

# HOW MORNINGDAWN RESCUED THE THREE PRINCESSES

RETOLD FROM THE HUNGARIAN BY  
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WHERE was it, where was it not? Beyond seven times seven kingdoms it was. I went to Pereg to see the fairy tales. There they were, tied to a manger. I loosened a pretty one. I'll tell a short one. I sailed across the Theiss, where there were Peter Jambor, Paul Jambor and the handsomest of the world.

Well, now, once there was somewhere in the world a very poor couple who had three sons. The eldest was born in the evening, so he was called Evening; the second at midnight, therefore they called him Midnight, and the youngest at morning dawn, so his name was Morningdawn.

When grown up and strong lads the father said to them:

"Now, my children, you are big enough to make your own living, therefore, go into the world and look for work."

The lads immediately got ready. Their mother baked them delicious ashcakes, which they put into their knapsacks, and then they started out into the world.

They wandered through seven times seven kingdoms. When they got tired they encouraged one another; they whistled and sang and had no care.

Once they arrived at a king's castle. They told who they were, why they came and that they were looking for work.

The king employed them right away. He had a well which nobody could clean, so he said:

"If you can free my well from dirt I will give you my three daughters."

The lads consented to do it. The third day the well was so clean and such pure water was purring in it that they could not drink enough of it.

Then the lads demanded their reward, the three daughters.

"Indeed, I'll keep my word!" said the king, "but first you must liberate the three girls from the three dragons who are guarding them."

Sure enough, this was quite a blow to the brothers; but, being brave lads, they were determined to do it, no matter how it would turn out.

They started at once. After marching a long time they came into a wood. "Here we shall stay over night," they said. Being hungry, they told Evening to get supper ready, while they went to search for the opening to descend into the earth where the dragons had taken the three princesses.

Suddenly, while Evening was cooking and the others were still away, a little man called down from the tree:

"I'll eat your supper!"

"Just try to do it; I'll show you where you'll take it from," replied Evening.

"To me, hey?"

"Yes, indeed, to you!"

"We will yet see to that!" cried the little man.

Thus saying, he jumped from the tree, knocked down Evening, took the little kettle from the fire and dumped it right on Evening's stomach. From there he ate up the whole supper.

My, wasn't Evening's stomach aching dreadfully! But to his brothers he did not say a word.

The following day Morningdawn and Evening went to hunt for the hole. So Midnight stayed at home to cook, but he did no better than his brother Evening; the little man again ate supper from his stomach.

By this time, though, Morningdawn was anxious to know why neither of them had cooked a thing. The third day his turn came, so he stayed at home.

Toward evening he cooked a nice little supper, very good indeed, stirring it well all the time. Just as he finished the little man said from the tree:

"I'll eat that up!"

"You'll eat a raw bone," replied Morningdawn.

"Myself?"

"Yes, yourself!"

"We'll yet see to that!"

Thus saying the little man descended the tree and went right at Morningdawn. But Morningdawn was no reed either, to be shaken in either way desired. He took the little man and squeezed him into the chink of a tree. Then he returned to the kettle and stirred the meal, so it would not burn.

Late in the evening the two other brothers came home. Morningdawn waited until they had finished eating, then he said:

"Come with me; I'll show you something!"

Now, that was certainly a surprise to see the little man pinched in the tree.

The little man took to begging:

"Let me loose now, and do not torment me any longer!"

Morningdawn promised to release him if he would show him the opening that leads under the earth; the little man vowed to do it.

Then all together they marched to the hole, the little man leading them; when they had arrived there he disappeared.

Hereafter they took counsel as to which way they should descend into this hole. Morningdawn took it upon him to go down first. They twisted a long willow cord upon which Morningdawn was to slide down. Before leaving he told them to wait seven years; if by that time he was not back they should

leave him there. In case he called they were to let down the willow rope; he would send up first the three girls and himself follow last.

The brothers were satisfied and said: "All right, be it so."

Morningdawn descended under the earth, and somehow landed there, where he found a beautiful palace. He went in, and, mind you, whom did he see there? Why the king's eldest daughter, who said:

"What are you seeking here, where not even a bird comes? Are you not afraid to be killed? My master is a nine-headed dragon."

"Why should I be afraid? I came to rescue you!" said Morningdawn.

"Myself? Well, then, I am going to tell you something, so that nothing will happen to you. Look at this ring. If you turn it upon your finger you will get seven times as strong as you are."

Morningdawn put the ring upon his finger and sat down. Suddenly an awful noise was heard from far off.

"What's that? Is it perhaps thundering?" asked Morningdawn.

"Not at all. My master, the nine-headed dragon, is coming home. His walking makes the noise," said the girl.

The minute she said this something fell down outside with an awful crash. The dragon had slung his club into the house from a hundred miles off. Now they did not have to wait long before the dragon was home himself. Immediately he started to snuffle about as though he scented something.

"Who is here, woman? I smell a strange odor."

"Who should be here? Why, your brother in law."

"My brother in law? Well, all right. Quickly get some stone bread, a wooden knife and then cook lead dumplings."

Hastily the king's daughter cut wood to make fire with, while in the meantime the other two ate what stood before them—stone bread. Then they ate the lead dumplings; indeed, they went at them so heartily that in a moment all were swallowed up.

Morningdawn had hardly wiped his mouth when the dragon called for him to wrestle with him.

Morningdawn had no objection, but went at it immediately. They threw each other down, up to the shoulder one time and then again to the knee until Morningdawn knocked down the dragon so forcibly that he was thrust into the earth up to his throat. Then he took out his sword and cut off all his heads.

Overwhelmed with joy, the king's daughter ran up to Morningdawn and handed him a whip as a reward. He had but to strike the table with it and the whole palace would turn into a silver apple.

And so it happened.

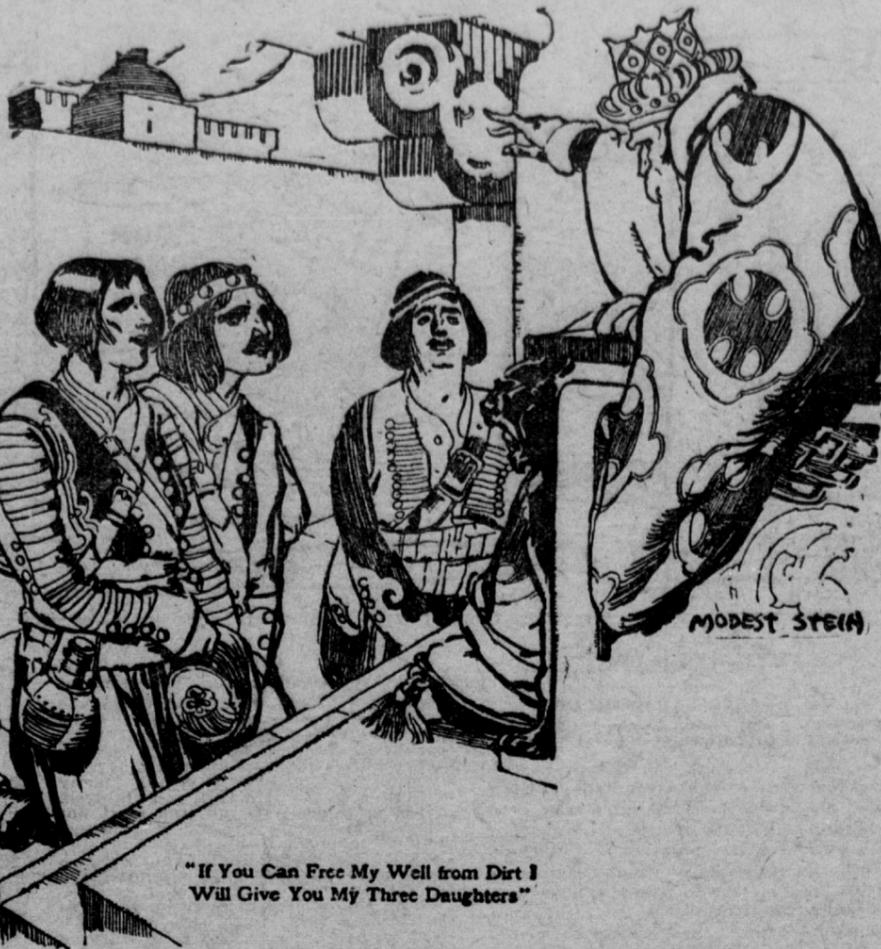
He whipped the table and instantly the palace turned into a silver apple, which he put in his pocket.

Then he went on to the second palace, where, from afar, he saw the princess standing at the door.

"Good day, how are you?" said Morningdawn.

"How are you? Good morning," said she. "Why, what are you seeking here, where not even a bird comes? Are you not afraid to die? My master is the twelve-headed dragon!"

"What is there to be scared about?" replied Morningdawn. "I came on purpose to liberate you from him."



"If You Can Free My Well from Dirt I Will Give You My Three Daughters"

"Well, then," said the princess, "look at this ring! If you turn it upon your finger you'll be seven times stronger than now."

Morningdawn put also this ring upon his finger.

Soon afterward the dragon's step was heard miles away; the earth actually shook from it. He too slung his club home, a hundred miles away from the house, but of course Morningdawn was not a bit afraid, knowing the ring's value. All of a sudden the dragon was in the house.

"Listen, woman! Who is here? For I smell a strong odor!" he roared.

"Who is here? Why, who else but your brother-in-law?" said the princess.

"The brother in law! All right. Quickly bring some stone bread, a wooden knife and cook lead dumplings!" roared the master of the house.

They ate and ate and really made away with all the lead dumplings. Then they wrestled.

To Morningdawn it was as much as nothing to subdue the dragon. He dealt with him as a hen does with a young chicken. He simply cut off the 12 heads on the spot.

Now, upon that the king's daughter, happier than can be told, came up to him and gave him a whip. By whipping the table the whole palace would turn into a golden apple.

But now came the most difficult part. Morningdawn went into the third palace and there he found the king's youngest daughter. She also told him that the 18-headed dragon was her master and that he was surely going to kill him. Then Morningdawn assured her that he was not frightened, but, on the contrary, came to free her from the dragon. Upon that she, too, gave him the ring with the magic power that whoever turned it upon the finger became seven times stronger than ever.

In the meantime the dragon also arrived. His club had fallen down long before and torn up as much earth as would be needed for a house ground. Now this dragon was in a mighty bad humor, for he growled dreadfully at the woman.

"Hello, woman! Who is in this house? I smell a strange odor."

"Who else but your brother in law!"

"What kind of a brother in law? All right, then, get some stone bread, a wooden knife and cook lead dumplings!"

The girl brought a stone bread as round as a hayrick and a wooden knife as big as a board. Soon came also the steaming lead dumplings! They pocketed all so nicely that their stomachs became four cornered like a house. When they were through the dragon challenged Morningdawn to have a round to better digest their dinner. So they wrestled with one another. In the beginning neither got ahead of the other. First Morningdawn was up to his knees in the soil, and then the dragon was; then Morningdawn disappeared up to his throat in the sand, and then the dragon.

In a short while Morningdawn grew tired of this game and went at it in earnest. He took a good onset and really severed the dragon's heads; 17 were already down, but one remained. This one he could not get in any way.

In his fury the dragon roared dreadfully and demanded from his wife a glass of water; she brought the water, but gave it in such a way that Morningdawn got hold of it and drank it

hurriedly. Then turning the ring upon his finger he became so strong that nothing could hold him back, and he immediately flew at the dragon and cut off the last of his heads. The third princess then gave him a whip and told him to strike the table with it. He did this and at once the palace disappeared, leaving nothing but an apple made entirely of diamonds. This the lad put in his pocket, and, telling the three princesses to follow him, he led the way to the hole whereby he had descended into the earth.

Sure enough there was the palace, just as it had been before, and Morningdawn called aloud to his brothers to let down the rope. But to his great unhappiness no rope appeared, and after waiting for a long time Morningdawn decided that he must have been down in the earth more than seven years and his brothers had grown tired of waiting and gone away.

He was quite in despair for a moment until he happened to think of the three apples which he had in his pocket. At once he whistled to a small bird that was passing. "Here," he said, "I will give you a silver apple if you will take a message for me to the strongest bird that you know, the one that can fly the farthest and carry to most weight, and another message to the bird that has the sharpest beak, which can cut a hole in the rock." The little bird said he would do this and presently he came back with two birds, both much stronger and larger looking than himself. Meanwhile Morningdawn and the three princesses worked like mad and wove a heavy, strong rope from the roots of the trees which Morningdawn tore up. You see he had the three rings still which the princesses had given him, so that when he tired of pulling up trees he had only to turn one of them upon his finger to find himself seven times as strong as he had been.

When the three birds arrived an immensely long rope was woven, and Morningdawn said to the one of the big birds who could fly the longest distance: "If you will carry one end of this rope up to the earth through this hole I will give you a golden apple."

The bird said he would and started off at once with one end of the rope, and Morningdawn said to the other bird:

"If you will go after him and make the rope end fast in the rock so that we can climb up on the rope without falling I will give you a diamond apple."

The bird promised and started off toward the hole in the ground, and presently, after a long time, Morningdawn and the princesses saw that the rope had been made fast.

It was pretty hard climbing for the princesses, but at last they were all out of the hole and on top of the earth again, and after Morningdawn had given the apples to the three birds he took all three princesses upon his back and scampered away toward the king's palace.

And if you think the king wasn't glad to see them you should have been at the feast in the palace that night. The other two brothers had long ago given Morningdawn up for dead, and had never expected to see the princesses either. So there was great rejoicing in the palace and a triple wedding next day, after which all three couples lived very happily. And maybe they are living yet. Who can say?