

The Dog Bride

India

Cecil Henry Bompas, Folklore of the Santal Parganas (London: David Nutt, 1909), no. 85, pp. 254-256.

Once upon a time there was a youth who used to herd buffaloes; and as he watched his animals graze he noticed that exactly at noon every day a she-dog used to make its way to a ravine, in which there were some pools of water. This made him curious and he wondered to whom it belonged and what it did in the ravine. So he decided to watch, and one day when the dog came he hid himself and saw that when it got to the water, it shed its dog skin, and out stepped a beautiful maiden and began to bathe. And when she had finished bathing she put on the skin and became a dog again, and went off to the village. The herdboys followed her and watched into what house she entered, and he inquired to whom the house belonged. Having found out all about it, he went back to his work.

That year the herdboys' father and mother decided that it was time for him to marry and began to look about for a wife for him. But he announced that he had made up his mind to have a dog for his wife, and he would never marry a human girl.

Everyone laughed at him for such an extraordinary idea, but he could not be moved. So at last they concluded that he must really have the soul of a dog in him, and that it was best to let him have his own way. So his father and mother asked him whether there was any particular dog he would like to have for his bride, and then he gave the name of the man into whose house he had tracked the dog that he had seen going to the ravine. The master of the dog laughed at the idea that anyone should wish to marry her, and gladly accepted a bride's price for her. So a day was fixed for the wedding and the booth built for the ceremony, and the bridegroom's party went to the bride's house, and the marriage took place in due form, and the bride was escorted to her husband's house.

Every night when her husband was asleep, the bride used to come out of the dog's skin and go out of the house. And when her husband found out this, he one night only pretended to go to sleep and lay watching her. And when she was about to leave the room he jumped up and caught hold of her and seizing the dog skin, threw it into the fire, where it was burnt to ashes. So his bride remained a woman, but she was of more than human beauty. This soon became known in the village, and everyone congratulated the herdboys on his wisdom in marrying a dog.

Now the herdboys had a friend named Jitu, and when Jitu saw what a prize his friend had got, he thought that he could not do better than marry a dog himself. His relations made no objection, and a bride was selected, and the marriage took place, but when they were putting vermilion on the bride's forehead she began to growl; but in spite of her growling they dragged her to the bridegroom's house, and forcibly anointed her with oil and turmeric. But when the bride's party set off home, the dog broke loose and ran after them. Then everyone shouted to Jitu to run after his bride and bring her back, but she only growled and bit at him, so that he had at last to give it up.

Rumpelstiltskin

Germany

Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, "Rumpelstilzchen," Kinder- und Hausmärchen, 1st ed. (Berlin: Realschulbuchhandlung, 1812), v. 1, no. 55, pp. 253-55

Once upon a time there was a miller who was poor, but who had a beautiful daughter. Now it happened that he got into a conversation with the king and said to him: "I have a daughter who knows the art of turning straw into gold."

So the king immediately sent for the miller's daughter and ordered her to turn a whole room full of straw into gold in one night. And if she could not do it, she would have to die. She was locked in the room, and she sat there and cried, because for her life she did not know how the straw would turn into gold.

Then suddenly a little man appeared before her, and said: "What will you give me, if I turn this all into gold?" She took off her necklace and gave it to the little man, and he did what he had promised.

The next morning the king found the room filled with gold, and his heart became even more greedy. He put the miller's daughter into an even larger room filled with straw, and told her to turn it into gold. The little man came again. She gave him a ring from her hand, and he turned it all into gold.

The third night the king had her locked in a third room, which was larger than the first two, and entirely filled with straw. "If you succeed this time, I'll make you my wife," he said.

Then the little man came and said, "I'll do it again, but you must promise me the first child that you have with the king."

In her distress she made the promise, and when the king saw that this straw too had been turned into gold, he took the miller's daughter as his wife.

Soon thereafter the queen delivered a child. Then the little man appeared before her and demanded the child that had been promised him. The queen begged him to let her keep the child, offering him great riches in its place.

Finally he said, "I'll be back to get the child in three days. But if by then you know my name, you can keep the child.!"

For two days the queen pondered what the little man's name might be, but she could not think of anything, and became very sad. On the third day the king came home from a hunt and told her how, two days earlier, while hunting deep in a dark forest, he had come upon a little house. A comical little man was there, jumping about as if on one leg, and crying out:

"Today I'll bake; tomorrow I'll brew.

Then I'll fetch the queen's new child.

It is good that no one knows

Rumpelstiltskin is my name".

The queen was overjoyed to hear this.

Then the dangerous little man arrived and asked: "Your majesty, what is my name?"

"Is your name Conrad?"

"No."

"Is your name Heinrich?"

"No."

"Then could your name be Rumpelstiltskin?"

"The devil told you that!" shouted the little man. He ran away angrily, and never came back.

Strong Wind

Cyrus Macmillan, Canadian Wonder Tales (London: John Lane, 1920), pp. 116-19

On the shores of a wide bay on the Atlantic coast there dwelt in old times a great warrior. He had a very wonderful and strange power; he could make himself invisible; he could thus mingle unseen with his enemies and listen to their plots. He was known among the people as Strong Wind, the Invisible. He dwelt with his sister in a tent near the sea, and his sister helped him greatly in his work. Many maidens would have been glad to marry him, and he was much sought after because of his mighty deeds; and it was known that Strong Wind would marry the first maiden who could see him as he came home at night. Many made the trial, but it was a long time before one succeeded.

Strong Wind used a clever trick to test the truthfulness of all who sought to win him. Each evening as the day went down, his sister walked on the beach with any girl who wished to make the trial. His sister could always see him, but no one else could see him. And as he came home from work in the twilight, his sister as she saw him drawing near would ask the girl who sought him, "Do you see him?"

And each girl would falsely answer "Yes."

And his sister would ask, "With what does he draw his sled?"

And each girl would answer, "With the hide of a moose," or "With a pole," or "With a great cord."

And then his sister would know that they all had lied, for their answers were mere guesses. And many tried and lied and failed, for Strong Wind would not marry any who were untruthful.

There lived in the village a great chief who had three daughters. Their mother had long been dead. One of these was much younger than the others. She was very beautiful and gentle and well beloved by all, and for that reason her older sisters were very jealous of her charms and treated her very cruelly. They clothed her in rags that she might be ugly; and they cut off her long black hair; and they burned her face with coals from the fire that she might be scarred and disfigured. And they lied to their father, telling him that she had done these things herself. But the young girl was patient and kept her gentle heart and went gladly about her work.

Like other girls, the chief's two eldest daughters tried to win Strong Wind. One evening, as the day went down, they walked on the shore with Strong Wind's sister and waited for his coming. Soon he came home from his day's work, drawing his sled. And his sister asked as usual, "Do you see him?"

And each one, lying, answered "Yes."

And she asked, "Of what is his shoulder strap made?"

And each, guessing, said "Of rawhide."

Then they entered the tent where they hoped to see Strong Wind eating his supper; and when he took off his coat and his moccasins they could see them, but more than these they saw nothing. And Strong Wind knew that they had lied, and he kept himself from their sight, and they went home dismayed.

One day the chief's youngest daughter with her rags and her burnt face resolved to seek Strong Wind. She patched her clothes with bits of birch bark from the trees, and put on the few little ornaments she possessed, and went forth to try to see the Invisible One as all the other girls of the village had done before. And her sisters laughed at her and called her "fool"; and as she passed along the road all the people laughed at her because of her tattered frock and her burnt face, but silently she went her way.

Strong Wind's sister received the little girl kindly, and at twilight she took her to the beach. Soon Strong Wind came home drawing his sled. And his sister asked, "Do you see him?"

And the girl answered "No," and his sister wondered greatly because she spoke the truth.

And again she asked, "Do you see him now?"

And the girl answered, "Yes, and he is very wonderful."

And she asked, "With what does he draw his sled?"

And the girl answered, "With the Rainbow," and she was much afraid.

Then Strong Wind's sister knew that because the girl had spoken the truth at first her brother had made himself visible to her. And she said, "Truly, you have seen him." And she took her home and bathed her, and all the scars disappeared from her face and body; and her hair grew long and black again like the raven's wing; and she gave her fine clothes to wear and many rich ornaments. Then she bade her take the wife's seat in the tent.

Soon Strong Wind entered and sat beside her, and called her his bride. The very next day she became his wife, and ever afterwards she helped him to do great deeds.

The King and the Ju-Ju Tree

Nigeria

Elphinstone Dayrell. Folk Stories From Southern Nigeria [London: Longmans Green & Co, 1910]

UDO UBOK UDOM was a famous king who lived at Itam, which is an inland town, and does not possess a river. The king and his wife therefore used to wash at the spring just behind their house.

King Udo had a daughter, of whom he was very fond, and looked after her most carefully, and she grew up into a beautiful woman.

For some time the king had been absent from his house, and had not been to the spring for two years. When he went to his old place to wash, he found that the Idem Ju Ju tree had grown up all round the place, and it was impossible for him to use the spring as he had done formerly. He therefore called fifty of his young men to bring their machetes and cut down the tree. They started cutting the tree, but it had no effect, as, directly they made a cut in the tree, it closed up again; so, after working all day, they found they had made no impression on it.

When they returned at night, they told the king that they had been unable to destroy the tree. He was very angry when he heard this, and went to the spring the following morning, taking his own machete with him.

When the Ju Ju tree saw that the king had come himself and was starting to try to cut his branches, he caused a small splinter of wood to go into the king's eye. This gave the king great pain, so he threw down his machete and went back to his house. The pain, however, got worse, and he could not eat or sleep for three days.

He therefore sent for his witch men, and told them to cast lots to find out why he was in such pain. When they had cast lots, they decided that the reason was that the Ju Ju tree was angry with the king because he wanted to wash at the spring, and had tried to destroy the tree.

They then told the king that he must take seven baskets of flies, a white goat, a white chicken, and a piece of white cloth, and make a sacrifice of them in order to satisfy the Ju Ju.

The king did this, and the witch men tried their lotions on the king's eye, but it got worse and worse.

He then dismissed these witches and got another lot. When they arrived they told the king that, although they could do nothing themselves to relieve his pain, they knew one man who lived in the spirit land who could cure him; so the king told them to send for him at once, and he arrived the next day.

Then the spirit man said, "Before I do anything to your eye, what will you give me?" So King Udo, said, ""will give you half my town with the people in it, also seven cows and some money." But the spirit man refused to accept the king's offer. As the king was in such pain, he said, "Name your own price, and I will pay you." So the spirit man said the only thing he was willing to accept as payment was the king's daughter. At this the king cried very much, and told the man to go away, as he would rather die than let him have his daughter.

That night the pain was worse than ever, and some of his subjects pleaded with the king to send for the spirit man again and give him his daughter, and told him that when he got well he could no doubt have another daughter but that if he died now he would lose everything.

The king then sent for the spirit man again, who came very quickly, and in great grief, the king handed his daughter to the spirit.

The spirit man then went out into the bush, and collected some leaves, which he soaked in water and beat up. The juice he poured into the king's eye, and told him that when he washed his face in the morning he would be able to see what was troubling him in the eye.

The king tried to persuade him to stay the night, but the spirit man refused, and departed that same night for the spirit land, taking the king's daughter with him.

Before it was light the king rose up and washed his face, and found that the small splinter from the Ju Ju tree, which had been troubling him so much, dropped out of his eye, the pain disappeared, and he was quite well again.

When he came to his proper senses he realised that he had sacrificed his daughter for one of his eyes, so he made an order that there should be general mourning throughout his kingdom for three years.

For the first two years of the mourning the king's daughter was put in the fattening house by the spirit man, and was given food; but a skull, who was in the house, told her not to eat, as they were fattening

her up, not for marriage, but so that they could eat her. She therefore gave all the food which was brought to her to the skull, and lived on chalk herself.

Towards the end of the third year the spirit man brought some of his friends to see the king's daughter, and told them he would kill her the next day, and they would have a good feast off her.

When she woke up in the morning the spirit man brought her food as usual; but the skull, who wanted to preserve her life, and who had heard what the spirit man had said, called her into the room and told her what was going to happen later in the day. She handed the food to the skull, and he said, "When the spirit man goes to the wood with his friends to prepare for the feast, you must run back to your father."

He then gave her some medicine which would make her strong for the journey, and also gave her directions as to the road, telling her that there were two roads but that when she came to the parting of the ways she was to drop some of the medicine on the ground and the two roads would become one.

He then told her to leave by the back door, and go through the wood until she came to the end of the town; she would then find the road. If she met people on the road she was to pass them in silence, as if she saluted them they would know that she was a stranger in the spirit land, and might kill her. She was also not to turn round if any one called to her, but was to go straight on till she reached her father's house.

Having thanked the skull for his kind advice, the king's daughter started off, and when she reached the end of the town and found the road, she ran for three hours, and at last arrived at the branch roads. There she dropped the medicine, as she had been instructed, and the two roads immediately became one; so she went straight on and never saluted any one or turned back, although several people called to her.

About this time the spirit man had returned from the wood, and went to the house, only to find the king's daughter was absent. He asked the skull where she was, and he replied that she had gone out by the back door, but he did not know where she had gone to. Being a spirit, however, he very soon guessed that she had gone home; so he followed as quickly as possible, shouting out all the time.

When the girl heard his voice she ran as fast as she could, and at last arrived at her father's house, and told him to take at once a cow, a pig, a sheep, a goat, a dog, a chicken, and seven eggs, and cut them into seven parts as a sacrifice, and leave them on the road, so that when the spirit man saw these things he would stop and not enter the town. This the king did immediately, and made the sacrifice as his daughter had told him.

When the spirit man saw the sacrifice on the road, he sat down and at once began to eat.

When he had satisfied his appetite, he packed up the remainder and returned to the spirit land, not troubling any more about the king's daughter.

When the king saw that the danger was over, he beat his drum, and declared- that for the future, when people died and went to the spirit land, they should not come to earth again as spirits to cure sick people.