

A Primary Reader

E. Louise Smythe

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A Primary Reader

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A Primary Reader

Old-time Stories, Fairy Tales and Myths Retold by Children

Produced by Juliet Sutherland, Tonya Allen and the
Online Distributed Proofreading Team

PREFACE.

This book originated in a series of little reading lessons prepared for the first grade pupils in the Santa Rosa public schools. The object of the lessons was three-fold: to provide reading matter for the little ones who had only a small vocabulary of sight-words; to acquaint them early with the heroes who have come down to us in song and story; and to create a desire for literature.

It has been my endeavor to follow Dr. G. Stanley Hall's suggestions in his monograph, "How to Teach Reading," where he asks for "true child-editions, made by testing many children with the work piece-meal and cutting and adapting the material till it really and closely fitted the minds and hearts of the children."

Various stories were given to the pupils; discussions followed. After a time the story was produced orally by the children. Notes were made on expressions used and points of interest dwelt upon. Later the story was either written on the blackboard or mimeographed and put into the pupils' hands to read.

It gave great delight to the children to recognize an old friend in a new dress, and as interest was aroused, but little difficulty was encountered in recognizing words that were indeed "new" in their sight vocabulary, but old servants in their oral vocabulary.

The spirit of the book may be illustrated by referring to the roast turkey in the story of The Little Match Girl. The story was told as dear old Hans Christian Andersen gave it to the little German children of fifty years ago. But American children have a different idea of the fowl which graces the table at Christmas time. The story as it came from the lips of the children referred to the "turkey," and "goose" was used in only one instance. As the story was to appeal to our children, the word was changed to suit their ideas.

Again, in the story of Red Riding-Hood we preferred to use the German ending, as it leaves a far happier impression on the minds of the children than the accepted English version. The incongruity of the wolf's swallowing whole the grandmother and child does not destroy the child's enjoyment of the story, while the happy release of both grandmother and little girl forms a suitable close.

Also, as this old story handed down in so many languages is an interpretation of one of the Sun myths, it seems better to cling to the original, especially when it meets so entirely with the child's approval.

Before presenting the Norse myths for reading, they had been the subject of many conversations, queries and illustrations. Some were even dramatized—in a childlike way, of course. Detailed descriptions of Mt. Ida, Asgard, and some of the principal heroes, were given. But, though the little audience seemed interested in the introductory remarks, these never came back when the children were called upon to reproduce the story. The narrator at once plunged into the story part. It is for this reason descriptions of heroes and places have been omitted in these stories. It is thus left for each teacher who uses this book to employ her own method of introducing the gods of the hardy Norseman to her pupils.

The following works will be found useful and quite available to most teachers: Andersen's Norse Mythology, Mabie's Norse Stories, Mara Pratt's Stories from Norseland, Fiske's Myths and Myth Makers, Taylor's Primitive Culture, Vol. I.; and Longfellow's Poems.

Hoping these stories will interest other children as they have interested those who helped build them, I send them forth.

E. LOUISE SMYTHE.
Santa Rosa, California.

[Illustration: THEY DRESSED THOR LIKE FREYJA.]

THE UGLY DUCKLING.

under broke does
keep only turkey
warm ugly water

A duck made her nest under some leaves.

[Illustration: THE DUCK'S NEST.]

She sat on the eggs to keep them warm.

At last the eggs broke, one after the other. Little ducks came out.

Only one egg was left. It was a very large one.

At last it broke, and out came a big, ugly duckling.

“What a big duckling!” said the old duck. “He does not look like us. Can he be a turkey?—We will see. If he does not like the water, he is not a duck.”

* * * * *

mother jumped duckling
splash swim bigger
called began little

The next day the mother duck took her ducklings to the pond.

[Illustration: THE DUCK TAKES HER DUCKLINGS TO SWIM.]

Splash! Splash! The mother duck was in the water. Then she called the ducklings to come in. They all jumped in and began to swim. The big, ugly duckling swam, too.

The mother duck said, “He is not a turkey. He is my own little duck. He will not be so ugly when he is bigger.”

* * * * *

yard alone while
noise hurt that
eating know want

Then she said to the ducklings, “Come with me. I want you to see the other ducks. Stay by me and look out for the cat.”

They all went into the duck yard. What a noise the ducks made!

While the mother duck was eating a big bug, an old duck bit the ugly duckling.

“Let him alone,” said the mother duck. “He did not hurt you.”

[Illustration: “HE DID NOT HURT YOU,” SAID THE MOTHER DUCK.]

“I know that,” said the duck, “but he is so ugly, I bit him.”

* * * * *

lovely help there
walked bushes afraid

The next duck they met, said, “You have lovely ducklings. They are all pretty but one. He is very ugly.”

[Illustration: “YOUR CHILDREN ARE ALL PRETTY EXCEPT ONE.”]

The mother duck said, “I know he is not pretty. But he is very good.”

Then she said to the ducklings, “Now, my dears, have a good time.”

But the poor, big, ugly duckling did not have a good time.

The hens all bit him. The big ducks walked on him.

The poor duckling was very sad. He did not want to be so ugly. But he could not help it.

He ran to hide under some bushes. The little birds in the bushes were afraid and flew away.

* * * * *

because house would
away hard lived

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“It is all because I am so ugly,” said the duckling. So he ran away.

At night he came to an old house. The house looked as if it would fall down. It was so old. But the wind blew so hard that the duckling went into the house.

[Illustration: THE UGLY DUCKLING FINDS THE OLD HOUSE.]

An old woman lived there with her cat and her hen.

The old woman said, “I will keep the duck. I will have some eggs.”

* * * * *

growl walk

corner animals

The next day, the cat saw the duckling and began to growl.

The hen said, “Can you lay eggs?” The duckling said, “No.”

“Then keep still,” said the hen. The cat said, “Can you growl?”

[Illustration: THE CAT SAID, “CAN YOU GROWL?”]

“No,” said the duckling.

“Then keep still,” said the cat.

And the duckling hid in a corner. The next day he went for a walk. He saw a big pond. He said, “I will have a good swim.”

But all of the animals made fun of him. He was so ugly.

* * * * *

summer away cake

winter swans spring

flew bread leaves

The summer went by.

Then the leaves fell and it was very cold. The poor duckling had a hard time.

It is too sad to tell what he did all winter.

At last it was spring.

The birds sang. The ugly duckling was big now.

One day he flew far away.

[Illustration: “OH, SEE THE LOVELY SWAN!”]

Soon he saw three white swans on the lake.

He said, “I am going to see those birds. I am afraid they will kill me, for I am so ugly.”

He put his head down to the water. What did he see? He saw himself in the water. But he was not an ugly duck. He was a white swan.

The other swans came to see him.

The children said, “Oh, see the lovely swans. The one that came last is the best.”

And they gave him bread and cake.

It was a happy time for the ugly duckling.

THE LITTLE PINE TREE

pine leaves other
woods needles better
fairy gold sleep

A little pine tree was in the woods.

It had no leaves. It had needles.

The little tree said, "I do not like needles. All the other trees in the woods have pretty leaves. I want leaves, too. But I will have better leaves. I want gold leaves."

Night came and the little tree went to sleep. A fairy came by and gave it gold leaves.

[Illustration: THE FAIRY GIVES THE PINK TREE GOLD LEAVES.]

woke cried glass
little again pretty

When the little tree woke it had leaves of gold.

It said, "Oh, I am so pretty! No other tree has gold leaves."

Night came.

A man came by with a bag. He saw the gold leaves. He took them all and put them into his bag.

The poor little tree cried, "I do not want gold leaves again. I will have glass leaves."

* * * * *

night sunshine bright
looked wind blew

So the little tree went to sleep. The fairy came by and put the glass leaves on it.

The little tree woke and saw its glass leaves.

How pretty they looked in the sunshine! 'No other tree was so bright.

Then a wind came up. It blew and blew.

The glass leaves all fell from the tree and were broken.

* * * * *

again green
goat hungry

Again the little tree had no leaves. It was very sad, and said, "I will not have gold leaves and I will not have glass leaves. I want green leaves. I want to be like the other trees."

And the little tree went to sleep. When it woke, it was like other trees. It had green leaves.

A goat came by. He saw the green leaves on the little tree. The goat was hungry and he ate all the leaves.

[Illustration: THE GOAT EATS THE GREEN LEAVES.]

happy best

Then the little tree said, "I do not want any leaves. I will not have green leaves, nor glass leaves, nor gold leaves. I like my needles best."

[Illustration: THE PINE TREE WITH NEEDLES.]

And the little tree went to sleep. The fairy gave it what it wanted.

When it woke, it had its needles again. Then the little pine tree was happy.

THE LITTLE MATCH GIRL.

almost match across
dark running bare
year slippers fell

It was very cold. The snow fell and it was almost dark.

It was the last day of the year.

A little match girl was running in the street. Her name was Gretchen. She had no hat on.

Her feet were bare. When she left home, she had on some big slippers of her mama's. But they were so large that she lost them when she ran across the street.

* * * * *

apron curly lights
bunch about smelled
could matches cooking

Gretchen had a lot of matches in her old apron.

She had a little bunch in her hand.

But she could not sell her matches. No one would buy them.

Poor little Gretchen!

She was cold and hungry.

The snow fell on her curly hair. But she did not think about that.

She saw lights in the houses.

She smelled good things cooking.

She said to herself, "This is the last night of the year."

* * * * *

knew window fire
money even pile

Gretchen got colder and colder.

She was afraid to go home. She knew her papa would whip her, if she did not take some money to him.

It was as cold at home as in the street. They were too poor to have a fire. They had to put rags in the windows to keep out the wind.

Gretchen did not even have a bed. She had to sleep on a pile of rags.

* * * * *

frozen candle sitting
lighted thought stove
near think step

She sat down on a door step.

[Illustration: GRETCHEN ON THE DOOR STEP.]

Her little hands were almost frozen.

She took a match and lighted it to warm her hands. The match looked like a little candle.

Gretchen thought she was sitting by a big stove. It was so bright.

She put the match near her feet, to warm them. Then the light went out. She did not think that she was by the stove any more.

* * * * *

another dishes roast
table cloth ready
fork knife turkey

Gretchen lighted another match.

Now she thought she could look into a room. In this room was a table.

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A white cloth and pretty dishes were on the table. There was a roast turkey, too. It was cooked and ready to eat. The knife and fork were in his back. The turkey jumped from the dish and ran to the little girl.

The light went out and she was in the cold and dark again.

Christmas candles

many until

Gretchen lighted another match. Then she thought she was sitting by a Christmas tree. Very many candles were on the tree. It was full of pretty things.

Gretchen put up her little hands. The light went out.

The lights on the Christmas tree went up, up—until she saw they were the stars.

* * * * *

grandma never before

dying going been

Then she saw a star fall.

“Some one is dying,” said little Gretchen.

Her grandma had been very good to the little girl. But she was dead.

The grandma had said, “When a star falls some one is going to God.”

The little girl lighted another match. It made a big light.

Gretchen thought she saw her grandma. She never looked so pretty before. She looked so sweet and happy.

* * * * *

take goes

“O grandma,” said the little girl, “take me. When the light goes out you will go away. The stove and the turkey and the Christmas tree all went away.”

Then Gretchen lighted a bunch of matches. She wanted to keep her grandma with her. The matches made it very light.

The grandma took the little girl in her arms. They went up, up—where they would never be cold or hungry.

They were with God.

* * * * *

found next burned

dead froze death

The next day came.

Some men found a little girl in the street. She was dead.

In her hand were the burned matches.

They said, “Poor little thing, she froze to death.”

They did not know how happy she was in heaven.

LITTLE RED RIDING-HOOD.

six take cake
coat butter basket
hood always off

When May was six years old, her grandma made her a red coat with a hood. She looked so pretty in it that the children all called her "Red Riding-Hood."

One day her mama said, "I want you to take this cake and some butter to grandma."

Red Riding-Hood was very glad to go. She always had a good time at grandma's.

[Illustration: LITTLE RED RIDING-HOOD AND HER MOTHER]

She put the things into her little basket and ran off.

* * * * *

wolf mill shall
going first wood

When Red Riding-Hood came to the wood, she met a big wolf.

[Illustration: SHE MEETS THE WOLF.]

"Where are you going?" said the wolf.

Red Riding-Hood said, "I am going to see my grandma. Mama has made her a cake and some butter."

"Does she live far?" said the wolf.

"Yes," said Red Riding-Hood, "in the white house by the mill."

"I will go too, and we shall see who will get there first," said the wolf.

* * * * *

short flowers soft
stopped tapped pull
pick voice string

The wolf ran off and took a short way, but Red Riding-Hood stopped to pick some flowers.

When the wolf got to the house, he tapped on the door.

The grandma said, "Who is there?" The wolf made his voice as soft as he could. He said, "It is little Red Riding-Hood, grandma."

Then the old lady said, "Pull the string and the door will open."

The wolf pulled the string and the door opened.

He ran in and ate the poor old lady.

Then he jumped into her bed and put on her cap.

* * * * *

tapped thank dear
arms hug called

When Red Riding-Hood tapped on the door, the wolf called out, "Who is there?" Red Riding-Hood said, "It is your little Red Riding-Hood, grandma."

Then the wolf said, "Pull the string and the door will open."

When she went in, she said, "Look, grandma, see the cake and butter mama has sent you."

"Thank you, dear, put them on the table and come here."

* * * * *

better hear eyes
ears how teeth
ate cruel poor

When Red Riding-Hood went near the bed, she said, "Oh, grandma, how big your arms are!"

"The better to hug you, my dear."

"How big your ears are, grandma."

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“The better to hear you, my dear.”

“How big your eyes are, grandma.”

“The better to see you, my dear.”

“How big your teeth are, grandma!”

“The better to eat you.”

Then the cruel wolf jumped up and ate poor little Red Riding-Hood.

* * * * *

just hunter scream

killed heard open

Just then a hunter came by. He heard Red Riding-Hood scream. The hunter ran into the house and killed the old wolf.

[Illustration: THE GRANDMOTHER, THE HUNTER AND LITTLE RED RIDING-HOOD.]

When he cut the wolf open, out jumped Little Red Riding-Hood and her grandma.

THE APPLES OF IDUN.

once hills field
journey rocks cattle
walked pieces three

Once upon a time three of the gods went on a journey.

One was Thor and one was Loki. Loki was ugly and mean.

The gods liked to walk over the hills and rocks. They could go very fast for they were so big.

The gods walked on and on.

At last they got very hungry. Then they came to a field with cattle.

[Illustration: LOKI AND ANOTHER GOD TAKE A WALK.]

Thor killed a big ox and put the pieces into a pot.

* * * * *

meat share talking
cross eagle right

They made a big fire but the meat would not cook. They made the fire bigger and bigger, but the meat would not cook.

Then the gods were very cross.

Some one said, "Give me my share, and I will make the meat cook."

The gods looked to see who was talking. There in an oak tree was a big eagle.

[Illustration: THE THREE GODS TRY TO COOK THE OX.]

The gods were so hungry that they said, "Well, we will."

* * * * *

supper stuck enough
minute claws stones
pole against flew

The supper was ready in a minute.

Then the eagle flew down to get his share. He took the four legs and there was not much left but the ribs.

This made Loki cross for he was very hungry. He took a long pole to hit the eagle. But the pole stuck to the eagle's claws. The other end stuck to Loki.

Then the eagle flew away. He did not fly high. He flew just high enough for Loki to hit against the stones.

* * * * *

please giant flying
tried feathers suit

Loki said, "Please let me go! Oh, please let me go!"

But the eagle said, "No, you tried to kill me. I will not let you go."

And the eagle hit him against the stones.

Loki said again, "Please let me go!"

But the eagle said, "No, I have you now."

Then Loki knew the eagle was a giant and not a bird.

This giant had a suit of eagle's feathers. He was flying in his eagle suit when he saw Loki.

* * * * *

city beautiful apples
felt growing young

Now the gods lived in a city named Asgard.

In this city Idun kept the beautiful golden apples. When the gods felt they were growing old, they ate the apples and were young again.

The giant wanted to be like the gods. So he said to Loki, "I will let you go, if you will get me the apples of

Idun.”

[Illustration: IDUN WITH HER APPLES.]

But Loki said, “I can't do that.”

* * * * *

bumped gate putting
stayed golden morning

So the eagle bumped him on the stones again.

Then Loki said, “I can't stand this. I will get the apples for you.”

Loki and the eagle went to the city. The eagle stayed by the gate, but Loki went into the city. He went up to Idun. She was putting the apples into a beautiful golden box.

[Illustration: LOKI AND IDUN]

Loki said, “Good morning, Idun Those are beautiful apples.”

And Idun said, “Yes, they are beautiful.” “I saw some just like them, the other day,” said Loki.

[Illustration: IDUN WITH HER APPLES.]

strange show
bring picked

Idun knew there were no other apples like these, and she said, “That is strange. I would like to see them.”

Loki said, “Come with me and I will show them to you. It is only a little way. Bring your apples with you.”

As soon as Idun was out of the gates the eagle flew down. He picked her up in his claws. Then he flew away with her to his home.

* * * * *

after pale falcon
passed story began

Day after day passed and Idun did not come back. The gods did not have the golden apples to eat, so they began to get old.

At last they said, “Who let the apples go?”

Then Loki looked pale and the gods said, “Loki, you did it.” And Loki said, “Yes, I did.”

[Illustration: THE GODS ASK WHERE IDUN IS.]

He did not tell a story that time.

Then Loki said, “I will get Idun and the apples back, if I may have the falcon suit.”

* * * * *

changed faster

The gods said, “You may have it, if you will bring the apples back.”

Loki put on the falcon suit and flew away. He looked like a big bird flying.

When Loki came to the giant's home, he was glad the giant was not there. He changed Idun into a nut and then flew away with the nut.

[Illustration: THE GIANT SEES THE BIRD FLY AWAY]

When the giant came home, Idun was gone. The golden apples were gone, too.

Then the giant put on his eagle suit and flew after Loki.

Loki heard the eagle coming. Loki flew faster.

* * * * *

breath over changed
walls blazed burned

Poor Loki was all out of breath. The eagle flew faster and faster.

Then the gods got on the walls to look for Loki. They saw him coming and the eagle after him.

So they made fires on the walls. At last Loki flew over the walls.

Then the gods lighted the fires. The fires blazed up.

The eagle flew into the fire and was burned.

As soon as Loki put the nut down, it changed to Idun.

The gods ate the beautiful golden apples and were young again.

[Illustration]

HOW THOR GOT THE HAMMER.

proud porch lying
journeys tricks wife
always alone asleep

Sif was Thor's wife.

Sif had long golden hair. Thor was very proud of Sif's golden hair.

Thor was always going on long journeys. One day he went off and left Sif alone. She went out on the porch and fell asleep.

Loki came along. He was always playing tricks.

He saw Sif lying asleep. He said, "I am going to cut off her hair."

[Illustration]

So Loki went up on the porch and cut off Sif's golden hair.

* * * * *

where around crying
answer found somebody

When Sif woke up and saw that her hair was gone, she cried and cried. Then she ran to hide. She did not want Thor to see her.

When Thor came home, he could not find Sif.

"Sif! Sif!" he called, "Where are you?"

But Sif did not answer.

Thor looked all around the house. At last he found her crying.

[Illustration: "OH THOR, ALL MY HAIR, IS GONE!"]

"Oh, Thor, look, all my hair is gone! Somebody has cut it off. It was a man. He ran away with it."

* * * * *

angry mischief right
getting cutting something

Then Thor was very angry. He said, "I know it was Loki. He is always getting into mischief. Just wait until I get him!"

And Thor went out to find Loki. Pretty soon he found him.

Thor said, "Did you cut off Sif's hair?" Loki said, "Yes, I did."

"Then you must pay for cutting off my wife's hair," said Thor.

[Illustration: "DID YOU CUT OFF SIF'S HAIR?"]

"All right," said Loki, "I will get you something better than the hair."

* * * * *

ground thumb beads
dwarfs crooked crown
worked

Loki went down, down into the ground to the home of the dwarfs. It was very dark down there. The only light came from the dwarfs' fires.

The dwarfs were ugly little black men. They were not any bigger than your thumb. They had crooked backs and crooked legs. Their eyes looked like black beads.

[Illustration: LOKI AND THE DWARFS.]

Loki said, "Can you make me a gold crown that will grow like real hair?"

The dwarfs said, "Yes, we can." So the busy little dwarfs worked all night.

* * * * *

morning showed laughed
spear wonderful three

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ship standing brother
nobody stepped else

When morning came the dwarfs gave Loki his crown of golden hair. They gave him a spear and a ship, too.

[Illustration: THE DWARFS BRING TO LOKI THE SHIP, THE SPEAR AND THE CROWN OF HAIR.]

Loki took the things up to Asgard, where the gods all lived.

Then the gods all came up to him. He showed them the things.

The gods said, "They are very wonderful."

And Loki said, "Oh, nobody else can make such things as my little dwarfs."

A little dwarf, named Brok, was standing near by. He heard Loki say that. Then he stepped up and said, "My brother can make just as good things as these."

Loki laughed and said, "If you can get three things as wonderful as these, I will give you my head."

[Illustration: BROK TELLS LOKI THAT HIS BROTHER CAN MAKE BETTER GIFTS]

* * * * *

anywhere misses
spear mark

Brok went down into the ground where his little dwarfs were working.

Brok's brother was named Sindre. He said to his brother, "Loki says that you can't make such nice things as his dwarfs can. He said that he would give me his head if I could get him such wonderful things as his."

This made the dwarfs angry. Their eyes grew big. They said, "He will see what we can do."

Sindre wanted to know what the wonderful things were.

Brok said, "Loki has a golden crown that will grow like real hair. A ship that can go anywhere. A spear that never misses the mark."

"We will show him," said the dwarfs.

* * * * *

burning blow pigskin
bellows blew blowing

The dwarfs soon had the fires burning. Then Sindre put a pigskin into the fire.

He gave the bellows to Brok and said, "Now blow as hard as you can."

Then Sindre went out. Brok blew and blew.

A little fly came in and bit him on the hand.

The fly bit him so hard that Brok thought he would have to stop blowing, but he did not.

Then Sindre came back. He took out a golden pig from the fire.

* * * * *

stand lump ring

He next put a lump of gold into the fire.

He said to Brok, "Blow and blow and blow, and do not stop."

Then Sindre went out again.

So Brok blew as hard as he could.

Then the same fly came in and bit him again.

Brok thought that he could not stand it, but he kept on.

When Sindre came back, he took a gold ring from the fire.

* * * * *

hard forehead brush
iron blood hammer
handle spoiled mean

Then Sindre put a lump of iron into the fire.

He said to Brok, "Now blow as hard as you can."

And Sindre went out. Brok blew and blew. The same mean fly came again, and bit him on the forehead. It bit so hard that the blood ran into his eyes.

Brok put up his hand to brush away the fly.

Just then Sindre came back.

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He took the hammer out of the fire.

[Illustration: THE DWARFS WITH THE GOLDEN PIG, THE RING AND THE HAMMER.]

“There!” he said, “You have almost spoiled it. The handle is too short, but it cannot be helped now.”

* * * * *

hurried proud
came pocket

Brok hurried up to Asgard with his things.

All the gods came around to see. Then Loki came up to show his things.

He put the crown of gold on Sif's head and it began to grow like real hair.

He gave the spear to Odin and said, “This spear will never miss its mark.”

[Illustration: SIF WITH THE GOLDEN CROWN]

Then he took out the ship. He said, “This is a wonderful ship. It will sail on any sea, and yet you can fold it up and put it into your pocket.”

Loki felt very proud, for he thought his things were the best.

* * * * *

fold sail afraid
sorry each ring
shining faster gave

All the gods felt very sorry for little Brok. They thought Loki's things were fine. They were afraid Brok's would not be so nice.

[Illustration: BROK SHOWS HIS THINGS TO THE GODS.]

They said, “Now, Brok, show your things.”

Brok took out the gold ring. He said, “Each night this ring will throw off a ring just like it. He gave the ring to Odin.”

Then Brok took out the golden pig. He said, “This pig can go anywhere, on the ground or in the air. It can go faster than any horse. If the night is dark, the shining pig will make it light.”

* * * * *

frost giants
turned blowing

[Illustration: THOR WITH HIS HAMMER]

Then Brok showed the hammer. He said, “This is not a very pretty hammer. When I was making it, Loki turned himself into a fly and made me spoil it. The fly bit me so hard that I had to stop blowing. So the handle is a little short. But it is a wonderful hammer. If you throw it at anything, it will hit the mark and come back to you.”

The gods picked up the hammer and passed it around.

They said, “It will be just the things with which to keep the Frost Giants out of Asgard.”

* * * * *

touch neck
without way

The gods said, “Brok's things are the best.”

Brok gave the hammer to Thor. That is the way Thor got his wonderful hammer.

Then Brok said to Loki, “You said I could have your head if my things were the best.”

And Loki was angry and said, “Yes, I told you that you could have my head. But you can't touch my neck.”

Of course, Brok could not get his head without touching his neck.

So Brok did not get Loki's head.

[Illustration: THE FROST GIANT]

THE HAMMER LOST AND FOUND.

everything planned

The Frost Giants did not like the sunshine. They did not like to see the flowers. They did not like to hear the birds sing. They wanted to spoil everything.

The Frost Giants wanted to get into Asgard. But they did not know how. They were afraid of Thor and his hammer. They said, "If we can only get the hammer, we can get into Asgard."

They talked and planned all night. At last one Frost Giant said, "I know how we can get the hammer. I will dress in a bird suit. Then I will fly up to Thor's house and get the hammer."

[Illustration: THE FROST GIANTS TALKED AND PLANNED ALL NIGHT.]

* * * * *

Freyja

The next night the Frost Giant flew into the house while Thor was asleep.

He took the hammer and flew away with it.

When Thor woke, he put out his hand to get the hammer. It was gone.

He said, "Loki, the hammer is gone. The Frost Giants have taken it. We must get it back."

[Illustration: THE FROST GIANT FLEW INTO THE HOUSE WHILE THOR WAS ASLEEP.]

Loki said, "I can get it back, if Freyja will let me have her falcon suit."

So he went to Freyja and said, "Will you let me have your falcon suit? I can get the hammer back if you will." Freyja said, "Yes, of course I will. If I had a gold suit you could have it. Any thing to get the hammer back."

* * * * *

people city Thrym
strange buried eight
miles deep falcon

Loki took the falcon suit and put it on. He flew over the city. All the people saw him flying. They said, "What a strange bird!" They did not know that it was Loki going for the hammer.

[Illustration: LOKI BORROWS THE FALCON SUIT.]

When Loki came to the city of the Frost Giants, he took off the falcon suit. He walked and walked until he came to Thrym's house. Thrym was the giant who took the hammer.

Thrym was sitting on the porch, making gold collars for his dogs.

When he saw Loki, he said, "What do you want?"

Loki said, "I have come for the hammer."

The old giant laughed and said, "You will never get that hammer. It is buried eight miles deep in the ground.

"But there is one way you can get it. I will give you the hammer if you get Freyja for my wife."

* * * * *

clothes shook necklace

So Loki went back to Asgard.

Thor said, "Well, did you get the hammer?"

"No, but we can get it if Freyja will be Thrym's wife."

Then they went to Freyja's house. They said, "Put on your very best clothes and come with us. You must be Thrym's wife."

Freyja said, "Do you think I will be the Frost Giant's wife? I won't be his wife."

Thor said, "We can get the hammer back if you will."

But Freyja said, "No, I will not be his wife."

Loki said, "You will have to, if we get the hammer back."

Still Freyja said, "I will not go." And she was very angry. She shook so hard that she broke her necklace and it fell to the floor.

* * * * *

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bride braided wagon
vail servant goat

Then the gods said, "Thor, you must dress like Freyja. You will have to play you are the bride."

Thor said, "I won't do it. You will all laugh at me. I won't dress up like a girl."

They said, "Well, that is the only way we can get the hammer back."

Thor said, "I do not like to dress like a girl, but I will do it." Then they dressed Thor up like Freyja.

They put on Freyja's dress, necklace and vail, and braided his hair.

Loki said, "I will dress up too, and be your servant."

They got into Thor's goat wagon and went to the Giants' home.

[Illustration: THOR AND LOKI APPROACH THE HOUSE OF THE GIANTS]

* * * * *

dinner salmon mead
whole thirsty barrels

When the Frost Giants saw them coming, they said, "Get ready, here comes the bride! We will sit down to the table as soon as they come."

The dinner was ready on time. The table was full of good things. All sat down.

The bride ate a whole ox and eight salmon before the others had a bite.

"She must be very hungry," the Frost Giants said.

"Yes," Loki said, "she was so glad to come. She hasn't eaten anything for eight days."

Then they brought in the mead.

[Illustration: THOR AND LOKI MET BY THRYM]

The bride drank three barrels of mead.

"How thirsty she is!" said the Frost Giants.

Loki said, "Yes, she is very thirsty. She was so glad to come. She did not drink anything for eight days."

* * * * *

kiss stepped whirled
lifted shone lap

Old Thrym said, "I had every thing I wanted but Freyja. Now I have Freyja."

And Thrym went to kiss the bride. He lifted her vail, but her eyes shone like fire.

[Illustration: THRYM PUTS THE HAMMER IN THOR'S LAP.]

[Illustration: THOR AND HIS HAMMER.]

Thrym stepped back. He said, "What makes Freyja's eyes shine so?"

Loki said, "Oh, she was so glad to come. She did not sleep for eight nights."

Then Loki said, "It is time for the hammer. Go and get it and put it in the bride's lap."

As soon as the hammer was in his lap, Thor tore off the vail.

He took the hammer and whirled it around. Fire flew from it. The fire burned the house and the Frost Giants ran away.

So Thor got his hammer back.

A Primary Reader

The following stories by Miss Smythe were originally published under the title of “The Golden Fleece.” They have been carefully revised and illustrated for this book.

THE STORY OF THE SHEEP.

ago horns fleece
king Greece loved
playing Helle grass
garden catch clouds

Long, long ago there lived a king in Greece. He had two little children, a boy and a girl. They were good children and loved each other very much.

One day they were playing in the garden.

“Oh, Helle, look!” said the boy.

There on the grass was a fine large sheep. This sheep had a fleece of gold and his horns were gold, too.

[Illustration: THE KING AND HIS TWO CHILDREN.]

The children wanted to pat the sheep, but they could not catch him. When they went near, he ran away on the clouds.

* * * * *

grew golden hold
tame ride tight

Every day they played in the garden and every day the sheep came, too.

By and by he grew tame and let the children pat his golden fleece.

One day the boy said, “Helle, let us take a ride.”

First he helped his sister on the sheep's back.

Then he got on and held to the horns.

“Hold tight to me, Helle,” he said.

* * * * *

sky dizzy sea
sister land dragon
lose nailed Colchis

The sheep went up, up into the sky, and ran a long way on the clouds. But Helle got dizzy and fell down into the sea.

The boy felt very bad to lose his sister, but went right on.

Then he came to the land Colchis. He killed the sheep and gave the golden fleece to the king.

[Illustration: THE BOY GIVES THE GOLDEN FLEECE TO THE KING.]

The king was glad to have it and nailed it to an oak tree.

[Illustration: THE SHEEP WENT UP INTO THE SKY AND RAN A LONG WAY ON THE CLOUDS]

By the tree was a dragon. The dragon never went to sleep. He would not let any one but the king come to the tree.

So no one could get the golden fleece.

THE GOOD SHIP ARGO.

across untied wade
Jason brave party
rained creek bridge
shoe—strings invited

Jason was a brave young man. He lived a little way from the king's city.

One day the king gave a big party and invited Jason.

It was a very dark night and it rained hard.

Jason had to go across a creek, but there was no bridge.

[Illustration: JASON COMES TO THE KING'S HOUSE.]

The creek was full of water and Jason had to wade.

One of his shoe—strings came untied and he lost his shoe in the water.

When he came to the king's house, he had but one shoe.

* * * * *

knew bring fight
wild Argo asked
animals shoe Argonauts

The king did not like this, for a fairy had said, "The man who shall come to your house with one shoe, will be king."

So he knew Jason was to be king.

Then he said to Jason, "You may be king when you bring me the golden fleece."

Jason was glad to go, and asked many brave men to go with him.

To get the golden fleece they would have to fight wild men and animals.

They made a big ship which they named "Argo."

The men who went on the Argo were called Argonauts.

JASON AND THE HARPIES.

wings blind nobody
strong iron hard
skin drive claws
scratched brass Harpies

The ship Argo sailed a long way. There were two strong men on the ship. They had wings and could fly. One day the Argo came to a land where the blind king lived.

This poor king had a hard time. When he sat down to the table to eat, some ugly birds called Harpies, came too. The Harpies had skin like brass and nobody could hurt them. They had claws of iron, and scratched people when they tried to drive them away.

When the king's dinner was ready, the Harpies came and took it away. When Jason and his men came, the king told them all about it. Jason said they would help him.

* * * * *

food drowned tired
swords hurt flying

They all sat down to the table. When the food was put on the table, the Harpies came flying in. Jason and his men took their swords.

[Illustration: JASON TRIES TO KILL THE HARPIES.]

They cut at the Harpies but could not hurt them.

Then the two men with wings flew up in the air. The Harpies were afraid and flew away. The men flew after them.

At last the Harpies grew very tired and fell into the sea and were drowned.

Then the men with wings came back.

Now the blind king could eat all he wanted.

* * * * *

thanked rocks moved
friends helping good-bye
over apart icebergs

It was now time for Jason and his friends to go away.

The king thanked them over and over again for helping him.

When they said good-bye, he told them how to get to the land where they would find the golden fleece.

On the sea where Jason and his men had to sail, were two big rocks. These rocks moved on the waterlike icebergs.

They were as high as a big hill. They would come close to each other, then they would go far apart.

* * * * *

fishes pieces dove
past break together
row almost rocks

When fishes swam in the water the rocks would come together and kill the fishes.

If birds flew in the air, the rocks would come together and kill birds.

If a boat sailed on the water, the rocks would come together and break the boat into little pieces.

These rocks had been put in the sea, so no one could go to the land where the golden fleece was.

When the ship Argo came to the rocks, Jason sent a dove out.

The rocks came together when the dove was almost past.

Then they went far apart. Jason made his men row as hard as they could.

The rocks began to come together. "Row hard, my men," said Jason.

Just as they got past, the rocks hit, but Jason and his men were all right.

So they came to Colchis.

THE BRASS BULLS.

something plow bulls
stronger chains noses
mouths smoke plant
stone flew stall

When Jason came to Colchis, he went to the king and said, "Will you give me the golden fleece?"
The king wanted to keep the fleece.

So he said to Jason, "You may have it, but you must do something for me first."

"You must plow with the brass bulls, and plant the dragon's teeth."

The brass bulls looked like real bulls, but they were larger and stronger.

They blew out fire and smoke from their noses and mouths.

The bulls had a stall made of iron and stone. They had to be tied with strong iron chains.

* * * * *

daughter Medea carriage
snakes through pulled

When the dragon's teeth were planted, iron men grew up.

They always killed the one who had planted them.

The king wanted the bulls to kill Jason.

[Illustration: MEDEA GATHERS FLOWERS.]

He said, "If the bulls do not kill him the iron men will."

The king had a daughter named Medea. She saw Jason was a brave young man and did not want him killed.

She knew how to help him. She stepped into her carriage, which was pulled by flying snakes.

Then Medea flew through the air. She went to hills and creeks and picked all kinds of flowers.

She took the flowers home and cooked them.

* * * * *

nothing face rub
juice legs cut

Then Medea went to Jason when the king did not know it.

She said to Jason, "Rub your face and hands and legs with this juice."

[Illustration: MEDEA GIVES JASON THE JUICE.]

When he did this, he was as strong as a giant.

Nothing could hurt him then. Fire could not burn him, and swords could not cut him.

The next day Jason had to plow with the brass bulls and plant the dragon's teeth.

* * * * *

climbed early tied
princess seats hold
untied opened place

Early in the morning, the king and princess went out to the place.

They had good seats where they could see well.

All the people in the city came out to see Jason plow.

The little boys climbed the trees so they could see better.

Then Jason came to the place. The stall where the brass bulls were tied was not far off.

The door was opened and Jason went in.

He untied the bulls and took hold of their horns.

Then he made the bulls come out of their stall.

* * * * *

pushed kicked until

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The bulls were very angry and blew fire and smoke from their mouths.

This made the cruel king glad. But the people who saw it were afraid. They did not want Jason killed. They did not know that the princess had helped him.

Jason pushed the bulls' heads down to the ground. Then they kicked at him with their feet, but could not hurt him.

He held their heads down on the ground until the plow was ready.

* * * * *

handle slowly noon
wheat lie just

Jason took the chains in one hand. He took the handle of the plow in the other.

The bulls jumped and wanted to run away.

But Jason held so hard they had to go very slowly.

When it was noon the ground was all plowed.

Then Jason let the bulls go.

They were so angry that they ran away to the woods.

Now Jason went to the king and said, "Give me the dragon's teeth."

The king gave him his hat full.

Then Jason planted the dragon's teeth, just as a man plants wheat.

By this time he was very tired, so he went to lie down.

[Illustration: JASON SOWS THE DRAGON'S TEETH.]

evening knees marble
threw growing fight

In the evening he came back.

The iron men were growing up. Some of the men had only their feet in the ground.

Some of them were in the ground up to their knees.

Some had only their heads out. They all tried to get out so they could kill Jason.

Then Jason did what Medea told him he should do.

He took a giant's marble and threw it near the men.

All the iron men wanted to get the marble.

So they began to fight each other. As soon as one had his feet out of the ground, he cut at the man next to him. So they killed each other.

Then Jason took his sword and cut off all the heads that were out of the ground.

So all the iron men were killed and the king was very angry.

But Medea and the people were glad.

JASON AND THE DRAGON.

yourself fond father

The next day Jason went to the king and said, "Now, give me the golden fleece."

The king did not give it to him, but said, "Come again."

Then Medea said, "If you want the golden fleece, you must help yourself. My father will not give it to you. A dragon is by the tree where the golden fleece is, and he never sleeps. He is always hungry and eats people if they go near him. I can not kill him but I can make him sleep. He is very fond of cake. I will make some cake and put in something to make the dragon sleep."

* * * * *

became climbed angry

So Medea made the cakes and Jason took them and threw them to the dragon.

The dragon ate them all and went to sleep.

Then Jason climbed over the dragon and took the nail out of the tree.

He put the golden fleece under his coat and ran to the ship Argo.

Medea went with him and became his wife.

[Illustration: THE DRAGON FINDS THE FLEECE IS GONE.]

Oh, how angry the king was! He had lost the golden fleece and the brass bulls and the dragon's teeth. And now his daughter was gone.

* * * * *

through nine stones

He sent his men in ships to take Jason, but they could not get him.

At last Medea and Jason and the other Argonauts came to Greece.

Jason's father was there. He was a very old man. Jason wanted his father to be king, so he asked Medea to make the old man young.

Then Medea took her carriage and flew through the air.

She did not come back for nine days. She picked flowers from the hills. She found all kinds of stones, too.

* * * * *

stick died woke

When she went home she put all these things into a pot and cooked them.

[Illustration: MEDEA MAKES THE OLD KING YOUNG.]

Then she put a stick into the pot and leaves grew on it.

Some of the juice fell on the ground and grass grew up.

So Medea knew the juice would make things grow.

Jason's father went to sleep and Medea put some of the juice into his mouth.

His white hair turned black and teeth grew in his mouth.

When he woke up, he looked and felt like a young man.

He lived many years and when he died Jason was king.