Kate said: "Come, don't unfasten it!"

Kate went and gave Dodla a pat on the petticoat; and now she, too, couldn't get away, but was obliged to stay by her.

In the morning George made haste and went for the goat, and led the whole set away—Kate Dodla, and Manka. The innkeeper was still asleep.

They went through the village, and the judge looked out of a window and said, “Fie, Kate! What’s this? What’s this?”

He went and took her by the hand, wishing to pull her away, but remained also by her. After this, a cowherd drove some cows through a narrow street, and the bull came rushing round; he stuck fast, and George led him, too, in the procession.

Thus they afterward came in front of the castle, and the servants came out-of-doors; and when they saw such things they went and told the king. “Oh, sire, we have such a spectacle here; we have already had all manner of masquerades, but this has never been here yet.”

So they immediately led the king’s daughter to the square in front of the castle, and she looked and laughed till the castle shook.

Now they asked him what sort of person he was. He said that he was a shepherd’s son, and was named George. They said that it could not be done; for he was of mean lineage, and they could not give him the damsel; but he must accomplish something more for them.

He said, “What?”

They replied that there was a spring yonder, a hundred miles off; if he brought a goblet of water from it in a minute, then he should obtain the damsel.

So George said to the man who had the foot on his shoulder: “You said that if you took the foot down, you could jump a hundred miles.”

He replied: “I’ll easily do that.”

He took the foot down, jumped, and was there. But after this there was only a very little time to spare, and by then he ought to have been back. So George said to the other: “You said that if you removed the bandage from your eyes, you could see a hundred miles. Peep and see what is going on.”

“Ah, sir! Goodness gracious! He’s fallen asleep!”



“That will be a bad job,” said George; “the time will be up. You, third man, you said if you pulled your thumb out, you could squirt a hundred miles; be quick and squirt thither, that he may get up. And you, look whether he is moving, or what.”

“Oh, sir, he’s getting up now; he’s knocking the dust off; he’s drawing the water.”

He then gave a jump, and was there exactly in time.

After this they said that he must perform one task more; that yonder, in a rock, was a wild beast, a unicorn, of such a nature that he destroyed a great many of their people; if he cleared him out of the world he should obtain the damsel. So he took his people and went into the forest. They came to a firwood. There were three wild beasts, and three lairs had been formed by wallowing as they lay. Two did nothing: but the third destroyed the people. So they took some stones and some pine-cones in their pockets, and climbed up into a tree; and when the beasts lay down, they dropped a stone down upon that one which was the unicorn.

He said to the next: "Be quiet; don't butt me."

It said: "I'm not doing anything to you."

Again they let a stone fall from above upon the unicorn. "Be quiet! You've already done it to me twice."

"Indeed, I'm doing nothing to you." So they attacked each other and fought together. The unicorn wanted to pierce the second beast through; but it jumped out of the way, and he rushed so violently after it, that he struck his horn into a tree, and couldn't pull it out quickly. So they sprang speedily down from the fir, and the other two beasts ran away and escaped, but they cut off the head of the third, the unicorn, took it up, and carried it to the castle.

Now those in the castle saw that George had again accomplished that task. "What, prithee, shall we do? Perhaps we must after all give him the damsel!"

"No, sire," said one of the attendants, "that cannot be; he is too lowborn to obtain a king's daughter! On the contrary, we must clear him out of the world."

So the king ordered them to note his words, what he should say. There was a hired female servant there, and she said to him: "George, it will be evil for you to-day; they're going to clear you out of the world."

He answered: "Oh, I'm not afraid. When I was only just twelve years old, I killed twelve of them at one blow!"

But this was the fact: when his mother was baking a flat-cake, a dozen flies settled upon her, and he killed them all at a single blow.

When they heard this, they said: "Nothing else will do but we must shoot him."

So they drew up the soldiers, and said they would hold a review in his honour, for they would celebrate the wedding in the square before the castle. Then they conducted him thither, and the soldiers were already going to let fly at him.

But George said to the man who held his thumb in the bottle in the place of a stopper: "You said, if you pulled your thumb out, you could besprinkle everything. Pull it out—quick!"

"Oh, sir, I'll easily perform that."

So he pulled out his thumb and gave them all such a sprinkling that they were all blind, and not one could see.

So, when they perceived that nothing else was to be done, they told him to go, for they would give him the damsel. Then they gave him a handsome royal robe, and the wedding took place. I, too, was at the wedding; they had music there, sang, ate, and drank; there was meat, there were cheesecakes, and baskets full of everything, and buckets full of strong waters. To-day I went, yesterday I came; I found an egg among the tree-stumps; I knocked it against somebody's head, and gave him a bald place, and he's got it still.