

# SIEGFRIED

THE · HEROIC · LIFE

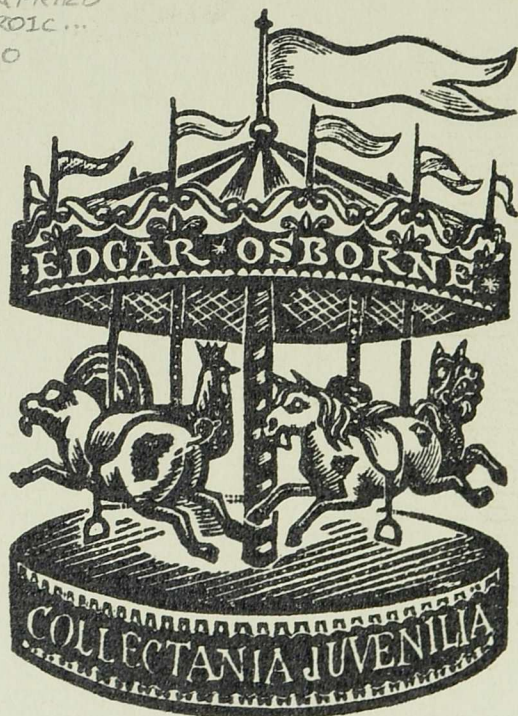
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· AND · EXPLOITS · OF ·

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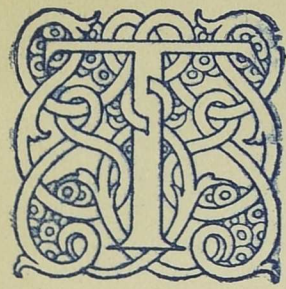
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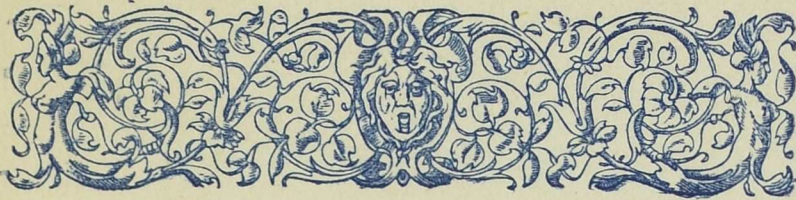






THE HEROIC LIFE  
AND EXPLOITS  
OF SIEGFRIED  
THE DRAGON-  
SLAYER. AN OLD STORY  
OF THE NORTH. RETOLD  
BY DORA FORD MADE-  
LEY AND ILLUSTRATED  
BY STEPHEN REID

Bertha Cooke  
131 Arundel  
Ave  
City.









“ Straight into its right eye went the flaming point ”  
(page 88)



THE HEROIC LIFE  
AND EXPLOITS OF  
SIEGFRIED  
THE DRAGON-SLAYER  
AN OLD STORY OF THE NORTH

*RETOLD BY*  
DORA FORD MADELEY

*WITH TWELVE ILLUSTRATIONS BY*  
STEPHEN REID



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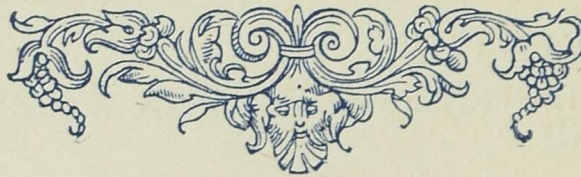


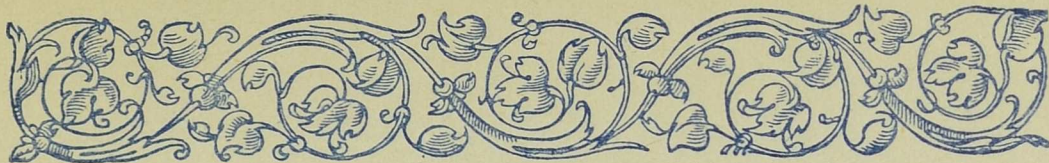
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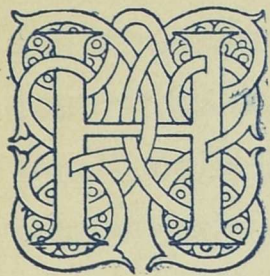
*FIRST ADVENTURE*: HOW  
KING SIEGMUND RULED THE  
LOW COUNTRIES







## How King Siegmund ruled the Low Countries



HUNDREDS and hundreds of years ago, the Low Countries that lie about the Rhine were ruled by a great King named Siegmund ; who had everything that a King could wish for.

His castles were strong, his men-at-arms were brave, and he had plenty of swords and shields, as well as rich robes, jewels, fine horses, and many herds of cattle.

But better than all these, King Siegmund had a noble heart ; he was as wise as he was brave, and was always ready to take the advice of experienced counsellors. If any of his subjects were in trouble

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the King did his best to offer some comfort ; he took pleasure in rewarding good deeds with honours, and travellers might always be sure of a welcome in his hall.

The King's name soon became famous not only in his own country but all over Germany, and the wandering harpers and singers were never tired of praising him. In this way his character was well known, and after a time any one who had cause for complaint against tyrannical or unjust rulers, and all who wished to win honour and renown, used to find their way to King Siegmund's capital of Königsburg on the Rhine. They knew that there they would be sure of a patient hearing, and that the King would see their wrongs redressed. It was his custom to sit at an iron table surrounded by his heroic knights, and with his Queen, Sieglinde, on his right hand. She was as much beloved by the people as the King, and there was no one with so tender a heart for one in trouble, or so gentle a hand for the wounded.

In those days thick forests covered a great part of

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the country, and no man dared to wander through them without a sword at his side and a spear in his hand. Sometimes a hunter would follow the wolves, the bear, or the wild boar through these deep forests and valleys for days together without meeting any human being or finding a path. Then his only guides would be the rivers by day and the stars by night, and many a bold hunter, hearing the cries of wild beasts about him, and the moan of the wind among the trees, thought the spirits of the storm were abroad and heartily wished himself safe at home.

The air was peopled by fierce birds of prey, that built their eyries high among the rocks, and were so strong as to carry off animals and even men in their talons. In the marshes lurked serpents as long as trees, and in the rocky caves were dragons armed with scales against which the stoutest sword was useless, and whose breath was like tongues of flame.

But worse than all these were the Giants, a dark and wicked race, older, so men said, than the earth itself, and always at war with mankind. In the

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mountains were a race of Dwarfs, who suffered more than any one from the oppression of the Giants. These little creatures were very cunning and worked the mines where precious stones, gold, and other metals were found. They knew not only where these things were, and how to get them out of the earth, but also how to forge weapons and to make rich ornaments. The Giants kept watch over their haunts and forced them to toil day and night, so it was no wonder the Dwarfs hated these tyrants and tried in every way to revenge themselves for all the cruelties they were made to suffer.

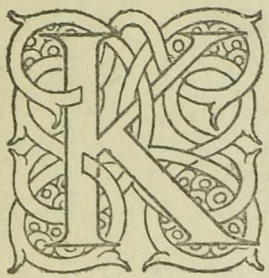
Thus it happened that the Dwarfs made a league with the Heroes, of whom King Siegmund was the head. They saw that these men had stout hearts, undaunted courage, and great strength, so the Dwarfs used to make swords and shields for their allies, and taught them many a secret art in the hope that one day the Heroes, with their help, would be able to overcome the Giants and drive them out of the land so that it might be at peace.

*SECOND ADVENTURE:* HOW  
SIEGFRIED GREW UP TO BE  
A HERO





## How Siegfried grew up to be a Hero



ING SIEGMUND and Queen Sieglinde had only one son, but from his babyhood this boy promised to grow into as strong a man as his father or any of his ancestors.

While he was only a child the Heroes who sat round the iron table taught him all the duties that a king's son ought to do, and his own courage and high spirit made him an eager pupil. In the evening the old Heroes, grey-haired men who had fought many a hard fight, used to sit round the hearth telling of their adventures in foreign lands, or singing of the

## Siegfried The Dragon-Slayer

dead Heroes whose names were still held in honour ; and the young Siegfried would listen with beating heart and sparkling eyes, longing for the day when he should have a share in such deeds of bravery.

Once Siegfried and two other boys had gone into the forest with one of these old Heroes to cut some ash sticks for the handles of their spears. The old man had seated himself on a high rock from whence they could see the stretches of meadow land and the cornfields bordered by a fringe of dark forest. Taking the boys in turn on his knee the old man looked sternly at them as if meaning to throw them down the steep precipice. The two other boys trembled before his gaze as if it had been a gleam of lightning, but Siegfried quailed no more than does a young falcon when it looks at the sun.

The old man smiled with pride as he set the boy down, for he knew then that Siegfried had the blood of the Heroes in his veins, and that in the day of battle he would look with a steady eye on flashing swords and flying spears.



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One of the lads had turned his attention to some goats that were browsing near them ; the other was picking wild berries to eat, but Siegfried kept his place on the old warrior's knee, and played with the hilt of his sword, though his fingers were scarcely big enough to grasp it.

The first boy, as he looked across the valley, said :

“ If I could have my wish, it would be that all this valley were one great field of corn, and that farms, granaries and barns were mine so that I might be the richest king in the world.”

“ No,” said the second boy, “ I would wish for the valley to be a pasture, and that my herds of oxen and horses were so many that no one could count them from morning to night.”

Siegfried listened, but he said nothing till the old man asked him what his wish would be.

“ I would rather have as sharp a sword as yours,” he said, “ and so many Heroes to stand by me, that all your granaries and herds would not be too many to give us food. Then I would go forth with them

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and free every country east and west from monsters and tyrants of every kind.”

And the old man smiled his approval, for he felt that the boy had spoken well.

Siegfried's masters in warlike exercises were more and more satisfied with his progress, for his eye was as keen as his arm was strong. None of the other lads could shoot the eagle in flight or spear the wild boar so surely as Siegfried, yet all were fond of him, for he was generous and gentle too; if in their exercises he overthrew a companion he was always the first to help him up again and to make light of his own advantage.

Thus the young hero grew up, and at last a day came when his teachers said he had nothing more to learn in swordsmanship; while, boy as he was, his courage was such that he feared neither man nor beast.

One evening, Siegfried was amusing himself in a meadow on the banks of the Rhine in front of his father's castle with some of his young companions.

## Siegfried The Dragon-Slayer

They were wrestling, racing and throwing the spear, but there was not one of them who could run so fast as the Prince. However swiftly a spear was thrown, Siegfried could always run after it, catch it in its flight, and bring it back to its owner. Turning to the youth who most nearly approached him in speed, Siegfried said :

“ I will dart my spear into yonder oak and before you can touch it I will drain my drinking-horn to your health ; if I succeed you shall forfeit your falcon, and if I fail I will hand over the horn.”

Siegfried's companions, who stood by, thought his offer very foolish, for the drinking-horn was such a splendid specimen of ivory, carved and inlaid with gold and silver, that it was worth at least ten falcons. They looked at one another, and all thought the Prince had certainly taken his last draught from that drinking-horn.

The other lad thought the same, and confidently accepted the challenge. While all stood watching him, Siegfried filled the horn ; in one hand he

## Siegfried The Dragon-Slayer

poised the spear as if aiming at the nearest oak in the meadow. Near him, with eager eyes, stood the runner, ready to dart off as soon as the spear left the Prince's hand, and round them the group of lads waited in tense excitement the result of the trial.

Siegfried drew himself back and with all his strength hurled the spear, smiling as he did so. Right across the Rhine it flew and stood quivering in an oak on the farther side. The competitor had already set off to run towards the oaks in the meadow, thinking he was in advance of the spear, but the laughter of his comrades soon undeceived him. Instantly he sprang into the river and swam straight as an arrow to the tree where the spear was. Siegfried, with a smile, emptied his drinking-horn to the success of the swimmer and bade his companions do the same. They drank as they were bidden, but their shouts were for Siegfried.

“Since the days of the old Heroes, never has a spear been so well thrown,” they cried in chorus, “and long will this cast be remembered.”

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Presently back came the swimmer with the spear ; he brought the falcon and offered it as forfeit to Siegfried, but the Prince held out to him the horn filled with wine.

“You have tasted enough water, I’ll be bound, and after such a swim you want a draught that will refresh you.” And when the lad had emptied the horn Siegfried took the falcon, put the gold band of the horn in the bird’s beak, unhooded him and threw him up. The falcon flew with the horn into the air, wheeled round and round, and then hovered with motionless wings over the Königsburg. Siegfried turned to his companion with a smile and said :

“Call your falcon off, or he will swoop down on my mother’s pet doves on the castle roof, and then woe betide him, for he will never dare to come into her presence again.”

So the other lad immediately gave a shrill whistle and at the well-known sound the falcon dropped like a stone and settled on his master’s shoulder.

“See !” said Siegfried, “the bird will have

## Siegfried The Dragon-Slayer

nothing to do with me ; he does not acknowledge me as his owner. He thinks I did not win that wager fairly, and so he brings you the drinking-horn, and when you drink from it in the banquet hall, you and your sons after you will remember me and the casting of that spear.”

And all the youths who stood round were pleased with the young Prince's courtesy. “ He has thrown the spear like a Hero,” they said to each other, “ and he has behaved like a king's son.”

*THIRD ADVENTURE*: HOW  
SIEGFRIED WENT OUT INTO  
THE WORLD







## How Siegfried went out into the World

**A**FTER a merry day they all went back singing to the Königsburg and sat down in the great hall. They took their places round the fire and while they talked over hunts and fights, feasts and festivals, one polished his shield, another sharpened his sword, and a third set his hunting gear in order. But Siegfried for once took no part in the gay chatter, and sat by the wide hearth idly playing with the burning logs and looking dreamily into the flames.

At last one of the knights took down a harp that

# Siegfried The Dragon-Slayer

hung on the wall and sounded it while an old minstrel  
began a song of the Emperor Otnit.

## THE BALLAD OF OTNIT

“No longer may I tarry,”  
The Emperor Otnit said,  
“For I must fight the Dragon  
In yonder forest shade.”

In vain around him clinging  
Fast hung his suppliant wife,  
He leaves her in her sorrow,  
And hastens to the strife.

He rode about the forest,  
He rode the vale along,  
The weary way beguiling  
With many an ancient song.



The Ballad of Otnit



# Siegfried The Dragon-Slayer

In hollows and in caverns

He strove the foe to find ;

His shouts of bold defiance

Were lost upon the wind.

At length he sees a meadow,

Through which a streamlet flows,

A bird sang there so sweetly

Inviting to repose.

The air was all enchanted,

The earth was fairy ground ;

The very winds breathed music,

And magic hovered round.

Upon a bed of roses

The Hero lays him low,

Nor thinks that near him lieth

His fierce and deadly foe.

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In vain his hound is barking,  
His steed neighs loud and deep :  
Alas ! their faithful warning  
But soothes him in his sleep.

He dreams that he has conquer'd,  
And sees the Dragon dead :—  
The monster howls beside him  
And wakes him from his bed.

In vain he grasped his weapon  
The Dragon o'er him stood !  
Alas ! that pleasant meadow  
Is dyed with Otnit's blood.

When the minstrel had finished Siegfried looked up.

“That is a sorrowful song,” he said, “it seems a shame that a bold Hero should be killed in his sleep like that before he had chance to strike a blow. Give us something more cheerful, and tell us whether

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any one was brave enough to fight the Dragon and avenge the Emperor.”

“I admit that the song is sad,” said the minstrel, “but it teaches a lesson to all you sons of Heroes, not to lie down and give way to pleasure when you have an enemy to face, but to be always on the watch. The Emperor Otnit was avenged and the song is one after your own heart, so I will sing it as my parting one.”

And with that the minstrel began :

## THE BALLAD OF WOLFDIETRICH

Say, who was best and bravest

Amid the battle's rage ?

And who was held most famous

In the old heroic age ?

The Knight most bold and famous,

Wolfdietrich he is named,

He slew full many a Dragon

Full many a lion tamed.

# Siegfried The Dragon-Slayer

'Twas early in the morning,  
The Hero waking cried :  
“ Awake ! awake ! to battle  
This moment I must ride.”

He rode a long day's journey  
The woods and meadows through,  
And came to Berne's fair city,  
Beside the lake so blue.

He gazed upon the castle,  
Where once in joyous mood  
The Emperor's guests were feasted  
And drank the red grape's blood.

And hasting to the portal,  
The brave Knight wound his horn,  
And asked the silent watchman,  
In anger and in scorn :



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“ Now speak and tell me quickly  
Thou watchman on the wall  
Why Otnit’s dogs are howling,  
Why keeps his steed the stall ?

“ Why are your halls so silent,  
Your banners darkly furled ?  
Does Otnit live no longer,  
The bravest in the world ? ”

Replying from the turret,  
The sorrowing watchman said :  
“ Respect our grief, and leave us  
For here we mourn the dead !

“ ’Twas on a fatal morning  
Lord Otnit left these walls ;  
For this his hounds are howling,  
And silent are his halls.”

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“ And tell me, old man, truly,  
    Before I hence depart,  
Where dwells his lovely widow,  
    And weeps her bitter smart ? ”

A voice came from those turrets,  
    So soft, so sad, so deep ;  
“ Sir Knight, depart in pity,  
    And leave me here to weep.

“ My grief is past my telling,  
    I weep both night and day,  
This now is sorrow's dwelling,  
    And so, Sir Knight, away !

“ Him only will I welcome,  
    Full many a time I said,  
Who on the poisonous serpent  
    Revenge Otnit dead.

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“ And since none dared avenge him  
I still withheld my hand ;  
For this the base oppressor  
Hath ta'en my gold and land.

“ So ride away, Sir Stranger,  
For all my joys have flown ;  
From early morn till even  
I sit and weep alone.”

“ I ride not home, sweet Lady,  
'Tis not for gold or land  
I come to seek your castle  
With trusty sword in hand ;

“ But Giants fierce and Dragons  
I dare to mortal strife :  
The sufferer and the mourner  
I guard with limb and life.”

## Siegfried The Dragon-Slayer

“O ride along, Sir Stranger,  
Your hand is all too weak,  
Nor on the field of danger  
Presume your fate to seek.”

That moment came a falcon,  
And seized upon her dove,  
And high the trembling captive  
Bore to the sky above.

His spear the Hero grasping,  
He hurled it swift on high :  
It reached the falcon flying  
And pierced him in the sky.

The dove returned uninjured,  
And sought his mistress fair ;  
The hawk fell in the waters,  
And sank and perished there.

# Siegfried The Dragon-Slayer

She gave him from her finger  
    A ring, a ring of gold ;  
He said, “ O gentle Lady  
    Be kind, as I am bold.”

He spoke—she closed the casement,  
    He saw her move aside,  
Then swiftly turned his courser  
    And like the wind did ride.

On either hand beside him,  
    A dog now swiftly bounds,  
They follow him and gladly,  
    For they are Otnit's hounds.

And hasting on his journey,  
    He rides in joyous mood,  
And finds at length the valley  
    Where dwells the Giant brood.

# Siegfried The Dragon-Slayer

And hark, from out the valley,  
    What hideous sounds arise ?  
A lion fights the Dragon  
    Till one or other dies.

The Hero braves the monster,  
    And hurls his spear with speed,  
But 'gainst that scaly armour  
    'Tis broken like a reed.

Again he braves the Dragon  
    And lifts his sword so dire,  
It melts before his breathing  
    Like lead before the fire.

Again the lion rushes  
    In fury to the strife ;  
Again Wolfdietrich rallies  
    And seeks the Dragon's life.

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The Dragon with his talons  
Has seized the Hero's shield ;  
The lion springs upon him,  
The Dragon seems to yield.

And now the Dragon seizes  
The lion by the tail,  
Against its deadly grip of teeth,  
Nor strength nor skill prevail.

And weaker yet and weaker  
The brave Woldietrich grows,  
Till the Dragon's hot breath scorched him  
And no more the Hero rose.

The monster bore the lion  
Wrapt in his scaly fold,  
And in his jaws of fury  
He bore the Knight so bold.

## Siegfried The Dragon-Slayer

But ah ! his limbs were weary,  
And as he reached his lair,  
He fell for very weakness,  
And sank in stupor there.

Then creeping to the lion  
Came first the Dragon's brood,  
They broke his bones asunder,  
And then they suck'd his blood.

They swallow first the lion,  
And fain the Knight would kill,  
His coat of mail defies them,  
And baffles all their skill.

They throw him to each other  
In rough and cruel play,  
Till sleep has seized upon them,  
And all in slumber lay.



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For hours the stars above him,  
    Their nightly watching kept,  
For hours 'mid his tormentors  
    The wounded Hero slept.

But when the sun, arising,  
    Shot forth his earliest beam,  
The Hero then awoke him  
    As from some fearful dream.

He rose at once on waking  
    And sought his sword and spear,  
But bones and mangled corpses  
    Alone were lying near.

But searching there around him,  
    What charm might aid afford,  
He saw not far before him  
    A light and gleaming sword.

# Siegfried The Dragon-Slayer

The blade was once Lord Otnit's,  
He had borne it to the strife ;  
'Twas fated that no other  
Could take the Dragon's life.

He gripped the brand and swung it  
So bravely and so true,  
That ere the monster wakened  
His head from shoulders flew.

He next attack'd the broodlings,  
Cut off from each its head,  
And gazing on the slaughter  
He then exulting said :

“ Now I return in triumph,  
To ask the Lady's hand,  
For Otnit sleeps with honour—  
And free is all the land.”

By the time the song was ended it was nearly

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midnight ; the minstrel, tired out with his performance, laid himself down to rest, and the company soon followed his example. Only Siegfried was left beside the fire ; he sat in his place silent and motionless, watching the fitful glow of the embers, till suddenly he snatched up a brand, waved it round his head, and struck fiercely at the fire as if he, too, would slay a fiery dragon, while the sparks flew hither and thither in a shower across the stone floor of the hall.

For some time the young Prince sat thinking deeply before the fire, till at last his eyes fell on the wall where the deeds of his ancestors, the Kings and Heroes of old, were pictured in tapestry worked by Queens and the ladies of their court. Here was shown many a fight with Giants and Dragons, and above the tapestry hung the swords and spears with which victory had been gained, as well as trophies of teeth and claws from the monsters they had slain.

But to-night Siegfried felt as if he dared not even

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look at the faded pictures of these great Heroes, for was he not sitting idly at home, without attempting to do any such deeds as had made their names famous for a hundred years? It almost seemed to him that in place of the old pictures the men themselves were looking down at him with scorn, and that he heard their reproachful voices saying :

“Siegfried, you are no better than a girl! You do well to sit by the fireside, it is the proper place for such as you, while men go into the world to win fame with their swords.”

It was all so real in the half-light of the dying fire that Siegfried started up angrily, seized a firebrand, and was about to hurl it against the figures that seemed to mock him. Then he realised what he was doing and his arm fell to his side.

“Had you been living men,” he muttered, “I would have shown you I can fight like a man, and you would not have got off scot-free, because you happened to be my ancestors. But what a fool I am to be quarrelling with old pictures on a wall! I’ll set

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out into the world with the first streak of dawn, and see if I cannot win as great glory as any of my fathers.”

Then he took his best sword and buckled it round his waist ; he fastened round his neck an old shield that had long hung on the wall ; he added a cross-bow and the very horn that the Hero Wolfdietrich himself had borne, and last of all Siegfried threw over his shoulders the skin of a bear which he had killed one day without weapon of any kind. There was still no sign of daylight when the Prince had finished arming himself, and he went into the room where his father and mother slept. Roused by his entrance they asked what brought him in so early, and whether he were off on a hunting expedition.

“ Yes, indeed. I am going to hunt,” he answered, “ but the game I seek this time is neither boar nor stag, but the fame of a Hero, and the glory of the fight, so I have come to ask your blessing. I cannot bear to sit here any longer like a miserable, broken-

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winged falcon who dare not venture from his nest. I long to go out into the world and to add fresh glory to our name, as you, father, and those before you did when you were young."

The King, though feeling a little sad at the idea of parting from his only son, was still proud to hear the Prince speak so boldly, but the Queen began to weep bitterly, for she could think of nothing but the dangers her dear boy would be sure to meet with.

"You are still too young," urged the King. "Stay at home until you are a little stronger, then I promise I will find you some followers and you shall set out in good company."

But Siegfried would not listen to any such advice, for his mind was already made up.

"I shall die if I stay here idle any longer," he said ; "night and day I have no rest, for wherever I turn something seems to reproach me for wasting my time and my strength. When the minstrels sing in the hall at night I think of the future when your deeds will be sung, and what will the minstrels say of



“Go, and show yourself worthy of our ancestors”





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me? They will name me with scorn. 'King Siegmund had indeed a son,' they will say; 'he was tall and strong like his father, but his name is lost like the stars in a cloudy night, for he never did any great deed to make himself remembered. He hunted the deer in the forest but he never had the courage to meet men in the field of battle.' This thought cuts me to the heart, father, and that is why I ask you to let me go. I may make you proud of me, and even if I never came back you would have the satisfaction of knowing that your son had died the death of a Hero."

What could King Siegmund say to this earnest pleading? When he saw his son's determination he had not heart to withhold his consent, but laid his hand on the Prince's head.

"Go, my boy, and show yourself worthy of our ancestors, the Hero Kings. Be prudent enough to take advice, and quick to act on it; let your arm be strong but keep your heart tender, just as a sword is sharp and will yet bend. Be on your guard against

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pride when things go well with you, for this leads often to ruin, and let no misfortune make a coward of you. Have nothing to do with artful and unworthy men, and beware of their false kindness. Be true to your sword, firm in friendship and spotless in life, for when at last death comes to meet you and robs you of sword and shield, your deeds will rise up like a company of men-at-arms behind you, and for these you must answer to God. May He be with you on your way !”

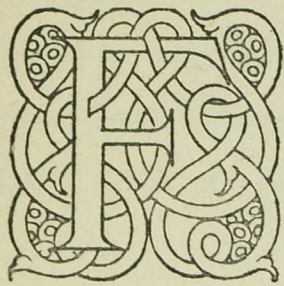
Siegfried promised to bear this advice in mind ; then his parents kissed him heartily once more and he hastened out of the room and away from the Castle, looking back more than once as he set forth on his wanderings.

*FOURTH ADVENTURE*: HOW  
SIEGFRIED CAME TO THE  
SMITHY





## How Siegfried came to the Smithy



OR some distance Siegfried's way lay beside the Rhine, over green fields, through dark forests and valleys towards the south. His only companions were the two hounds without whom he never set out for the chase, and they roused many a stag from his lurking-place as they passed through the forests. Any traveller who followed in Siegfried's steps would have found the path marked by many a poisonous serpent or bird of prey which had been slain and transfixed to the trees or the rocks.

Now that he had fairly started out into the world

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the Prince felt light of heart, and all his gloomy thoughts had disappeared. Now he would rush forward in pursuit of some quarry, now he would sound his horn to the delight of the eager dogs, and now he would sing till the woods re-echoed with his voice. For food he had wild fruits, and the flesh of birds and beasts which he killed ; streams were everywhere to be found so he never wanted for water to drink. When night came he lay down to sleep on his shield under some oak-tree with his bearskin for a covering, his naked sword at his side, and the dogs at his feet to keep watch and rouse him if any beast of prey came near.

After several days, however, when he saw no sign of the Giants or Dragons he so much longed to meet, he began to feel disappointed.

“ My fathers, the Heroes, have left me nothing to do,” he complained impatiently, although he knew there was no one to hear him. “ They have hunted to such good purpose that all the noblest game has been killed.”

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And he vented his vexation on the snakes and beasts of prey, pushing his way into the very heart of the forest, where the trees were so thick as almost to shut out the sky.

One morning, as he was hastening along in no very contented frame of mind, he reached the outskirts of the forest where the trees were less dense, and saw beyond them a meadow bright with flowers through which ran a swift stream. Suddenly he heard the sound of horsemen dashing through the wood, the boughs of the trees were parted, and a stag of unusual size burst out. The hair on its breast hung down with age like a beard, and its antlers, which showed it to be a royal, were so wide that no man could have stretched them with both his arms. But the strangest thing of all was that the stag bore on his head a magnificent gold crown as if he were indeed the king of the forest. He must have wandered there for many years without seeing any man, for as he stood looking at Siegfried he did not show any signs of fear. The Prince, anxious to

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know the meaning of the golden crown, called to his dogs to take the stag alive, but no sooner did they approach than the animal bounded away. Over streams and rocks followed Siegfried and his hounds, and many a time did the young hunter think himself on the point of catching his quarry, but always the stag escaped by a fresh leap. So the long chase went on, till all wearied they came to the edge of a steep precipice at the foot of which was a deep lake.

In another moment the stag would have sprung over, but Siegfried, quick as lightning, caught hold of the gold crown, and planting his foot firmly against the creature's back, pulled him down. Then he remembered a story that he had often heard as a boy, how his grandfather had taken a young stag and had placed a gold crown on its antlers. So Siegfried broke off a point from the crown as a trophy and let the frightened animal go free. He met with no further adventure for several days, though he kept a sharp look-out for any signs that should promise





Siegfried catches the crowned deer



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him more excitement than the hunting which supplied his wants.

One evening he was in full chase after a bear which had led him into a valley shut in between rocky mountains, with a torrent roaring along the bottom. The full moon had already risen, but it cast such eerie shadows around him that Siegfried fancied over and over again that at last he had met with the Giants, or Dragons, of which the minstrels had so often sung. Suddenly above the rushing sound of the torrent his ear caught the noise of hollow blows, as if the rocks were being rent apart. He hastened in the direction of the sounds, which grew louder and louder, till at last the noise was deafening. Yet he fancied it came from inside the mountain, and putting his ear to the rock, he could certainly hear rough voices speaking a language quite unknown to him. No sign of any entrance was to be seen, but when he had gone a few yards farther, there was a turn in the valley, and he found himself standing before a high wall made of huge blocks of stone. Through the

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crevices gleamed rays of light, and black clouds of smoke streamed out every now and then. There was no doubt that the noise was caused by the heavy blows of a hammer on an anvil, and after listening for a little time, Siegfried climbed up the rocks to see what was going on.

Through a wide opening he looked into a cavern in the depths of which flamed a forge, while great wild-looking men lifted the red-hot iron with huge pincers from the fire on to an anvil. The hollow trunk of a tree on one side directed the wind into the fire, and another trunk brought water to fill a vessel hewn from the solid rock. The red flames danced on the moving water and the sooty faces of the smiths, they flickered on swords that hung round the cave, while the bright moonlight fell here and there across a richly wrought shield and made it shine like a lamp of white fire. Showers of sparks flew out every now and then from the forge, and as Siegfried looked at the strange picture it seemed to him that these were evil spirits and their dwelling a fiery furnace.

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They were great misshapen creatures, silent and black of face, with heavy brows and hair hanging long on their backs. Just below the point where Siegfried peered over the rock, one of the smiths was roasting an ox spitted on an iron stake before a huge fire, and each time the spit turned round he tore off a slice to taste if the meat were nearly done, tossed it into his great mouth and swallowed it down as ravenously as a wolf. When at last it was ready, he took the ox from the fire and cut from it with an axe a piece for every man in the cave ; these he laid out separately, and Siegfried saw a row of stone blocks which were used as seats. The smith then lighted a torch of pinewood, and going to the back of the cave began to fill iron jugs with mead.

As he watched, Siegfried said to himself: "If I wait for these men to offer me a supper I shall come off badly, it will be best for me to help myself at once and leave them to settle the rest among themselves." So he stretched out his spear over the table, stuck it into the nearest piece of meat, and long

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before the smith returned with his jugs, Siegfried and the dogs had devoured it.

When all was ready the smith took up a hammer and struck three blows on an iron shield as a signal for the others to come. Instantly all obeyed the summons ; each smith rushed to his place and quickly began tearing with his teeth at his portion of meat. One, of course, found nothing.

“ How is this, Eckhart, you old glutton ? Where is my share ? ” he shouted.

Eckhart looked right and left but could see no signs of the missing meat.

“ If you steal the supper among you while my back is turned,” he muttered, “ you can find it yourselves.”

“ You know well enough where it is gone ! ” cried the hungry smith. “ It’s not the first time you’ve helped yourself to the meat and left us the bones, and if you can’t say where it is, I’ll hammer that skull of yours till you can bring it to mind.”

With these angry words the smith sprang upon

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Eckhart, and though another held him back this did not prevent a violent quarrel. Some cried out that Eckhart had stolen the meat, others suspected some one else. More and more furious grew the clamour and the smiths would have come to blows had not Siegfried suddenly shouted to them, but the noise they were making drowned his voice. Putting his horn to his lips he blew such a blast that the cave echoed with the sound and the shields on the walls were shaken. Instantly there was silence and the smiths stood as if turned to stone. Then Siegfried spoke :

“ Listen, you savages ! You need not accuse each other. It is I who have eaten your meat, and now I hope you will welcome me and treat me as a guest.”

These bold words took the smiths aback ; for a moment they stood aghast at this youth's presumption, but their rage soon got the better of their astonishment, and every one seized and hurled at Siegfried whatever came to hand. The Hero, not to be outdone, quickly snatched up a huge mass of rock,

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and cast it down on the iron table with such force that it was broken in two.

“Let no one raise a hand against me,” he cried, “or you will all be dead men, unless your heads are harder than your table!” On hearing these words the leader feared the speaker was some great Giant who would bury them in their cave if they provoked him further, and he commanded one of the smiths to admit the stranger.

The man pushed away the rock from the entrance and laughed scornfully when he saw Siegfried.

“I thought to see a Giant, and I find a Dwarf,” he scoffed. “Are you the frog who has been croaking so loudly? What is your name and where have you come from?”

Siegfried, nothing daunted, drew himself up proudly to his full height.

“You have asked three questions, but you have forgotten the fourth—whether it pleases me to answer any of them. However, you may tell your leader that I carry a sharp sword to silence insolent



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fellows like yourself ; that I have as yet no name, but that I have come to win one : and if you want to know where I live, the wild beasts and birds of prey I have hung on the trees and rocks will show you the way I came."

"You crow loudly for a young bantam," answered the smith, "and I have a good mind to try how your sword compares with my hammer." So saying he swung his hammer round and aimed a blow at Siegfried's head that would certainly have killed him had not the young Hero met it with a lightning thrust of his sword, which cut the handle of the hammer clean in two, so that the head fell to the ground. The smith, seeing that he had no child to deal with, now hurried into the cave, followed closely by Siegfried and the dogs. But no sooner was he inside than Eckhart rushed at the Hero with the tongs, and Siegfried, seizing Eckhart by his hair, had him on the ground in the twinkling of an eye. All the smiths, forgetting their grievance, rushed to the rescue of their comrade, and set upon Siegfried, who

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still held Eckhart by the hair and dragged him in this fashion round the cave. The sword in his right hand flashed hither and thither, and the dogs did their best to help their master by springing at his assailants' throats. Never was such an uproar heard, till at last the leader of the smiths commanded silence and turned angrily upon Siegfried.

“You are certainly a most ill-mannered guest,” he exclaimed. “First you steal our meat and then you draw your sword and set about one of our comrades.”

“It does not do you much credit to treat a guest in this fashion over a scrap of meat. I give you leave to throw me into your smithy fire if I don't bring you a whole buffalo in place of it. And if you will teach me the art of forging weapons, I will undertake to keep your spit supplied from the forest.”

This offer seemed to please the leader; he bade Siegfried welcome to the cave, and sitting down together they were soon all as good friends as if nothing had happened.

*FIFTH ADVENTURE*: HOW  
SIEGFRIED HEARD THE  
STORY OF WIELAND





## How Siegfried heard the Story of Wieland



IEGFRIED took his seat boldly among the smiths, and had a ready answer for all their questions. Mimer, the leader, thought he had gained in this new-comer a good workman, and told Siegfried that if he served them well they would make him as clever a smith as Wieland, the best of all armourers.

“Who is this Wieland, and what wonders has he wrought?” asked Siegfried.

“You cannot have been long out of the nest, my chicken, if you have never heard of Wieland,” said

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Mimer in surprise. "But it is a long story, and we have no time for it to-day ; Wieland forged so many marvellous things that one can scarcely get them named in a day."

Siegfried, however, begged him so earnestly and promised besides to bring in such a fat buffalo, that Mimer at last consented to tell the story.

"Wieland the king of armourers came from Seeland, and Wade his father was descended from the race of Giants. Wade heard that somewhere in a hollow mountain there dwelt two Dwarfs who understood everything in the world, and were able to work in gold, silver, and iron better than any one else. So the old Giant set out with his son Wieland to find this mountain. On the way they came to a river, but though they waited some time, neither boat nor ferryman was to be seen, and at last, the Giant's patience being at an end, he took the lad on his shoulder and carried him across the river. This was five fathoms deep, yet the water scarcely reached the Giant's girdle, and

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he minded the strong current no more than if he had been a rock.

“After long wanderings they came to the hollow mountain, and Wade left his son with the Dwarfs, who were to teach the youth all they knew, the Giant agreeing to pay them one gold mark at the end of a year.

“When the year was up Wade came back to fetch his son home, but Wieland had been so quick to learn and had become so useful that the Dwarfs did not want to part with him. So they begged the Giant to leave the lad with them for another year, and promised that they would not only teach Wieland twice as much as he knew, but that they would return to the Giant his gold mark as payment for his son's services.

“The father thought this a good offer, and accepted it, but afterwards the Dwarfs repented of their promise to return the money, and they made a bargain with the Giant that if he should not appear on the appointed day, they should be free to cut off

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his son's head. To this the Giant agreed again, but when the time came for parting he called to Wieland to walk a little way with him. When they were safely outside the mountain Wade looked round to make sure the dwarfs were not in sight, then he stopped and plunged his sword into a bog under a mass of brushwood.

“ ‘ Now, if I should not return on the appointed day,’ he said, ‘ and if the Dwarfs try to kill you, take out this sword, and fight like a man for your life, for anything would be better than that you should be murdered by two such contemptible little creatures.’

“ And so the father and son bade each other good-bye, Wade going home and Wieland returning to the Dwarfs.

“ As time went on the young man learned all the arts that were known to his masters, and though they were rather displeased to see him daily becoming more clever, they consoled themselves with the hope that his skill would never be of much use to him.

“ When the twelve months were drawing to a



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close the old Giant was anxious to go and fetch his son rather too soon than too late, for the journey was a long one. So he set off and travelled night and day till he came to the mountain, where he arrived three days earlier than the time agreed upon. But he found the mountain closed, and feeling very tired with his journey he lay down to rest till the Dwarfs should open it. He immediately fell into a deep sleep, and as he lay there snoring, the sky began to grow dark, then an earthquake shook the mountain and loosened a great cliff, which fell on the sleeping Giant and buried him. Wade was never seen again, but there are some people who say that he is not really dead, and that sometimes you may hear his breathing or feel the mountain tremble as he turns over.

“On the appointed day the Dwarfs opened the side of the mountain, and Wieland went out in the hope of meeting his father. Nowhere could he see him, however, and when he came to the fallen cliff he guessed what had happened. He instantly went to the bog, drew out the sword, and returning to the

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mine, killed the two dwarfs who were lying in wait for him. Then he collected all his tools and all the gold and silver he could lay his hands on, loaded them on a horse and set out for Denmark.

“After three days he reached the river Weser, but was puzzled to find a means of crossing it. At last, after much thinking, he felled a large tree, hollowed it out, packed inside it all his tools, with the gold and silver, and laid in a stock of provisions. He cut openings in the trunk for windows and covered them with skin to keep out the water. Then he slipped inside, and started the tree rolling down the smooth bank of the river.

“Into the deep tide it splashed, and for eighteen days Wieland went down stream in this strange boat till at last he reached the land. It happened that King Nidung’s people were out at sea with their nets, and when the fishermen drew them in they were so heavy that the men thought they must have caught some monstrous fish. Imagine their surprise at seeing the tree-trunk so skilfully cut and quite

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unlike anything they had ever seen before. They sent a messenger to the King, and he was soon down on the beach giving orders for the tree to be opened so as to see what was inside. Wieland, being afraid of getting a fatal blow from one of the axes, called out, and when the men heard his voice they thought there must be an evil spirit in the tree, so they took to their heels and ran away, leaving the King on the shore alone.

“Wieland now came out, and going up to the King begged for his protection and offered to serve him. Seeing that he was a stranger, and not a wandering beggar, King Nidung gave Wieland leave to present himself at the palace and went away much interested in this strange arrival. Hastening back to his tree Wieland buried it, as well as his tools and his wealth, but not before one of the courtiers named Reigin saw what he was doing.

“For a whole year Wieland served the King faithfully, having charge always of the three knives that were used on the royal table. One day while

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washing them on the sea-shore the best fell from his hand and was lost. Greatly troubled he went to Amilias, the King's smith, but he was not in the smithy, so Wieland set to work and made a knife exactly like the one he had lost, and this he laid before the King as if nothing had happened.

“ But when presently his Majesty took up the new knife to cut a loaf, the blade went right through the bread and cut a piece out of the table itself. Much amazed, the King asked who had made the knife, and Wieland answered :

“ ‘ Who else but Amilias, your Majesty's smith ? ’  
But the King said at once :

“ ‘ Amilias could not make so good a blade, ’ and then Wieland had to tell the truth. The King's remark on his workmanship was soon carried to the ears of Amilias, and he angrily challenged Wieland to a trial of skill at the forge. It was agreed that Amilias should make a helmet, breastplate, and leggings of mail, and that Wieland should make a sword ; and he whose work was the best should cut

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off the other's head. They were to have a year for the work, and Amilias went straight to the smithy and began, but Wieland waited every day at the King's table until half the year had passed. One day the King asked him how he proposed to win his wager, and Wieland replied that if it were his sovereign's pleasure he was quite ready to begin. Then he went to the place where he had buried his tree, but it was broken in pieces and all his tools were gone as well as the gold and silver.

“ For some time he stood there in perplexity, till he remembered the man who had seen him hiding his possessions, but he did not know who this was. So he went straight to the King and told him the whole story, and King Nidung summoned an assembly of all his people so that Wieland might recognise the thief. But though the armourer stood at the palace gate and watched every soul who came in, he saw no one in the least like the man he wanted. Then the King grew angry, and said he could see plainly that Wieland was not after all so clever as he pretended.

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“ But the armourer had learnt one art from the Dwarfs that he made use of now. He secretly forged the image of a man, put hair on its head, painted and dressed it till it looked like life. When it was finished he placed it where the King would pass it as he went to bed. All happened as Wieland intended : the King retiring to his room caught sight of the figure and so did his attendants.

“ ‘ Welcome, Reigin ! ’ he cried heartily. ‘ Why did you not come into the hall ? How is your embassy to Sweden going on ? ’

“ But of course the figure said never a word, and Wieland confessed that he had made it.

“ ‘ That is the man, ’ he added, ‘ who stole my tools. ’ And when Reigin shortly afterwards returned from Sweden, he was commanded by the King to give back all he had taken from Wieland.

“ For another four months the armourer waited each day on the King, who at last warned him again of the wager, and he went to the smithy to begin his work. Twice he made a sword, and each time



“ ‘Stand up then,’ said Wieland ”





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the King said he had never seen one so good, but Wieland was not satisfied ; each time he went back to his smithy and filed and hammered till he had made a better one. The third sword gleamed like a diamond and was set with gold. Wieland and the King went to the river taking it with them ; Wieland threw in a flock of wool three feet thick and held the sword quite still against the stream. When the wool touched the blade it was cut through as easily as the water had been divided. King Nidung was delighted and vowed that for the future he would use no other sword in battle. The armourer thereupon answered that he should be proud for the King to use it, but that he must first make the sheath and belt. So he returned to the smithy, and after making a fourth sword exactly like the third, he hid the latter carefully under his bellows.

“ At last came the appointed day for the trial, and the King with all his guests went to a meadow, where seats had been prepared for them in the midst of the assembled crowd. Wieland, going to the

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smithy, brought out his good sword and took his position behind the seat where Amilias sat. He laid the edge of his sword on the wonderful helmet, asking whether Amilias felt anything. The King's smith said no, and bade Wieland cut with all his might. One stroke of the sword penetrated through helmet and head, armour and body, right to the smith's waist, and Amilias, in answer to Wieland's question, replied that he only felt as if cold water were being poured down his back.

“ ‘Stand up then,’ said Wieland, ‘and shake yourself!’ When Amilias did so, he fell in two pieces, and never rose again, for no one in the whole kingdom could join the pieces together. After this the King would not be satisfied till he had Wieland's sword, but the armourer brought him out the false one and hid the good one again under the bellows.

“ For a long time he stayed in the King's service and became known far and wide for his skill in working gold and silver. At last a foreign army

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attacked King Nidung's country, and the King with all his knights went out to battle, Wieland being in his train. The day was a hard one, and the fight was fierce, so fierce that once the King promised to give his daughter to the man who should help him. Then Wieland dashed up, and not only saved the King's life, but gained him the victory over his enemy. Yet when once the danger was over, the King, instead of keeping his word, pretended to know nothing about the pledge, and drove Wieland from the court in disgrace.

“After a time the armourer came back disguised as a cook. The Princess had a knife which made a sound directly it touched meat that was poisoned, and the sound was heard when one of the new cook's dishes was placed before her. Search was made for the criminal, but suspicion did not fall upon Wieland, and the smith laughed to himself at the thought of his clever disguise. Then he changed the knife for another he had made, and preparing a fresh dish, poured over it a magic syrup that would make the

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Princess fall deeply in love with him. But she had her suspicions, and so she called for the first dish to be brought back. Finding that the knife now gave no warning when she put it into this, she knew it was not the same, and the King angrily declared that no one but Wieland could have imitated the magic knife so skilfully. Soldiers were commanded to seek the armourer, and when at last he was found the cruel King ordered the tendons of his feet to be cut so that he could not escape again : thus from that time Wieland was a prisoner in his smithy.

“He sent for his brother Eigil to keep him company, and as the new-comer was a better archer than any one in the kingdom he was soon in favour. One day, however, King Nidung sent for Eigil and his little three-year-old son, and putting an apple on the child’s head he commanded the father to shoot it off with a single arrow. Eigil took three from his quiver, placed one on the string, and taking good aim shot the apple clean in two.

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“ ‘ Well done ! ’ said the King ; ‘ but tell me why did you take out three arrows for one shot ? ’ ”

“ ‘ Sire, ’ was Eigil’s reply, ‘ I will tell the truth, if I had not hit the apple, I should have sent the other two arrows into your heart, ’ and though the courtiers trembled at Eigil’s outspoken avowal the King was not displeased.

“ Wieland, meanwhile, sat hammering away in his smithy, and night and day he was thinking how he could be revenged. One day King Nidung’s two youngest sons came to beg some arrows, and he promised that if they would walk backward from the palace to the smithy as soon as snow had fallen, they should have as many arrows as they wanted. The boys agreed, and scarcely had the first snow fallen when they came eagerly to the smithy. But Wieland stabbed them both to the heart, and hid their bodies in a hole under the bellows. They were missed the same morning, and when dinner-time came without any signs of them, soldiers were sent out in all directions to look for them. The men

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came to the smithy, and asked Wieland whether the young princes had not been with him.

“‘To be sure,’ answered the smith, ‘but that is long ago. Do you not see their footprints in the snow straight from here to the palace.’

“And sure enough there were the marks plainly to be seen. When all the search-parties had come back without bringing any news, it was supposed that the two Princes had either fallen into the sea, or had been attacked by wild beasts and killed.

“After some time Wieland took the bodies from the ground and made cups of the skulls, set them in gold, and presented them to the King, who little guessed what the gifts were.

“The smith laughed in his sleeve, and thinking himself sufficiently revenged began to consider how he could get home. First he begged Eigil to bring him all kinds of feathers, and his brother going into the wood shot all the birds he could find, from which Wieland made himself a coat of feathers that looked



The revenge of Wieland





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exactly like the skin stript from a large eagle. Next he made Eigil put on the coat to try it.

“ ‘Fly high or low, just as you like,’ he said, ‘but remember when coming down to go before the wind.’

“ So Eigil did as his brother said, and soared into the air like the swiftest bird, but when he wanted to come down he fell headlong with such force that for a moment he was stunned. Wieland asked if anything were wrong with the coat of feathers that he had fallen.

“ ‘If it were as easy to come down as to go up,’ said Eigil, ‘you would never have seen me again, and I should have been out of the country by now.’

“ Then Wieland laughed as he put on the coat himself.

“ ‘I knew that very well, and that was why I told you to go before the wind, for all birds alight against the wind. And now, brother, I am going to fly home. But I wish first to bid King Nidung good-bye. If he should command you to shoot at me, I beg you, if you love me, to aim straight at my heart.’

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“The brothers bade each other good-bye, and Wieland, rising into the air, flew to the highest tower and called out for the King to come out and listen to what he had to say.

“When the King arrived with his courtiers he was surprised to see Wieland on the tower.

“‘What! is this another of your miracles? Have you become a bird?’ he asked.

“‘Yes, Sire,’ answered Wieland with a laugh. ‘I am a bird and shall make use of my wings to escape from your power.’ Then he began to mock at the King and told how he had killed the Princes, till the King grew mad with rage. Turning to Eigil, who was beside him, he cried :

“‘Send an arrow after him, so that he may not escape alive!’

“So Eigil laid an arrow to his bow-string and aimed at his brother’s heart, but Wieland held his hammer just over his heart, and when the arrow struck the iron head he seized it in his left hand.

“‘Shoot again, Eigil!’ commanded the King, and

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Eigil shot, but Wieland did as before, and flew off, laughing scornfully, with an arrow in each hand. He reached his home in Seeland safe and sound, but what became of him afterwards no one knows."

Mimer's tale being ended he asked Siegfried what he thought of it and whether he would not like to become as clever a smith as Wieland.

"What pleases me most is that sword," he answered; "I don't need the coat of feathers, for I shall fly from neither man nor beast. But I cannot help thinking Wieland is not such a fine fellow after all. He killed his masters, the clever Dwarfs, and though King Nidung treated him treacherously he took a horrible revenge in slaying two innocent boys. If I had been his rival I would not have taken things so tamely as Amilias did, nor would he have played that trick with the hammer against my arrows. Still, I promise that if you will only teach me to forge such a sword as Wieland made, I will see that no one harms a hair of your head and no enemy shall come anywhere in sight of your smithy."

## Siegfried The Dragon-Slayer

“To-morrow we shall see whether you are as ready with your hammer as with your tongue,” replied Mimer, and the smiths all lay down on skins of wild beasts, while Siegfried, on his shield between the two dogs, slept as soundly as if he had been at home in his father’s castle.

*SIXTH ADVENTURE*: HOW  
SIEGFRIED HUNTED THE  
BUFFALO





## How Siegfried hunted the Buffalo

**I**T was still early the next morning and the sun was scarcely up when Siegfried sprang from his shield and set off with the dogs to hunt in the forest. Before long he came on the track of a buffalo, and his dogs pursued it eagerly, barking louder and louder as they gained on the animal. Siegfried came up just as the buffalo was attacking one of the dogs, while the other clung fast to its ear. As soon as the furious beast caught sight of the Hero it began pawing the ground, and then wild with rage it dashed furiously at him. Siegfried

## Siegfried The Dragon-Slayer

sprang quickly aside, and seizing the beast's horns in his hands forced back its head. Having thus gained the mastery Siegfried led the buffalo to the smithy and thrust it inside the cave.

“Wake up, wake up!” he shouted; “I have kept my word and brought you the meat I promised.” At the sight of the huge beast the smiths hastily leaped from their beds and ran to some place of safety. Some jumped up and held fast to the shields that hung on the walls, others took refuge behind the anvil; one sprang on the forge and another actually crept into the ashes.

Only the master kept his head, snatched up a shield and hammer, and taking his stand in the middle of the cave faced the buffalo. At first the animal stood still, bewildered by the strange scene, then he lowered his head and rushed furiously upon Mimer, while Siegfried blew a blast on his horn. Before the smith had time to swing his hammer he found himself flat on the ground under his shield, and the wild beast next turned his atten-



## Siegfried The Dragon-Slayer

tion to those who stood trembling behind the anvil.

Right and left they fled, climbing along the wall and making for the entrance of the cave in the hope of escaping. In its fury the buffalo threw over the anvil and came to a stop before the forge, pawing the ground and watching an opportunity to attack the man who was crouched on the top. The beast bellowed with rage, the man trembled with fear, and Siegfried, thoroughly enjoying the scene, blew a merry strain on his horn, till at length Mimer, having recovered from his fall, stepped up behind the infuriated beast and killed it with one stroke of his hammer.

All the smiths now ventured down from their hiding-places, and Mimer, turning angrily to Siegfried, said: "Another time you may keep your gifts to yourself, for we would rather be without them."

"Don't be angry, master," said Siegfried. "I thought the beast could run here better than I could carry him, and that you would enjoy the sport of

## Siegfried The Dragon-Slayer

killing him. Perhaps I may be able to make amends by being useful in the smithy."

"Well, we will try what you can do," replied the master, and so saying he placed a mass of iron in the fire, and gave Siegfried the heaviest hammer in the smithy.

As soon as the iron was red-hot he laid it on the anvil and told Siegfried to begin. At the first blow the stone that supported the anvil split in two, and the anvil sank into the earth; the iron and the pincers with which Mimer held it flew in pieces, and the hammer head rolled into a corner of the cavern. Mimer was astonished at such strength, and more angry than ever.

"I never saw such a clumsy blow," he growled; "it is easy to see you will not do for our work, whoever you may be."

But Siegfried tried to calm him.

"Did any man ever become a good shot at the first attempt? You need not lose your temper, but just let me try again."



Siegfried astonishes Mimir



## Siegfried The Dragon-Slayer

Instead of pleasing Mimer, this speech only set him pondering as to how he could get rid of Siegfried, for he thought to himself :

“This is a young wolf with sharp teeth ; he is not likely to bring us any good.”

Years ago Mimer had had a companion whose life was devoted to evil and that only, and because of this a curse had fallen on him and he had been changed into the form of a Dragon that could only crawl on the earth. As Mimer was wondering what he could do with Siegfried, he suddenly bethought him of this Dragon, so he said to the young man :

“ Listen, my bold friend, you must begin at the beginning in everything. You wish to learn how to make a good sword, don't you ? Well, you must first go to the woods and begin by burning charcoal.”

Siegfried never dreamed that Mimer meant to do him any harm, so he gladly promised to set off for the forest the very next day.



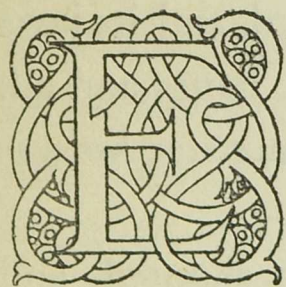
*SEVENTH ADVENTURE*: HOW  
SIEGFRIED MET THE DRAGON  
AND SETTLED ACCOUNTS  
WITH MIMER







## How Siegfried met the Dragon and settled Accounts with Mimer



EARLY the following morning Mimer provided Siegfried with food and drink to last him several days, gave him an axe, and then directed him to the wood where he intended the youth to meet his death.

On reaching the place Mimer had described, Siegfried began felling some trees ; then, having piled the trunks in a heap, he started the fire. By this time it was midday and Siegfried began to feel hungry ; he got out his provisions, and so keen was

## Siegfried The Dragon-Slayer

his appetite after all his hard work that he cleared off all that Mimer had given him.

As he sat resting on the trunk of a tree his thoughts turned to the great deeds he hoped to do.

“If any man dared to lift a spear against me, I would soon make him measure his length on the ground,” he said to himself, and no sooner were the words spoken than the huge Dragon came crawling out of its hiding-place. It had black wings like a bat, its poison-filled body was like that of a toad, its tail was as sharp as a two-edged sword, and its jaws wide enough to swallow a man—flesh, bones and all. When Siegfried caught sight of this monster he was delighted.

“Here is a chance for me!” he shouted, and running to his fire he drew out the longest tree and rushed on the creature with the fiery weapon. Straight into its right eye went the flaming point, and the Dragon writhed in agony; then Siegfried, without losing a moment, struck him on the head with such force that he was crushed to the earth.

# Siegfried The Dragon-Slayer

Blow after blow he rained on the monster till at last it lay still and silent, quite dead.

Well pleased with himself at his success Siegfried sat down to get his breath.

“If the Dragons can do no more in the way of fighting than this poor creature, it is hardly worth while to attack them,” he thought.

But the struggle had made him hungry, it was growing dusk, and he had no wish to go back to the smithy. At last he decided to roast the Dragon's heart for his supper, so he thrust his spear through the creature's body, made a spit of a tree, and hung the Dragon before the fire. The scaly coat soon began to soften with the heat, and the fat flowed in a stream. Siegfried took a piece of the flesh, but it burnt his fingers, and he hastily put them into his mouth. But it seemed to him that he was sucking a piece of iron, and looking at his fingers he found them cased in horn. The young Hero saw what had happened ; he first held his helmet under the stream till it was hard, and then throwing off his

## Siegfried The Dragon-Slayer

clothes he bathed his body till his skin became as a complete suit of armour. But there was just one spot between his shoulders whereon a leaf of a lime-tree fell, that the horny covering did not touch, and this one spot was now the only place in which any weapon could wound Siegfried.

“With his axe he cut the Dragon’s body in pieces : part he gave to his dogs, part he threw to the birds of prey, but the head he kept, and cutting up the heart he began to eat it. While doing this he suddenly heard voices round about him, yet he could see nothing but the trees and the birds among their branches. Then he knew that the ballad he had once heard a minstrel sing was true ; how the man who should eat a Dragon’s heart would instantly understand the language of the birds, from whom he would learn many a secret. So Siegfried listened.

A corn-crake cried out : “ Success ! success ! the Dragon is killed ! ”

Then a chaffinch came by. “ What ? what ? what ? The Dragon conquered ? Victory ! victory ! ”

## Siegfried The Dragon-Slayer

And a blackbird whistled: "Think of it! Siegfried has done it!"

He was followed by three ravens, who perched on the bough of a withered oak.

"Sister," said one of them, "you have deceived us again. Did you not say that we should find Siegfried dead?"

"Yes," replied the other; "I heard Mimer laugh this morning, as he watched Siegfried start. 'Go, proud boy,' he said, 'the Dragons will help you with your fire, and the ravens will pick your bones.'"

"Ah well," put in the third, "our chance will come before long, for he is too confiding and trustful, or he would have seen from Mimer's eyes that he meant mischief. If Siegfried does not look out Mimer will bury his spear in his heart yet."

"Ah, if he were wise," said the first raven, "he would cut off Mimer's head in time."

"I should be sorry for that," said the third, "for we owe many a feast from dead bones to Mimer. But let us fly away before the sun sets: I know

## Siegfried The Dragon-Slayer

where a dead stag lies, and we have our supper to think of." And away they all flew.

Siegfried finished his meal, took a drink from the stream, and laid himself down on his shield under an oak. As he looked up into the great branches which sheltered many a bird, and thought of all the storms that had beaten on it, yet left it standing unconquered like a king of the forest, Siegfried thought he, too, should like to stand as an oak among men, and with that thought he fell asleep.

Next morning Siegfried rose with the dawn, and sticking the Dragon's head on the point of his spear went straight back to the smithy. Mimer and his companions heard him coming, and, when they ran out of the cave, great was their astonishment to see the head on his spear.

"Master," said Eckhart, "the next thing will be that Siegfried will serve us as he has done the Dragon. I shall stay here no longer."

"You are a pack of cowards!" cried the angry Mimer. "Go and put the largest hammer in the

## Siegfried The Dragon-Slayer

fire, then we will stand at the entrance as if to welcome him, and brand him on the forehead with the red-hot iron if he gives any trouble.”

“Not I,” replied Eckhart, “I will have nothing more to do with him. We are twelve against one, it is true, but he is likely to be one too many for us.” So saying Eckhart took to his heels in the direction of the forest, and the others followed.

Mimer remained alone, and hiding his rage he went to meet Siegfried, and bade him welcome. But Siegfried’s eyes flashed with anger so that Mimer was glad enough to turn his own glance aside.

“I want none of your welcomes,” he said sternly. “I have burnt the wood, and paid off the labourer you sent to help me, and next I will pay you, for Siegfried the Swift, son of King Siegmund, is not used to be in any one’s debt.”

“I see you are not so brave as I thought,” answered Mimer scornfully. “Fancy making all this fuss about a little reptile that your ancestors would have trodden under their feet or strangled

## Siegfried The Dragon-Slayer

without a word ! Many a time have I burnt the wood or roasted game with the fire which flamed in its jaws, and here you who think yourself so bold can do nothing with the poor thing but kill it. I should not be surprised if you poked out its eyes while it slept, so that you might cut off its head."

These taunts enraged Siegfried still more, and grasping his sword he cried out : "To the onset, traitor ! My sword shall send you to join your old companion ; then you may amuse yourselves together, and roast game as long as you please."

But Mimer stepped out of his reach and held up his hand for silence.

"Listen," he said. "I will make you an offer that will be worth your while. Do you see over yonder the blue mountain with the rocky peaks ? That is where my eldest brother lives. In his cave he watches over treasures such as no king on earth possesses. To get them he murdered our father, and now he is under a curse and crawls about in the form of a Dragon. I will lead you there and provide you



## Siegfried The Dragon-Slayer

with good weapons, and when we have killed him we will divide the treasures between us.”

So Mimer went into the cave and brought out helmet, shield, and armour, the finest Siegfried had ever seen. One by one he gave them to the Hero, who, however, kept silence and said not a word of thanks. Lastly the smith handed him the sword.

“Look you,” he said, “this is the finest sword in the world. I made it for King Hartnit in Holmgart. Take it in both hands, and strike my brother the Dragon to the heart: then the treasures will be ours.”

So Siegfried took the sword in both hands and swung it high.

“I will try the edge of the sword to see if it be as good as you say; and your faithless heart, you murderer of your brother, shall feel it first.”

And before the last words were spoken, Mimer, the treacherous smith, lay dead at Siegfried's feet.

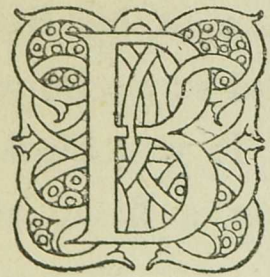


*EIGHTH ADVENTURE:* HOW  
SIEGFRIED SAW THE GREAT  
DRAGON AND MET THE  
DWARF KING





## How Siegfried saw the Great Dragon and met the Dwarf King



BEFORE going farther on his journey Siegfried tore down the walls and destroyed the smithy where only weapons for fraud and wickedness had been forged, so that to-day no man can say : " Here stood the Giants' smithy where Siegfried the Swift learnt the art of a smith."

Through the woods and fields he went singing for joy, but the country soon became steeper and more rugged, the streams more rapid. The grass was so thick that it rose over the heads of the dogs, and

## Siegfried The Dragon-Slayer

beasts of prey were everywhere. One day the Hero heard the dogs howling piteously in front of him and hastened forward, thinking some serpent or wild beast had attacked them. They were standing in a meadow and Siegfried found their terror was caused by some strange footprints the like of which he had never seen. These showed two large paws with long talons, and as he was looking at them more closely, the sun suddenly became darkened and the dogs cowered timidly against him. There was not a cloud in the sky, and for the first time in his life Siegfried felt afraid, as he looked up and saw a huge Dragon flying in the air above him. It was black as night, but with every breath it drew, a flame of fire issued from its jaws ; its head and neck were of horn and the fire of its body shone through with a deep red glow, lighting its blue wings as it flew slowly along.

Siegfried now saw the meaning of the strange footprints, and he stood under a tree watching the flight of this monster for a long time.

## Siegfried The Dragon-Slayer

“ May the Leader of Battles help me now ! ” he thought. “ Of all the Dragons painted on my father’s castle walls not one is equal to this. Grant but the victory to my good sword, that I may fight a good fight against this beast of darkness.” Meanwhile the Dragon flew quietly on its way, and at last disappeared behind the crest of a mountain.

Suddenly Siegfried heard behind him the jingling of bells and the tramp of a horse’s hoofs, and turning round he saw a tall, jet-black horse on which was seated a very small rider. For a moment Siegfried took this for a child, and wondered how he came to be riding in the forest on so big a horse, and so near the dangerous dragon. But as the rider approached Siegfried saw he had a snow-white beard reaching to his girdle, and that his limbs, though small, were those of a man. Both horse and rider were more richly adorned than Siegfried had ever seen even in his father’s castle. Gold, silver, and precious stones ornamented the horse’s trappings, and bells of silver and gold hung on its mane, fifty on each side, making

## Siegfried The Dragon-Slayer

a pleasant sound. Thrown over the horse was a green velvet cloth on which was figured the whole earth, with men, beasts, and flowers, while a blue border represented the sea, in which swam fishes of gold, silver, and purple.

The rider wore a silver helmet, on the top of which flashed a carbuncle, and round the casque was a crown of gold. His white steel armour was covered by a royal mantle fastened with a girdle of diamonds in the form of a snake. His sword-hilt was of rubies, and his shield sparkled as if it were of crystal. In the middle shone the sun, surrounded by seven stars, and between them ran circles in all the colours of the rainbow. This was a magic shield, for when the bearer held it before him he could see everything through it without being seen himself.

“Hail to you, brave Hero!” began the stranger, his eyes resting kindly and shrewdly on Siegfried, who stood in silent surprise. “You need not be afraid: I do not want to harm you, but rather to offer you my help in every danger.”





Siegfried meets King Euglein



## Siegfried The Dragon-Slayer

“I had no fear of you,” answered Siegfried with a smile. “I shall be glad to accept your friendship, though your help will hardly count for much, as you could scarcely be seen above the high grass, and if you were on the ground a stork might snap you up in mistake for a frog.”

At a speech so openly expressive of contempt, the little horseman was naturally somewhat offended.

“True, I am small, yet I am wiser than yourself since I know your name and your business. You are Siegfried, the son of King Siegmund, and though you are less than the Giants, you think to gain a victory over them. You have slain the Dragon that kept me and my people in slavery, and out of gratitude I have come to guide you out of the wood. I am Euglein, the King of the Dwarfs.”

“Well then, King Euglein,” answered Siegfried, “show me where I can win honour, and I will devote my sword to your service.”

“Spoken like a Hero!” cried the little man. “If I had not come, you would have lost your life,

## Siegfried The Dragon-Slayer

for the Dragon that lives in yonder mountain is more terrible than any other. It was he who stole the daughter of the Rhine-King, and he keeps her a prisoner on the Drachenstein. She will never be set free unless Heaven sends her help, and no one knows the place of her prison save myself.”

Siegfried was delighted at the King's words : here was an adventure after his own heart. Springing up he struck a stone with his sword and cut it in two like a sponge.

“ May the sword of my enemies pierce my body if I turn back before I have fought with that Dragon for the maiden ! ” he cried.

“ If that is what you want, ” said the Dwarf in some alarm, “ we must part company, for even if you had travelled the whole world from east to west, and had conquered all Giants and monsters, you would still have no chance against the Dragon. ”

“ No, no ! ” cried Siegfried, “ you promised to help me. You must keep your word and show me where the Princess lies. ”

# Siegfried The Dragon-Slayer

But the Dwarf drew back.

“If you want to rush to certain death, I will have nothing to do with it. Follow me and I will give you gold and jewels, magic weapons and roots of healing, but never will I lead you to the Drachenstein.”

So saying the little King spurred his horse to ride away, but Siegfried seized the bridle.

“You shall show me the way,” he shouted angrily, “if you want to ride home with your head on your shoulders.”

And he grasped the Dwarf by the beard, but the little man struggled so manfully that Siegfried soon saw he had no ordinary opponent to deal with. The truth was the Dwarf's immense strength was due to a magic ring which he always wore. In vain did Siegfried wrestle and strive to drag the King from his saddle: he could not master the tiny creature, and the contest went on till the ring fell from the Dwarf's finger, and with it went his strength. Then Siegfried seized him by the right foot, dragged

## Siegfried The Dragon-Slayer

him from his horse, and, holding him head downward against a stone, said :

“ If you do not promise to lead me to the Dragon, I will dash out your obstinate brains.”

And the Dwarf, although he was a King, begged for his life.

“ Do not be so hasty,” he cried piteously. “ If you will only spare me I will tell you the way.”

With this promise Siegfried was satisfied, and he set the Dwarf on his feet again.

*NINTH ADVENTURE:* HOW  
SIEGFRIED FOUGHT THE  
FAITHLESS GIANTS UNDER  
THE DRACHENSTEIN







## How Siegfried fought the Faithless Giants under the Drachenstein

**W**HEN the Dwarf King had recovered his breath he tied his horse to the trunk of a tree, and then led Siegfried in the direction of the Drachenstein. They passed over wild ravines, behind waterfalls, and through the hollows of rocks till at length they reached the entrance of a cave, very like Mimer's smithy, but more terrifying in its black depths.

“Here,” said the Dwarf, “lives Kuperan, a King of the Giants ; when he takes his stand at the mouth of this cave and blows his horn a thousand Giants are

## Siegfried The Dragon-Slayer

ready to obey his call, and all the Dwarfs in these mountains, as well as the spirits of the woods and waters, are subject to him, for he is the strongest and fiercest of all the Giants. He is in league with the Dragon and keeps the key which unlocks the hollow cave. Do you hear that roaring noise like the sound of a mountain torrent? That is his snoring, and if we are wise we shall get away before he wakes; otherwise there may be rough sport."

"Nay," said Siegfried, "it is just for that sport that I have come." And going straight to the entrance he blew the horn that hung before it so loudly that the rocks re-echoed with the sound. The Dwarf, affrighted at the young man's daring, leapt into a hollow tree. But the Giant slept on. So Siegfried blew a second blast with such force that all the birds in the woods were silent and flew to their nests. But still the Giant never opened his eyes; he merely stirred in his sleep, and muttered:

"How loud those troublesome wasps are humming to-day!"

# Siegfried The Dragon-Slayer

Then Siegfried entered the cave, and lifting his spear, struck the sleeper in the side.

Still without opening his eyes the Giant pushed away the spear, thinking a wasp had stung him.

The Hero bent over him and shouted in his ear as loudly as he could.

“Wake up, wake up, Kuperan ! A young wolf has got into your cave !”

Slowly the monster turned round and looked scornfully at Siegfried. The Giant was a sight to frighten any one less bold, his face covered with red hair, his mouth reaching almost from ear to ear, and two large tusks on each side that made him look like a fierce old boar.

“What has brought you here, boy ?” he asked, grinding his teeth angrily. “Upon my word, I don’t know whether I had better hang you up by your head or your heels, you little whipper-snapper.”

“I shall not trouble you to do either,” replied Siegfried coolly. “I did not come here to be hung up like a hare. The sword is my friend, fighting my

## Siegfried The Dragon-Slayer

amusement, and danger my delight. What you have to do is to set free that Princess whom you and the Dragon are keeping captive, or else you shall soon sleep more soundly than you have ever done yet, and oak-trees shall grow over your body.”

At these words the Giant became perfectly furious ; he snatched up a rock and hurled it at the Hero, who, however, stepped lightly aside and dodged it. Still more enraged, the Giant seized his pole-axe to cleave the Hero's skull, but again Siegfried avoided the blow, and the weapon sank deep in the earth. As the Giant stooped to pull it out, Siegfried sprang on him with his sword and gave him many severe cuts, while the dogs fastened their teeth in his legs. Kuperan seized both the dogs and flung one after the other down into the valley, then taking up his axe he turned again to attack Siegfried. But he had lost so much blood that he was obliged first to retire to the depths of the cave to dress his wounds. When he had done this he put on a coat of mail that the Dwarfs had made and hardened in Dragon's blood ;



Siegfried encounters Kuperan



## Siegfried The Dragon-Slayer

his sword had a snake at the point, his helmet was of black steel, and the shield hung round his neck was so large that he could lift a horse and his rider on it. To these he added a four-edged pole-axe, and then came out to meet Siegfried.

“Now tell me, you impudent hop-o’-my-thumb, what harm have I done you that you should come here to kill me in my sleep?”

“You lie, and you know it. Did I not go to the trouble of waking you to fight when I might easily have plunged my sword in your heart?”

“He who led you here has done you a bad turn, and so you will find before the sun goes down,” replied the Giant.

“Come on then!” cried Siegfried. “But look well to yourself; many a man has boasted of the great things he will do, while the ravens were already perched on his helmet ready to pick out his eyes.”

Without more ado the two rushed at each other, and dealt such blows that the sparks flew from their

## Siegfried The Dragon-Slayer

shields, but the Giant, naturally clumsy and unwieldy on account of his great size, constantly missed his aim. Siegfried, however, struck blow after blow so quickly that it seemed as if he had ten swords, and he hewed pieces out of the huge iron shield like a carpenter at his work. At last nothing of it was left to Kuperan but the strap, and he began to reel with the pain of his wounds.

“I have had enough!” he exclaimed. “Short as your sword is, it goes deep. I have proved your courage and I see I cannot gain any advantage over you. If you will only spare my life I will do anything for you.”

“Then,” replied Siegfried, “the first thing you have to do is to free the Princess on the rock.”

So the great fight ended, and both swore an oath—the Giant that he would serve Siegfried faithfully, and the Hero that he would take no revenge for the conflict. But the Giant was deceitful, and his one idea was to kill Siegfried in some way. The young man, however, never suspected him, and even offered



## Siegfried The Dragon-Slayer

to dress his wounds before they started for the rock. When at last they set out, Euglein the Dwarf, who had crept from his hollow tree, followed them without being seen, for he had put on his cap of mist that made him invisible.

The way led into a narrow rocky valley, having dwarf oaks and bushes on the farther side, while beyond these rose steep rocks half covered with trees.

On the right a precipice overhung a wild stream, and a bowshot farther on, the valley was closed by another precipice over which the stream rushed into the depths below.

The Giant pointed out a crevice in the rocks where the entrance to the cave lay, and as Siegfried looked, the treacherous monster struck him such a blow on the helmet that he fell senseless on his shield. Kuperan would then have thrown the young Prince into the roaring torrent, but the dogs, which had found their way back, flew fiercely at him, and the Dwarf, springing nimbly forward, lifted Siegfried

## Siegfried The Dragon-Slayer

up and carried him away in safety under the trees, where he, too, was rendered invisible by the cap.

The disappearance of his enemy amazed the Giant, who looked round on all sides, and came to the conclusion that Siegfried must have fallen over the rocks. He was just going to throw the hounds over too when they attacked him as if he had been one of the wild beasts they so often fought. Again and again did the Giant try to seize them; again and again he bellowed as they made their teeth meet in his legs. At last, turning and twisting together, they reached the place where Siegfried lay, and Kuperan, clutching at one of the dogs, caught hold of the Dwarf's head. Euglein cried out piteously and the sound roused the Hero from his swoon. He flung away the invisible cap, and gave the astonished Giant such a thrust in the neck that he instantly let the Dwarf go. Raising his sword again, Siegfried would have dealt Kuperan his death-blow, when the latter showed in his hand a golden key.

“Do not strike!” he cried, “or I will throw

## Siegfried The Dragon-Slayer

away this key, and then you will never reach the Princess on the Drachenstein, for no other key in the world will unlock the enchanted castle.”

So Siegfried let fall his sword, and spared the treacherous monster for the second time.




*TENTH ADVENTURE*: HOW  
SIEGFRIED SAW GREAT  
WONDERS IN THE DRAGON'S  
ROCK





## How Siegfried saw Great Wonders in the Dragon's Rock

IEGFRIED had learnt a lesson and he made the Giant walk in front of him till they reached the cave, the entrance of which was quite hidden by the waterfall. Eight fathoms down into the earth they crept, then Kuperan scraped away the leaves and loose stones till a great iron lock became visible ; he fitted his key into it, and when a heavy iron plate was lifted up they saw a stone staircase underneath.

“ Now,” said Kuperan, “ this will take us into the heart of the Drachenstein. You go first.”

## Siegfried The Dragon-Slayer

But Siegfried turned angrily upon him.

“Do you think I shall walk into your trap a second time? It is for you to lead the way, and be quick about it.”

Through long winding passages they went, where any one might easily lose his way, and if Siegfried had been alone the Giant would no doubt have led him to some gulf where he would fall headlong, or would have left him to die of hunger. But he was afraid of the Dwarf, who knew the way, and so he dared not attempt any treachery.

On the walls hung blackened skeletons of huge size, dragons which for centuries had lived here in league with the Giants, and when they came to a vast hall in the middle of which burned a fire, Euglein told Siegfried this was the burial-place of the Giants. Round the fire was a circle of stone altars where many a terrible sacrifice had been offered, and rows of stone images, with shields and clubs, represented the dead Giants.

At last, after this gloomy journey, they reached



## Siegfried The Dragon-Slayer

a hall so bright that Siegfried was obliged to hold his shield before his dazzled eyes. Shining trees made its walls, and fruits of silver and gold shone among the branches. But no such trees ever grew on the earth ; they were made from the rare and precious metals that lie hidden below the ground. More beautiful still were the flowers of a thousand colours that bloomed on all sides. These were all precious stones, and Elves and Dwarfs tripped about, busily tending the trees and plucking the fruit.

From this hall Siegfried passed to a second, hewn out of pure crystal. Two rows of pillars upheld the roof and sparkling streams of water poured down from them. Round their bases were clustered shells and water-plants ; little water-sprites peeped from among the leaves, and water-nymphs combed their long hair while others played upon harps. So strange, yet so sweet was this music that he who had once heard it could never forget it.

The third hall was of transparent blue jasper with a roof that sparkled with stars of gold. Here, too,

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the sun and moon rode on horses of light, and the balls which they threw to each other were the morning and evening stars. The Giant now complained that he must rest, for his wounds had exhausted him, so they all sat down, Siegfried looking round with amazement.

“ You may well be surprised that a Dragon can have such a palace,” said Euglein ; “ and you have not seen all either ; there is another hall more splendid than these. Thousands of industrious Dwarfs have toiled for many a century to do this work, and now it all belongs to the Dragon whom we are compelled to serve.

“ But my forefathers have told me that once upon a time spirits lived on earth in joy and peace. Never a sword or dagger was made, and no man had to serve another as a slave. Life was nothing but pleasure, and the Asi, who were the Fathers of mankind, sat on shining seats and read the words of eternal wisdom that were graven on iron tablets.

“ But out of the night came Loki, the Prince of

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Darkness, who appeared with smiles and winning words, deceiving the Fathers of our race. They believed his smooth speech and pledged themselves to him in brotherly love, mingling their blood with his in token of fidelity. That was the beginning of all evil.

“ And after Loki came an enchantress, beautiful but wicked, with a gold ornament on her brow made by magic power from light which she had stolen from heaven. The Asi looked into her glowing eyes, they were dazzled by her false gold, Loki the deceiver whispered to them, and avarice, envy, and discord filled their hearts. Their vows were forgotten and the first battle was fought on earth. Ever since that day a fearful curse has rested on the magic gold which was the cause of all the evil.

“ When at last they came to their senses the Asi tried to burn the enchantress and her wealth, but three times she came out uninjured from the flames, and mocked them. They pierced her with a spear and thrust her once more into the fire ; but Loki tore

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out her heart and swallowed it, whereby he gained all her magic power as well as all her wickedness.

“ He next married a Giantess, and their children were monsters. The first was the great Serpent of the World, who lies at the bottom of the sea, twined round the earth with his tail in his mouth ; if the water becomes too shallow he turns in anger and the whole earth trembles. The second monster was the great Wolf of the Pit, whose nostrils breathe flame, while his eyes scatter fire and he threatens to swallow both sun and moon. The third child was the Princess of Death, who lives in the under-world where the sun never shines and it is always night. Loki sent these three children to be brought up by the Giants in the Land of Night, but he stayed among our forefathers to do still more mischief.

“ Once he set out with Odin, the greatest of the Asi, and Haener to wander over the world, and before they had gone far they saw an otter catching fish in a stream and devouring them greedily. This was the son of an enchanter, and the brother of Fafner the

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Dragon, who owns this rock, as well as of Mimer the smith, whom you killed. Catching fish was his greatest pleasure, so every day he changed himself into an otter. Loki, knowing who he was, caught up a stone and killed him at once, and then his companions stripped off the otter's skin. That very evening they came to the dwelling of the old enchanter, Reidmar, who saw by the skin that they had killed his son. With the help of his other two sons he deprived the wanderers of their weapons, made them prisoners, and threatened a terrible revenge unless they filled the otter's skin with gold and covered the outside of it as well, so that not a hair could be seen.

“Odin and Haener decided to send Loki to get the gold because of his cunning, while they stayed with Reidmar as hostages. So Loki set off, and going back to the waterfall where they had seen the otter, he captured a Dwarf who kept an immense treasure hidden in the mountain. Besides gold and diamonds by the cartload there was a magic helmet, at the sight of which every living creature would tremble; a

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tarn-cap which made its wearer invisible ; and a sword against which no shield was proof. More precious than all, however, was a gold ring of wonderful power. Whoever possessed it would never be in want of gold, for the ring would always increase according to his wish. But it was made of the false gold that the wicked enchantress had used to deceive the Asi, and it was accursed, for it brought evil to its possessor.

“ When at Loki’s bidding the Dwarf gave up his treasure he hid this ring under his arm, but Loki saw the glitter of the gold, and insisted on having it in spite of the Dwarf’s entreaties. As soon as Loki had packed up his booty the Dwarf uttered a fearful curse on the treasure that it might bring misfortune to every one who shared it, and also on the ring that it might bring death to its possessor.

“ On Loki’s return to Reidmar’s cave he filled the otter’s skin with gold, set it up as if living, and then covered it over with gold. Reidmar looked very closely at the skin.

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“ ‘I see one hair still !’ he cried. ‘That must be covered before you go free.’

“ So Odin took the magic ring from Loki’s finger and laid it over the hair, while Loki repeated the Dwarf’s curse. Thus the treasure passed into the hands of Reidmar’s family, the Nibelungs, or Sons of Night, and with the treasure went the curse.

“ It was not long before Fafner, the strongest and fiercest of Reidmar’s sons, began to covet the ring, and soon Mimer was quite as eager to get possession of it for himself. They went to their father, but Reidmar refused to give up the gold, which he kept hidden under his bed, and night or day he had no peace for thinking about it.

“ But Fafner thought of it too, and one night he stole to the bedside with the magic sword and plunged it into his father’s heart as he slept. With his dying breath the old magician repeated the terrible curse which he had learnt from Loki, and in a moment Fafner was turned into a fiery Dragon. Mimer, the youngest brother, claimed a part of the

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treasure, but Fafner refused to share it, and drove him out of the mountain. Mimer vowed he would be even with his brother one day, and so he tried to send you, Siegfried, to fight him, that when Fafner was dead the treasure might be his own."

"And what became of Loki?" asked Siegfried, when Euglein had told his story. "It seems to me that he was at the bottom of the mischief, and ought not to have got off scot-free."

"You are right," replied the Dwarf King, "and Loki did not escape punishment. He became more and more cruel and daring till at last he committed a most terrible deed. Odin, the father of the Asi, had a son named Balder, who was so wise and good that every one loved him. The Asi were all so fond of Balder that they dreaded lest any harm should come to him. So they sent to Frikka, the goddess who ruled the earth, begging her to get a promise from all animals, snakes, trees, and stones that they would never hurt Balder the Good. The promise was given and the Asi were highly delighted; indeed they used



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to make a ring round Balder and amuse themselves by throwing spears and stones at him, but nothing hurt him because of the promise Frikka had asked. Loki, however, was determined that he would somehow kill Balder, so he disguised himself as a woman, went to Frikka, and told her what the Asi were doing.

“‘Is it possible that you made every thing on earth promise not to harm the youth?’ he asked cunningly.

“Then Frikka answered : ‘Everything except a mistletoe that grows to the east of Walhalla : I passed that by for it seemed too tender a plant to do any harm.’

“Loki had learnt all he wanted to know, and he went hastily and in secret to cut a dart from the mistletoe. Then going back to Walhalla, he went up to Hoeder, who was not joining in the sport because he was blind.

“‘Come,’ said Loki, putting the dart into his hand ; ‘you will surely throw one dart in honour of Balder. I will guide your arm.’

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“So Hoeder threw, and Balder fell dead, pierced by the dart. The Asi were struck dumb with grief, but Odin forbade them to take revenge, for the place where they stood was dedicated to peace. With great mourning the body of Balder was taken down to the sea-shore, and even the Giants from the icebergs, as well as all the races of men, came to the burial. Nanna, Balder’s wife, died of a broken heart and was buried with her lord.

“The Asi next consulted together and decided to send Hermodur, Balder’s brother, down to the Goddess of the Dead to entreat her to let Balder come back to the upper world. For nine nights Hermodur rode through the dark valleys that lead to the Kingdom of the Dead, after which he came to a bridge which was guarded by a maiden armed with sword and shield.

“‘What is your business?’ she cried. ‘Five troops of dead men rode over yesterday, and the bridge did not shake as it does now. You have not the look of the dead.’

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“ When Hermodur spoke of Balder she bade him ride on farther, till at length he reached a castle, leaped the high gate, and found himself in the hall where sat the pale Princess of the Dead. Round her were the maidens who brought the dead from earth, behind her stood a red cock, and at her feet lay Pain and Weariness. There Hermodur saw Balder and his wife Nanna, and he made his request to the Princess.

“ ‘ Balder shall return,’ she promised, ‘ if you can prove that all people and all things in the world grieve for his death.’

“ Balder sent a ring as a token to Odin and then they parted, Hermodur returning to earth. The Asi immediately sent out their messengers into the whole world to beg the tears of all creatures for Balder. The birds, the beasts, and the flowers all mourned for him whom they had loved, and the messengers hastened home with joy ; but as they went they saw a hideous Giantess sitting in a cave.

“ ‘ I shall shed no tears, for it does not matter to me

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whether Balder lives or dies. The Princess of the Dead is welcome to keep him for all I care.'

"And the messengers saw that this was Loki in disguise, so there was nothing to do but to go sorrowfully home.

"But Loki, haunted by the fear of punishment, flew off to a mountain, where he built a house with four gates facing the four winds. All night he watched the gates, and every morning he changed himself into a fish and hid in a waterfall. Still he never felt safe, so he made a little net that he might practise how to escape from its meshes. But this very precaution was his ruin, for as he was weaving it the Asi came in search of him. Loki threw the half-finished net into the fire and leaped into the water, yet not before the Asi had spied the magic net in the flames, so they went away and made one like it, broad enough to reach right across the stream where Loki had hidden himself.

"They stretched it across and went up stream to catch him, but he slipped under a stone and the net

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passed over him. Next they weighted the net so that it sank to the bottom of the water, but once more Loki was too cunning to be caught. He swam to the mouth of the stream, and they saw him leap over the net and turn back to the waterfall. So they divided themselves into two bands, and Thor the Strong waded into the middle of the stream. Loki was driven towards the sea ; he was afraid to swim out, so he leaped into the air, and, quick as lightning, Thor had him by the tail.

“ The Asi took their prisoner to a dark cavern, where they bound him to a pile of stones. Then a Giantess, whose father Loki had killed, came and held over him a venomous snake that dropped its poison like liquid fire on his face. The Asi allowed his wife Sigyn to be with him, and she holds a cup under the snake to catch the poison, but when this gets full and she goes away to empty it, the poison drops on his brow. He writhes in anguish and the whole earth trembles. There he must lie till the end of the world, and till that time you Heroes must

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carry on war against his children, the Giants, Enchanters, and Dragons, and fight them as our ancestors, the Asi, did."

By the time King Euglein had finished his story the Giant was fast asleep, and it was all Siegfried could do to awake him. At last, however, he succeeded and they went on to the fourth hall, which was even more splendid than Euglein had said. Round the walls were flames of coloured fire making figures of birds, beasts, and flowers, while the sparks took the form of stars and crowns. In the middle of the hall grew an ash-tree that reached to the roof, and the floor was of crystal so that all its roots could be seen just as if they were in water. Siegfried could scarcely believe that this was the work of the Dwarfs. Green leaves and golden fruit were on the boughs and the whole hall was filled with their sweetness.

On the top sat an eagle with piercing eyes and outspread wings, and on his head perched a hawk. On the four sides stood four stags with their heads

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uplifted as they champed the leaves of the ash-tree. This had three roots ; the middle one ran deep down, and at its end lay an enormous Dragon surrounded by serpents and wolves. A dark vapour enveloped him, and in the midst of this could be seen a seat where a Princess sat. Her face was pale, her robes were black, and on her head she wore a gold crown ; on the back of her seat stood a red cock, while a coal-black horse was close by.

The second root ran northward, where Giants were seated round a spring that bubbled out of a huge horn. The third root was surrounded by light, and near it ran a spring of clear blue water. Two snowy swans swam in it ; three beautiful maidens filled vessels from which they sprinkled the tree, and round about the spring were placed twelve royal seats upon which sat Princes and Princesses crowned with gold.

“ What is the meaning of all this ? ” asked Siegfried as he looked on in amazement.

“ That,” replied the wise King, “ is the wonderful

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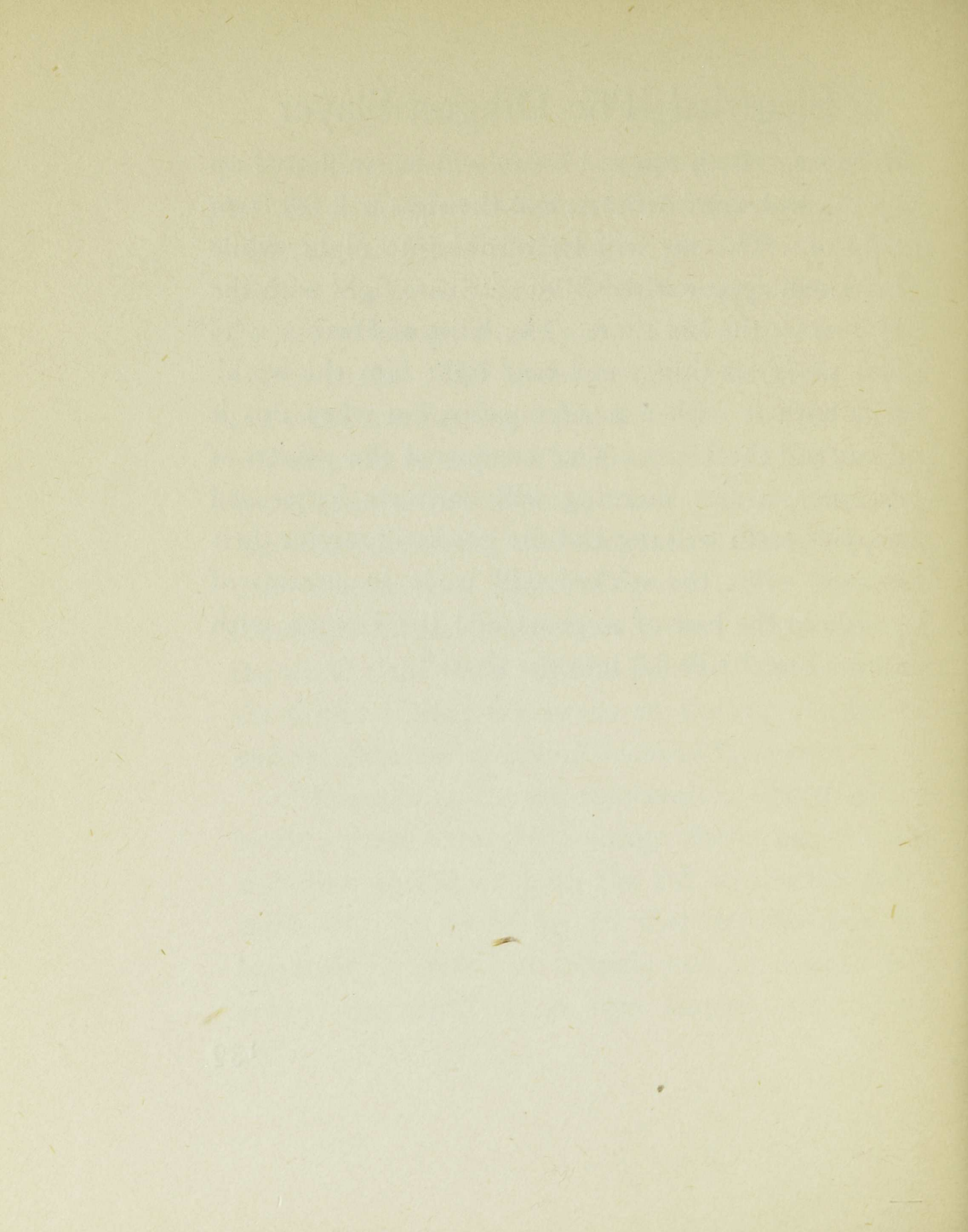
ash-tree Ygdrasil, which is an image of the world. Its leaves are the clouds, its fruit the stars. The eagle is the King of Heaven, who sees all. The trunk is the earth from which a root goes down into the depths below, where you see the Princess of the Under-world. The black horse bears to her the dead, and when one day the red cock shall crow the world will come to an end. The Dragon that breathes out flame, and the fiery serpents, are the subterranean fires that shake the earth ; also the passions and evil desires that torment the heart of man. The beautiful fountain with the golden seats is the south portion of the world ; the three maidens are the Fates who spin the thread of life ; the swans are the sun and moon, and around them are the Princes of Heaven.

“The root on the left represents the north of the world ; there stand the icebergs, there rises the sea, and from that great horn the call to the last judgment will be sounded. In that terrible day the leaves of the tree will tremble and its boughs will shake ; the earth will be torn asunder and the sea



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will roar. Both sun and moon will be swallowed up by the wolves of darkness and the stars will fall from the sky. The day will be turned into night, while Loki will appear with all his spirits to fight with the Heroes for the last time. The King of Heaven, who first made all things and sent light into the world, will burn it with a purifying fire, but when this is done, and the Heroes have conquered the powers of darkness, a new morning will dawn; a better and happier earth will rise and the good will receive their reward. But the wicked will wade in streams of poison in the hall of serpents, and the Dragon with all his brood will fall into the abyss."



*ELFVENTH ADVENTURE*: HOW  
SIEGFRIED FIRST SAW THE KING'S  
DAUGHTER





## How Siegfried first saw the King's Daughter



WHILE King Euglein was speaking they entered a lofty hall by an iron door; on the walls hung double rows of helmets and shields, with gold-embroidered garments, silken banners, and silver ornamented drinking-horns. But all was in the greatest disorder; banners and robes were bloodstained and blackened with smoke, helmets and shields were red with rust, and cobwebs were everywhere. It was plain that all these things had been carried off as booty, for they were piled up anyhow. Black iron pillars supported the roof, round which

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were stags' antlers and buffalo horns with a human skull stuck on every point.

Sword in hand, Siegfried looked round for the Dragon and the Princess, but neither was to be seen. He caught the sound of music, however, and went in its direction. Looking through a long gallery he saw at the farther end a maiden seated on a rock with a harp in her hand, and Siegfried stood still with his companions to listen while the Princess sang :

“ My father sat within his hall,  
    And drank the red and cooling wine,  
He drank from out a cup of gold  
    At Worms upon the dark green Rhine.

“ My mother held the silken threads  
    Within her hand so lily white,  
And worked upon the cloth of gold  
    The deeds of hero and of knight.

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- “ My brothers threw the dice in sport,  
    For swords and arms enrich'd with gold ;  
The while I sat within and sang  
    The deeds of knight or hero bold.
- “ But swift descending from above  
    A Dragon fierce was seen to glide ;  
He twined his folds around my form  
    And said, ‘ Come hence and be my bride ! ’
- “ My father dropped his cup of gold,  
    My mother wrung her hands so white,  
My brothers drew their swords in vain,  
    The Dragon bore me from their sight.
- “ And long must I sit here and sing  
    My lay upon the Drachenstein,  
My song will never reach my home  
    At Worms upon the dark green Rhine.

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“ And long may I lament in vain !  
    Yon valley lies so far, so deep ;  
No friends can hear as I complain—  
    O would I in the grave might sleep ! ”

Tears caused the singer to stop, but after a few moments she seized the harp again and went on with fresh courage :

“ Yet say, art thou a captive  
    For ever doomed to be ?  
What hinders thee to venture—  
    To venture to be free ?

“ One effort still may save thee,  
    Then why delay so long ?  
Are fear and fright such fetters ?  
    Is dread of death so strong ?

“ O no, the father’s spirit  
    Still lingers in the heart,  
It never shrinks from danger,  
    Nor dreads from life to part.”





“ I am Siegfried, the son of King Siegmund ”



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As she finished her song, she flung down the harp and turned towards the precipice, but Siegfried saw that she meant to throw herself over, so he sprang forward and caught her in his arms.

“Stay, Princess!” he cried. “I am Siegfried, the son of King Siegmund, and I will either slay the Dragon or die. Do not weep; you shall soon see him lying in the dust at your feet, and he shall pay with his heart’s blood for all the tears he has caused you to shed.”

“You are very good,” said the Princess, “and I thank you. But you cannot save me, and I beseech you to go away before the Dragon kills you.”

“No,” replied Siegfried. “I shall stand my ground and fight for you, otherwise I should die of shame. When I was a child I vowed I would never turn my back on fire or sword.”

“You don’t know what you are saying,” urged Princess Kriemhilda. “It is madness to fight that terrible monster, whose scales no sword can pierce, and whose breath is so hot as to melt steel itself.

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Go back, and take with you my last farewell to my parents and brothers.”

“Lady, I should be ashamed to look my father in the face if I ran away like a coward. The honour of our race has never been stained by fear, and when once my sword is drawn it is for victory or death !”

“Alas,” interrupted the Dwarf, “your sword will not be of much use. Only the sword with which Fafner the Dragon killed his father has the power to give him his own death-wound. He knows this and so he keeps it hidden. Can the Princess tell us its hiding-place ?”

“I have never even heard of any such weapon,” answered Kriemhilda sadly.

“Then I am afraid there is no chance for us,” said the Dwarf. “You will never slay the Dragon with your own sword, as I will soon prove to you.”

So saying he sprang into the hall and returned in a moment with a great shield which he could only just drag after him.

“Your sword will no more wound the Dragon

## Siegfried The Dragon-Slayer

than it will cut the Dragon's skin that covers this shield."

Then Siegfried swung his sword above his head with both hands and dealt such a blow that the hall echoed with the sound, but the shield was not even dented, while the sword broke off at the handle. All three were dumb with amazement; the Dwarf wrung his hands, and the Princess with tears in her eyes urged Siegfried once more to escape. Nothing daunted, however, he still refused.

"To the brave man courage is more than a good sword," he said, "and my courage at least is not broken. My arms are strong, and with them I shall kill the Dragon, for Heaven gives victory to him who is in the right."

All this time the Giant had said never a word, but at last he broke silence.

"As you are a bold Hero, and I owe you my life," he said, "you shall have the benefit of what I know. In his sleep, after a hard-won battle, I once heard the Dragon disclose the place where the magic sword was

## Siegfried The Dragon-Slayer

hidden. 'Ho ho! they will never kill me,' he said. 'They little know that the sword lies hidden in yonder corner.' I looked and found it. You have only to lift that stone and you will see a ring beneath which is the sword."

Overjoyed at these words, Siegfried rushed to the spot, removed the stone, tugged at the ring with all his might, and there like a gleam of flame lay the wondrous sword! Just as he was stooping to take it up, the faithless Kuperan aimed a blow with his dagger at that spot on Siegfried's back where the lime-leaf had fallen. The Hero would have been mortally wounded had not Euglein struck the Giant and made him miss his aim. But he seized Siegfried in his mighty arms and dragged him towards the edge of the cliffs, regardless of the dogs, which attacked him furiously.

Princess Kriemhilda wrung her hands and fell weeping on her knees, as she watched Siegfried twine his arms close round the wicked Giant. It was an unequal fight, but at last Kuperan began to lose

## Siegfried The Dragon-Slayer

ground. With roars and curses he tried to drag Siegfried with him over the precipice, so that at least in death he might have his revenge. But all in vain ; Siegfried loosened the grasp of his hands, and in another moment Kuperan fell headlong into the chasm, and was dashed to pieces.



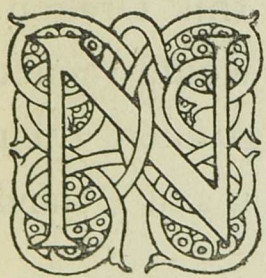


*LAST ADVENTURE*: HOW  
SIEGFRIED FOUGHT THE  
DRAGON





## How Siegfried fought the Dragon



EXT Siegfried tried the edge of the magic sword, finding to his intense delight that it passed through the shield as if it had been water, and went deep into the rock below.

Yet the Dwarf still looked grave.

“You have a harder battle before you, and you want meat and drink to strengthen you for the fight.”

Then he blew on his tiny silver horn, and in a moment they were surrounded by a crowd of Dwarfs, who appeared mysteriously from the crevices of the rocks. They spread a carpet, then brought out all

## Siegfried The Dragon-Slayer

kinds of meat and drink, and Siegfried, when all was ready, sat down to eat. The Princess offered him a golden drinking-horn, saying :

“ Hail to the bold Son of Siegmund, to Siegfried the Dragon-Slayer ! ”

The Hero took the horn from her hand, after she had put her lips to the edge, and drained it.

“ Never did I feel so strong,” he said. “ Never did I long for the chase of the boar in my father’s forests as I now do for the fight with this Dragon. If my forefathers could watch me they would rejoice and the ring of my sword would gladden their hearts. I am afraid of nothing on earth, and I stand here ready for the fight.”

As he spoke there was a roar as if the mountain itself were falling to pieces, and the Dragon came slowly into view, hovering overhead like a dark storm-cloud. With sword in hand, and his eyes flashing, Siegfried advanced to the edge of the rock, his faithful dogs close at his heels. The Princess drew back into the shelter of the gallery, and the



“ Siegfried's shield was red-hot ”



## Siegfried The Dragon-Slayer

Dwarf, putting on his cap of mist, crept into a crevice whence he could watch the fight in safety.

Three times did the Dragon fly round the rock without seeing the Hero, but just as he was about to alight he caught sight of him, and sending out a sheet of blue flame from his jaws he lashed the earth furiously with his tail. In a moment Siegfried's shield was red-hot; the dogs would have flown at the monster's throat but his fiery breath scorched them, and they fell dead. To escape from the devouring flames Siegfried himself was forced to fall back and retreat to the vaulted gallery, the opening of which was too narrow to allow of the Dragon following him; so he remained at the entrance shooting out flames, and Siegfried could not see how to reach him with the sword.

In this difficulty his eye fell on a huge stone which ten men could hardly have lifted; seizing it, Siegfried threw it into the monster's gaping jaws, and when he had thus quenched the flames, he darted out with sword and shield and rained blows on the

## Siegfried The Dragon-Slayer

Dragon's head. But the scales were as hard as diamonds, and despite all Siegfried's strength the sword merely glanced off them.

Suddenly he heard a plaintive voice calling apparently from the Dragon's jaws.

"Have a care, Prince, don't strike a friend." This was the Dwarf, who had seated himself, invisible as he was, on the top of the stone that Siegfried had lodged in the Dragon's mouth. At the sound of the voice the monster turned, and at that moment Siegfried dealt him a blow in the neck where the scales were parted a little. The flames found an outlet at once, and the Dwarf crept quickly out from his perilous position.

Maddened with pain, the Dragon next made a dash at Siegfried, smashing his shield to splinters and striving at the same time to entangle the Hero in the folds of his tail. But with a bound Siegfried cleared it, and rushing with all his might against the Dragon, forced him backward, and then grasping his sword in both hands he thrust it deep into the monster's breast.



## Siegfried The Dragon-Slayer

The first blow made a wound two spans wide, the second cut his heart in two, and as Siegfried was about to deal yet another blow he fell senseless beside the vanquished enemy.

Pale as death he lay for a long time, but at last with a deep sigh he slowly opened his eyes, only to see the Princess Kriemhilda lying near him as if dead. Springing up, Siegfried took her in his arms and called her by name, but she gave no sign of life.

“Of what use is it to have killed the Dragon,” cried Siegfried distractedly, “if she for whose sake I fought be dead from fright?”

“Do not be so hasty,” said Euglein, who had ventured out of his hiding-place on seeing the defeat of the Dragon, and now took from the pouch at his girdle a precious root which he always carried. The scent of this soon brought the Princess back to life, much to the delight of Siegfried. The Dwarf King was no less pleased, for he and his people owed their deliverance to the Hero, and in return he begged

## Siegfried The Dragon-Slayer

Siegfried to ask for whatever he liked, gold, diamonds, or costly weapons, since all were at his command.

“Nay,” replied Siegfried, “my victory was worth winning for itself, and if I wanted any further reward, is not the Princess a prize of whom any warrior might be proud? But since you offer me a boon, look, I pray you, into that future which you only can read, and tell me what will fall to my lot.”

The Dwarf laid his shield on a flat stone, kindled a flame with a handful of dried grass, and strewed over it a precious perfume. As the smoke rose from this the Dwarf bent over it, and turning a ring on his finger, closed his eyes as if falling into a deep sleep. Then he began, in a slow monotonous voice, to chant :

“As the falcon in its motion  
Flies in circles round and round,  
Seeking o’er both land and ocean  
Where its prey may best be found.

## Siegfried The Dragon-Slayer

“ So King Euglein, old and sage,  
Turning still his magic ring,  
Sees through every coming age  
Many a dim and distant thing.”

For a moment there was silence, then the Dwarf, still as if in a trance, pointed with his finger to the south, then to the north and the east.

“ Rosy gardens on the Rhine,  
Meadows full of bright sunshine,  
Through which wander streamlets fair,  
Stags and roe-bucks pair by pair ;  
Thickets, with a feather'd throng  
Warbling wildest sweetest song ;  
While a silken thread encloses  
All this fairy bow'r of roses.  
Many a knight, with martial tramp,  
Watches round that forest camp ;  
From the branches, from the trees,  
Pennons flutter in the breeze,  
Round the throne so fair to see

## Siegfried The Dragon-Slayer

All of gold and ivory.  
Ladies look on scenes so fair,  
Brave knights look on ladies there ;  
One his proud compeers outvies  
Like the sun in yonder skies ;  
Like the moon in maiden pride,  
Fair Kriemhilda is his bride ;  
For to her that Hero-youth  
Gives a ring in pledge of truth.  
All the maidens softly sigh,  
All the youthful heroes cry !  
' Hail to Siegfried and his bride !  
Health be theirs and joy beside !'

“ But an evil dame is nigh,  
Malice in her heart and eye,  
And she brings that bride so fair  
Three young rose-buds sweet and rare.  
' Take the reddest of the three,  
Take !' she cries, ' 'tis meant for thee.'  
But beware, sweet bride, beware,

## Siegfried The Dragon-Slayer

For a thorn is lurking there ;  
See, it wounds thy finger fair.  
Bride, why stops thy sobbing breath,  
Bride, why art thou pale as death ? ”

Again there was a pause, longer than before, and then, turning towards the west, the Dwarf King began to sing of Siegfried's death :

“ Hunter's horn and hunter's song,  
Wolves and bears together throng,  
Through the wild wood runs the boar  
Hounds that follow bark and roar.

“ Foxes creep in corners sly,  
Birds are twitt'ring in the sky ;  
Two white does in flight are seen,  
With a stag amidst the green.

“ Hark ! a sound of hunter's horn,  
By the breezes hither borne,  
Through the deep wood's dark defiles  
Where the sunbeam never smiles.

# Siegfried The Dragon-Slayer

“ Hark ! three dismal ravens croak,  
On a dry and wither'd oak ;  
And their dark foreboding song  
Tells a tale of death and wrong.

“ And the streamlet's gentle flood  
Flows with warm and vital blood :  
Stretched upon the flowery heath,  
See Prince Siegfried sleeps in death !

“ Howling wild his faithful hound  
Licks in vain his deadly wound ;  
While his falcon from his breast  
Drives the ravens to their nest.

“ See his stainless sword and shield  
Lie unused upon the field ;  
He hath never seen his foe,  
Treachery laid the Hero low.”

So ended the Dwarf King's prophecy, to which  
both Siegfried and Kriemhilda listened intently.

## Siegfried The Dragon-Slayer

There was much that they did not understand, but it was clear that the future revealed to Euglein was one of storm rather than of sunshine, and the thought left them grave.

Taking leave of them, the Dwarf prepared to go back, saying that his followers had fled into the depths of the mountain, where he must take them the news of Siegfried's victory. He told the Hero that if at any time he should be in want of help, he had only to appeal to Euglein, who would never forget what Siegfried had done for him and his people.

“And now farewell,” said he. “You will find two horses waiting at the mouth of the cave to carry you and the Princess Kriemhilda back to her father's kingdom.”

When Euglein had left them, Siegfried and the maiden rested for a time on the Drachenstein, then they turned to the cave, and having examined everything, they came at last to the Dragon's couch covered with the skins of lions. As he lifted these

## Siegfried The Dragon-Slayer

Siegfried's eyes were dazzled with the sight of the famous treasure and the ring of the Nibelungen. Forgetting altogether the Dwarf's warning about the curse which lay on the gold, Siegfried carried away with him this treasure of discord and envy, and so, as is told in another story, Euglein's prophecy came true, and Siegfried and his whole race were destroyed by fire and sword like those others who in turn had possessed the treasure.

But the City of Worms, where Siegfried married the Princess Kriemhilda, and where he was afterwards treacherously killed, held his memory in honour for centuries out of gratitude for its deliverance from the Dragon. The City caused the figure of Siegfried and the ancient race of Kings to be set up in different places, and the bones of the Dragon were brought there and hung in chains. Every year minstrels assembled to sing the Hero's deeds before all the people, receiving as a reward a piece of gold. Siegfried's spear was preserved, and centuries later, when the Emperor Frederick III. visited



## Siegfried The Dragon-Slayer

Worms in 1488, he ordered search to be made for the Hero's bones that he might raise a monument over them. But seek as they would, nothing was discovered.

Yet to this very day the Rose-garden is still pointed out at Worms ; the arms of the City show the key which unlocked the Drachenstein, while the shield is supported by the Dragon. The old custom of singing the Hero's deeds has died out, it is true, but if you go to Worms you will find that the memory of Siegfried the Dragon-Slayer is still dear to the hearts of the people.

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