



The golden bird

Description

contesdefees.com



Long ago, there was a king who had a beautiful garden around his palace, and in that garden there was a tree that bore golden apples.

When the apples were almost ripe, they were counted, but the next morning one was missing.

This was reported to the king, who ordered that a guard be kept under the tree every night.

The king had three sons, and he sent the eldest into the garden at nightfall; but at midnight, he succumbed to sleep and in the morning another apple was missing.

The next night, the second son was to stand guard, but he did no better. By the time the clock struck

midnight, he too was fast asleep, and in the morning a third apple was missing.

So the next watch was the third son's. He was fully prepared, but he was not ready to go. He was quite ready, but the king had little confidence in him, and thought he would be even less successful than his brothers.

Finally, he gave him permission, so the young man lay down under the tree to watch, determined not to let himself fall asleep.

When the clock struck midnight, there was a rustling in the air, and in the light of the moon he saw a bird whose feathers were of pure glittering gold. The bird landed on the tree. He had just picked a golden apple and was holding it in his beak.

Then the young prince held up his bow and shot an arrow at it.

The bird flew away, but the arrow hit its wing and one of the golden feathers fell to the ground.

The Prince picked it up and brought it to the king in the morning, telling him all he had seen that night.

The king gathered his council, and everyone declared that such a feather was worth more than the whole kingdom.

If the feather is worth so much, » said the king, « it is not enough for me; I need the whole bird.

The eldest of the three princes set off in search of the Bird, certain that he would soon find it.

When he had gone a long way, he saw a fox sitting at the edge of a wood; he raised his rifle and aimed at it.

But the fox cried out:

« Beautiful Prince! Don't shoot me, and I'll give you good advice on how to find the Golden Bird; If you continue on this path, you will come to a village at nightfall, where you will find two inns facing each other. One will be glowing with all its lights on, full of noise and merriment. Make sure you don't choose that one, but go to the other one, even if you don't like its appearance.

« How could a stupid animal give me good advice? » Thought the king's son, and he pulled the trigger, but missed
but missed the fox, who turned tail and ran off into the woods.

So the Prince continued his journey, and when night came, he reached the village with its two inns. One was singing and dancing, and the other looked miserable and dilapidated.

I'd be a fool, » he said, « to choose this wretched place when the other looks so good.

So he let himself be caught up in the noise and the party and lived that way, forgetting the Bird, his father, and all he had learned.

When some time had passed and the eldest son did not return, the second son declared himself ready to go in search of the Golden Bird.

He set out and met the Fox, as the elder son had done, and the Fox gave him the same advice, to which he also paid little attention.

He arrived at the two inns and saw his brother standing at the window of the one from which the sounds of rejoicing were coming.

He could not resist his brother's call, so he went in and indulged in a life of pleasure.

After some time, and the youngest son of the king wanted to go and try his luck; but his father would not let him go.

It's useless, » he said. He surely won't be able to find the Golden Bird any more than his brothers, and if anything goes wrong, he won't be able to get out of trouble on his own. He is hardly out of the fold. »

But as the young prince insisted and would not leave him in peace, he finally let him go.

Again the Fox sat at the edge of the wood, begged for his life, and gave his good advice.

The prince was in a good mood, and said to him:

« Calm yourself, little Fox, I will do you no harm. »

« You will not repent, » replied the Fox; « and that you may go faster, come and sit on my tail. »

No sooner had he sat down than the Fox began to run, and they flew over the woods and lands, so fast, that his hair whistled in the wind.



Arriving at the village, the prince put his foot down and, following the good advice of the Fox, went straight to the silent inn without looking at the other, and spent a peaceful night there.

In the morning, when he arrived in the fields, the Fox was quietly waiting for him and said:

« I will now tell you what you must do next. Walk straight ahead until you come to a castle, in front of

which a whole regiment of soldiers is camped. Do not be afraid of them; they will all be asleep and snoring. Walk through them and go straight into the castle. Walk through all the rooms, until you reach a room where you will find the golden bird locked in a common wooden cage. A golden cage stands next to it, but be careful! Above all, do not change the bird's cage! »

With these words, the Fox extended his tail again, the Prince took his place on it, and they flew over the woods and lands, until his hair whistled in the wind.

When he arrived at the castle, he found everything just as the Fox had said.

The Prince went to the room where the Golden Bird was, in its wooden cage, with the golden cage beside it, and he also saw the three golden apples, scattered around the room.

He thought it was absurd to leave the beautiful bird in the old common cage, so he opened the door, grabbed it and put it in the golden cage.
But as he did so, the Bird let out a shrill cry.

At this cry, the soldiers woke up, ran to him and took him to prison.

The next morning he was brought before the king of the land to be tried, and when he confessed everything, he was sentenced to death.

The king, however, told him that he would let him live on one condition: he had to bring him the Golden Horse that runs faster than the wind.

Moreover, he promised him that if he succeeded, he would have the golden bird as a reward.

So the prince set off, very sad and desperate, not knowing how he was going to find the golden horse at all.

Then suddenly he saw his friend the Fox sitting on the side of the road.

Now you see, » said the Fox, « all this has happened because you didn't listen to me. But come to your senses and your courage. I will help you again and tell you how to find the Golden Horse. You must go straight along the road, and you will come to a palace, in whose stable you will find the Golden Horse. The grooms will be lying around the stable, but they will be sleeping soundly and snoring, and you can guide the horse through them without fear. There is only one thing you will have to watch out for: Put the old wooden and leather saddle on the horse, and not the golden one hanging nearby, or you will regret it. »

So the Fox stretched out his tail, the Prince sat down, and they flew over the woods and lands, until his hair whistled in the wind.

Everything happened exactly as the Fox had predicted. The Prince arrived at the stable where the golden horse stood, but as he was about to put the old saddle on his back, he thought:
« Such a beautiful animal will be dishonored if I do not put the beautiful saddle on him, as he deserves. »

No sooner had the golden saddle touched the horse than he began to neigh loudly. The grooms woke up, grabbed the prince and threw him into a dark dungeon on top of the dungeon.

The next morning he was taken before the king to be tried again, and sentenced to death; but the king promised to let him live, and also to give him the golden horse, if he could bring him the beautiful princess from the golden palace.

With a heavy heart, the prince set off again, but to his great joy he found the faithful Fox.

I should leave you to your fate, » said Fox. But I have pity on you and I will once again get you out of trouble.

This road leads straight to the golden palace, which you will reach in the evening. When it is late at night and all is quiet, the beautiful princess will go to the bathroom to take a bath.

Before she gets into the bath, you will surprise her with a kiss, and she will follow you. Take her with you. But under no circumstances let her say goodbye to her parents, or else something bad will happen to you. »

Again the Fox spread his tail, the Prince sat on it, and they flew over the woods and lands, until his hair whistled in the wind.

When he arrived at the palace, everything was exactly as the Fox had said.

He waited until midnight, and when the whole palace was asleep, the girl went to take her bath. Then he ran up and gave her a kiss. She told him that she wanted to go with him, but she begged him to let her say goodbye to her parents.

At first he refused, but as she cried and threw herself at his feet, he finally let her go.

As soon as the girl went to her father's bed, he woke up and so did everyone in the palace.

The prince was seized and thrown into prison.

The next morning, the king said to him:

« Your life is over, unless you raze the mountain which is before my window and spoils my view. This must be done within eight days, and if you succeed, you will have my daughter as your reward. »

So the prince set to work, and he dug and dug and dug day and night. On the seventh day, when he saw how little he had advanced, he became very sad and gave up all hope.

However, in the evening, the Fox appeared and said to him, « You really don't deserve any help from me, but well, lie down and rest ;
I'll do the work. »

In the morning when he woke up and looked out the window, the mountain had disappeared.

Overjoyed, the prince rushed to the king and told him that he had fulfilled his part of the bargain and,

and, that he should give him his daughter.

So they both left together, and soon the faithful Fox joined them:

« You certainly have the reward of all, » he said; « but to the girl of the golden palace should go the golden horse. »

« How can I get it? » asked the Prince.

« Oh, I'll tell you, » replied the Fox. First take the beautiful Maiden to the King who sent you to the Golden Palace. He will be overjoyed when he sees you arrive, and he will bring you the golden horse.

Mount it immediately, and shake hands with everyone as a farewell, leaving the beautiful maiden last.

When you get to her turn, shake her hand firmly, and lift her behind you onto the horse before heeling it to gallop away.

No one will be able to catch you, for this horse runs faster than the wind. »

The prince put the plan into action and everything went according to plan. He and the beautiful young girl found themselves sitting on the golden horse, which ran like the wind.

contesdefees.com



The fox was not far away, and he said to the prince:

« Now I will also help you to get the golden bird. When you approach the castle, let the girl dismount and take shelter by my side

Then gallop with the golden horse into the castle courtyard;
They will celebrate when they see you and the king will give you the golden bird.

As soon as you have the cage in your hand, gallop back to us and take the young woman.

The young prince followed the advice of the faithful Fox, and when he returned victorious from this new ordeal and was ready to leave with all his treasures, the Fox said to him:

« Now you must reward me for my help. »

« What reward do you expect from me? » asked the Prince.

« When you reach that wood, » said the Fox, « kill me and cut off my head and legs. »

« But that's no reward! » said the Prince. I cannot promise to commit such a crime! »

The Fox replied:

« Well, but if you can't do it, then I must leave you; but before I go, I'll give you some more advice. Pay close attention to these two things:
Don't redeem prisoners, and don't sit by a well. »

And with these words, he fled into the woods.

The prince thought:

« That's definitely a strange animal, that fox; what strange ideas Why on earth would I go and buy back prisoners! And the desire to sit by a well has never seized me yet!



He mounted his horse again with the beautiful princess behind him, and the road led them back to the village where his two brothers had stayed.

There was a great commotion there, and when he asked what was going on, he was told that two men were going to be hanged.

When he approached, he saw that it was his two brothers, who had squandered their possessions and committed all sorts of crimes.

He asked if there was any way to free them.

Yes, if you want to buy them back, » said the villagers. But why would you waste your money paying for such vile characters? »

He did not stop to think, and paid the ransom, and when they were freed, they all left together.

They arrived at the wood where they had first met the Fox. It was delightfully cool under the trees, while the sun beat down hard on the plain. Then the two brothers said:

« Let's sit here by this well for a while and rest a while and eat and drink. »

The Prince agreed, and while he was conversing with his companions, he forgot the advice of the fox, and sat down on the edge of the well.

Then his two brothers pushed him and he fell to the bottom. His cruel brothers returned to their father's house, taking with them the girl, the horse and the bird.

« Father! Say they once at the castle, we bring you not only the golden bird, but also the golden horse, and the golden palace maiden! »

Their father rejoiced greatly at all these treasures; but he soon realized that the Horse would not eat, the bird would not sing, and the maiden sat crying all day.

The youngest brother had not perished, for fortunately the well was dry, and he fell on soft moss without being hurt; however, he could not get out.

Luckily, the faithful Fox had not abandoned him, and he came to his aid, scolding him for once again not following his advice.

« I cannot, however, leave you to your grim fate; I will help you to return to the light of day. »

He then told him to take a firm grip on his tail, then he hoisted him up.

You are not out of danger yet, » he said. Not being sure of your death, your brothers have placed lookouts all over the woods to kill you as soon as they see you. »

A poor old man was sitting by the roadside, and the prince exchanged clothes with him, and by this means he managed to return to the king's court without being recognized.

No one in the castle recognized him either, except that the bird began to sing, the horse began to eat and the beautiful girl stopped crying.

Amazed, the king asked:

« What on earth does all this mean? »

The Maiden replied:

« I don't know, but I was very sad, and now I am happy. It seems to me that the young prince, my true fiancé, must have returned. »

And she told the king all that had happened, although the two brothers had threatened her with death if she denounced them.

The king then ordered his guards to bring him every person present in the palace. Among them was the prince disguised as an old man in rags. The young girl recognized him immediately and threw herself around his neck.

The wicked brothers were seized and put to death.

The prince married the beautiful girl and was proclaimed heir to the kingdom.

But what had become of poor Fox?

Long afterwards, the prince went out one day into the fields, and met the Fox, who said to him:

« You have had all that you could wish for, but my misfortune has remained unchanged. It is still in your power to free me. »

And again he begged the prince to give him death, and to cut off his head and legs.

At last the prince consented to do as he asked, and as soon as he was killed, the Fox was changed into a living man; and this man was none other than the brother of his beautiful wife, at last freed from a curse that had weighed so long upon him.

Nothing was missing now to their happiness and they lived happily for many years.

Translation by contesdedees.com (Roland Beaussant) from the English translation by Mrs. Edgar Lucas

Illustration by [Arthur Rackham](#) and other unknown

date créée

29/01/2023

Auteur

cdf

contesdefees.com