

Mama
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FURTHER ADVENTURES of JACK the GIANT KILLER

by Grandfather Dean

CHAPTER I

JACK MEETS an ENCHANTED PRINCE

Jack the Giant Killer was no longer a poor boy. The hen that laid the golden eggs had made him ~~very~~ rich. He and his mother had visited the great shops in the city. They had bought many things for their comfort and for their new station in life. Only the night before his mother had said:

"Jack, we must leave this shabby little cottage at the Beanstalk and buy ourselves the finest home in the village."

Jack loved the little cottage. His father had lived here before the wicked giant came to steal his sheep. Jack's father had been a brave man so he had fought with the giant and Jack had seen it all - seen the giant's war club strike his father down. But now after three years his father was avenged. Jack had killed the giant Gilgal after taking from him the hen that laid golden eggs and the Harp that talked. The lad was troubled in his sleep that night. He loved his mother but he loved his humble home. At daylight next morning he awoke and laid his hand on the Harp that Talked. He kept it at his bedside.

The Harp spoke to him:

"Jack, you are my master and I love you well. Rise up and dress yourself in woods garments and in stout shoes. There is adventure for you this day if you be brave and true."

And so Jack dressed himself as the Harp had said and went downstairs to the kitchen. He would make his own breakfast as he had done many times before. Then he chanced to look out the window to the garden at the foot of the great rock where the giant had fallen two weeks before. The beanstalk - a brand new beanstalk had grown up overnight in the very spot where Jack had cut down the old one and brought the pursuing giant crashing to his death.

"Mother, Mother," he shouted, "Come quick. The beanstalk ~~is~~ ^{has} grown back again."

In her dressing gown, hair streaked with gray, eyes full of fear, Jack's mother came flying into the kitchen. She rubbed her eyes at the sight.

"You are right, Jack, it is there again. I thought we were done with it when you carted off the vines."

"And filled up the hole that the giant made when he hit the ground," added Jack.

Mother and son stood at the window and tried to see how high the stalks had grown. Then Jack ran out of doors and hurried back to report that the new vines had climbed the mountainside as far as he could see.

"I mean to find out how tall it is, Mother."

"No, no, Jack!"

"Yes, Mother, to the very top. There must be some reason - some magical reason for it to grow again. Besides, the Harp talked to me this morning."

He told her what the harp had said. They argued and argued, but Jack's mind was set upon fresh adventure. His mother went to her room and dressed. After breakfast Jack made ready to climb to Giant-land again. His mother packed a lunch box which Jack rolled in his blanket and strapped over his shoulder.

"Don't worry, Mother dear," he said as he kissed her good bye. She watched him as he began the difficult climb. The vines were matted and criss-crossed and Jack's hands and feet were very busy finding ^{safe} new places as he went up, above the housetop, above the church steeple!

The sixteen-year old lad soon tired of his ^{climb} ~~task~~. He was obliged to rest, clinging to the vines. They were new and green and some of them broke under his weight. The sun grew hot and the pack on his back became quite a burden. Finally he climbed high enough to see the giant's castle which was ~~built on a~~

built on a shoulder of rock and earth on the mountainside, with forest tress around and above it.

It seemed good to Jack, ~~I can tell you~~ when he could leave the beanstalk and set his feet on solid earth. But he was tired and needed time to recover his courage before going to the castle gate. Finding a shady spot under a big tree, the lad rested and gazed with wonder at the view of the broad valley below. Farms and villages and lakes stretched out as far as the eye could see. The world was very beautiful from this mountainside. Yet a wicked giant had lived here and had made war upon hardworking farmers and shepherds of the valley. Jack was glad that he had killed that giant - the giant Gilgal, who had slain his father. ^{he reasoned} There must be a road or a path down the mountain side, since the giant had carried stolen livestock and farm produce ^{w/p} to the castle for many years.

The castle was very old, Jack thought as he approached the gate. The horn hung by a leather thong as he had seen it twice before. Jack raised it to his lips and blew a loud blast. As he listened he heard the creak of a door within and then the rattle of a chain. The gate opened and the face of the old woman who had once hidden Jack from the giant appeared at the door.

"Go away, boy, - go away," she wailed. "This is no fit place for you. There is danger - danger here!"

"But the giant is dead - dead and buried. Took six yoke of oxen to move him from our garden and they buried him in the grave yard."

"Dead - yes, I know that giant Gilgal is dead - but listen to me, boy. There be other giants in this world - giants who will claim this castle - but there be worse than giants - mark my word."

"Mark your word - that I will," cried another voice. Strong hands grasped the woman and dragged her backward into the castle. "Away with you, kitchen wench, and cease your prating."

Another face appeared at the door - a ^{gaunt} forbidding face of a woman advanced in years, whose lips smiled while her eyes wore a crafty glint.

"Good morning, my lad," she said in sugary tones, "What can I do for you this fine morning?"

"I just happened to be on the mountainside," explained Jack lamely, taken aback by this reception and discomforted by the piercing eyes of the woman.

"Oh, do come in, my lad, you are very, very welcome." She flung the door open and Jack felt himself being drawn by an invisible power over the great doorstone. He might have entered the castle had not a huge ~~gaunt~~ dog, a Great Dane, confronted him with a snarl that chilled his blood and broke the spell of the dreadful eyes that were drawing him inward.

Brave as he was, Jack recoiled from the ugly jaws of the animal that now came charging upon him. Drawing his hunting knife in an effort to guard himself, Jack backed away.

"Down, Karl, down," screamed the woman again and again, yet the dog paid no heed to her commands. He seemed intent upon throttling the visitor and forced him backward down the mountainside toward the beanstalk. Jack had never seen such an animal - so ferocious in appearance, yet never launching an attack in real earnest. Not until the woman gave up her attempt and dog and youth were at a distance from the castle did the animal cease to snarl and threaten.

Then Jack was aware that the ^{dog} ~~hound~~ had blue eyes - he had never seen a blue-eyed dog before - nor had he ever seen one with human eyes before this moment.

"Come, come, let's be friends," said Jack soothingly.

The snarl ^{ceased} ~~vanished~~ and to the lad's astonishment the animal spoke to him in human tones.

"I am your friend. Surely, to save you from the most deadly witch in this world is a friendly act."

Jack gasped in surprise, unable to speak a single word.

"I am no dog but ~~the~~ Crown Prince ^{Karl} of the Kingdom of Sylvania, doomed to living death by the enchantments of yonder fiend. She would have done the like to you had you crossed her threshold."

"Heaven help me - and help you, ^{Prince Karl} ~~my friend~~. But how did that witch gain such power over you?" asked Jack.

"I was hunting in the forest one day," replied Karl, "and left my attendants behind me - mad fool that I was. Coming upon her cottage in the forest I called there for a drink of water. My father, the King, had banished her for her evil deeds. Having me in her power she turned me into the creature that you now behold."

"My dear Prince, what can I say to you? Your father, the King, has searched the Kingdom over for six months past and all the Court is said to be in mourning for your supposed death."

"This I also know," said Karl. "Yon fiend has gloated over it, rejoicing in her revenge against my father. She thinks me a dumb brute and so I have been until this day."

Jack gazed at him with awe. "So you are the missing Prince Karl, the heir to the throne of Sylvania! Let us make haste to leave this accursed place. Growl and ~~snarl~~ ^{snarl} at me as before. Chase me backward down the Giant's trail until there is no longer danger of pursuit. I will take you to your father, the King."

"No, no," moaned Karl. "I would rather die than greet him in such shameful guise."

"Your father loves you, Prince Karl, and will move heaven and earth to break the enchantment under which you live."

"As you will, my friend. This loathsome body clouds my brain," panted Karl. "So now look to your defense for I will herd you toward the Giant's path and down the mountainside to safety."

So saying the dog continued the furious farce. From the open door of the castle, the evil ~~creature~~^{witch} raged and screamed at her royal victim to return to her side. Jack's hunting knife glistened in the sunshine as he parried the ~~apparent~~^{pretended} lunges of the dog. Not until the strange pair had reached the valley did they feel free to lay aside their ~~pretended~~^{show} hostility.

Since Jack knew that to travel to the royal palace of the Kingdom afoot would require many days he made his way to his mother's cottage and filled his purse with gold, telling her that he was to make a long journey on a matter of great importance to the nation. At the village he purchased a saddle horse and set off at a brisk pace, the unfortunate Prince loping along behind him.

CHAPTER II

KING ERIC SENDS JACK on a MISSION

On the third day of his journey Jack reached the Capitol City. It had been agreed that Karl should stay at the inn where the horse would be stabled and that Jack should go to the king privately with news of Karl's present plight. The Palace Guards refused to admit the newcomer to the king's presence.

"How can a boy of your age," they scoffed, "have anything of importance to say to our king?"

"Neither I nor my age have anything to do with the tidings that I bring to our royal master," cried Jack. "It is of utmost importance to him and to the Kingdom of Sylvania."

"We will be the judges of that when you tell us the message," answered the guards.

"That I can not do. It is for the ears of the King alone."

An angry dispute developed at the Palace gate. Jack stood his ground. He raised his voice above the clamor of the guards, crying out that he must see the king at once.

"Who is this boy?" demanded a young girl, richly dressed and beautiful, as she came forth from the Palace gate.

"Your pardon, Princess. We do not know him. He will not tell us his mission. He simply cries out that he must see the king."

"Why this clamor at our gate? I am the king's daughter. Tell me your message. I will carry it to the king if it be worthy of his attention."

"You must be Princess Magda! Your brother Karl has told me much about you. My message is of Karl."

"But Karl is dead," cried the Princess, tears in her eyes.

"No, no, Princess Magda. Take me to your father. Karl is alive but in grave danger."

"Come, come," she cried, seizing Jack's hand and drawing him after her into the Palace.

Commotion within the Palace brought tall King Erik to the door of the royal apartment, as Princess Magda came racing up the marble staircase with Jack at her heels.

"Father, father, this boy has news of Karl. Karl is alive!"

"Alive! Alive! They ^{have} ~~had~~ be praised."

His careworn face alight with joy the king gripped Jack's hands in his and drew him into the Council Chamber. "Tell me the truth," he commanded.

"Your son indeed lives, your Majesty. Three days ago I rescued him from a wicked sorceress. She has kept him under enchantment for six months. I have come in haste to bring you word."

"To bring me word, yes, but why not bring my son?" *demanding the king.*

"I brought Prince Karl with me. He is not far distant from this Palace, yet the power of the enchantment is still upon him. He can talk as a man and feel as a man feels, yet he is not in human form. He cannot resume his station as Crown Prince until the enchantment is lifted."

A disturbance at the door of the Council Chamber announced the arrival of Queen Emma, the beautiful and talented consort of King Erik of Sylvania.

"Is it true, my Lord, that you have news of Karl at last?"

Taking her hand in his, the King replied:

"You have come in good time, my dear. This lad assures me that Karl lives but as the victim of a wicked witch. You shall hear the story from his own lips. Speak, my good lad - tell us all."

"Karl has told me that two years ago your Majesty scourged and banished a wicked Crone for witchcraft."

"That is very true - the woman was an ally of the Giant Gilgal who was slain not long ago by a brave lad in a little village in the mountains."

"If it please your Majesty, I am that lad. Three days ago I went back to the giant's castle. I saw the witch - and Karl! She would have cast her spell upon me also but Karl, in his present form, drove me away from the witch.

"What is his present form?" faltered Princess Magda.

"The witch turned him into a dog - into a Great Dane."

"And he is still in that ~~state~~?"

"Yes, your Majesty, but the witch is even ^{now} ~~no~~ at Gilgal's castle.

I implore you to make haste to send a troop of horsemen to capture her and to force her to lift the enchantment from Karl. That is his wish also. We have talked much of the plan. Karl and I will lead the way."

"But I must see my son," cried the Queen, bursting into tears.

"It is better to wait until the enchantment is lifted." ^{used Jack} "Karl would be greatly distressed to have you see him in the form of a dog. But he has told me much about his childhood that only his parents could know, asking me to tell it to you as proof that he is indeed your son."

Jack thereupon recited stories that brought tears even to the eyes of the king. Princess Magda, ~~in a passion of weeping~~ pleaded that she might go to the inn with Jack and talk to her brother.

"I must see him," she cried. "I must prove to him that we love him in whatever form the witch may have cast him."

Long and hotly they argued but at length Magda was given permission to see her brother. It was arranged that Jack should bring Karl to a little summer house by the pond in the Palace grounds. Magda would be there in waiting - if only Karl could be persuaded to come!

Jack returned to his lodgings to find Karl in a very unhappy mood. The sight of the Palace and of familiar scenes had brought a state of nerves pitiful to behold. The spirit of a man imprisoned in the body of a dog could be tragic enough, but if that man chanced to be the Crown Prince of the kingdom,

in sight of his former home, the effect could be ^{heart-rending} prodigious. When Jack told him of his sister's plan Karl flew into such a ^{homic} passion that it was necessary to restrain him by force from running away.

"The shame of it - the shame of it," he cried wildly.

"Not shame, Karl, but misfortune. That sister of yours will understand and love you the more tenderly ^{because of it.} ~~for your misfortune.~~ But we will capture the witch and force her to lift the enchantment - to restore you to your rightful form as a man and a royal prince. Your parents have only my word that you are their son. Princess Magda will look into your eyes and talk with you. Then they can be sure - they can know ^{that} you are Prince Karl."

Somewhat later Jack, accompanied by a Great Dane, entered the Palace Grounds and headed toward the pond and the summer house beside it. Unknown to them King Erik and Queen Emma, watched their progress through the palace grounds. For the loving sister the sight of Karl in his altered state came as a shock that she could not conceal from Jack. But she threw herself upon her knees, and taking Karl's head in her hands gazed upon him with melting tenderness.

"Are you indeed my dear brother whom I have loved all my life?"

"Such as I am - wrecked and ruined by a cruel witch - I am your brother, Karl."

"But Karl, our father, the King, will send soldiers to capture the witch and force her to free you from this enchantment. Jack will lead them to Gilgal's castle."

"That I will and gladly," cried Jack.

"But I must go with you - I must help."

"Your father, the King, may object to that plan," cautioned Magda.

"There is safety here but to go again into danger before the witch has been captured might be a fatal risk."

"Spoken like the daughter of a king," intoned a voice and King Erik stood before them, his face tense with emotion, ^{his} ~~his~~ ^{Queen} ~~Queen~~ beside him.

"Forgive us, dear son," cried Queen Emma, sinking to her knees, spreading caressing fingers around Karl's head, looking tenderly into his eyes. "We tried to stay away until you might give us leave to come, but Karl, we could not bear to have our long lost son feel that our love would fail him in his misfortune."

"Karl, ^{Karl} my son, your body may have changed under the spell of the witch," said the king. "Yet your eyes are the eyes of our Karl, the Crown Prince of this realm."

"Mother, Father, Sister, my cup of happiness overflows at this evidence of your love. But this I pray do not let my small brother, Little Fritz, see me in this hideous form and condition."

"It shall be as you wish, my son. But remember Little Fritz is too young to realize that you are other than what you now appear. He would never connect you hereafter with a Great Dane seen but a few times in his babyhood. Your mother and I, yes and your sister, have suffered much from your absence. Do not deprive us of the joy of having you near us every day while we seek the witch and force her to restore you to your proper station in life."

"Your father, the King, is right, Prince Karl," said Jack. "Besides the help that you could give us would be slight. For you to make the long journey afoot would delay us, for we must ride hard and fast to Gilgal's castle."

"Jack, my friend, you have snatched me from a bondage worse than death. Whatever you and my father decide, I will do."

"My boy," said the king, stooping low and laying his hand lovingly on Karl's head, "you make me very happy. While you are in this sad state you shall have a place to live within the Palace where you can be safe from harm. Your mother and I, Magda and Little Fritz, if you will permit it, can be with you daily. But now Jack and I have grave duties to perform. A band of mounted men will set off immediately to capture the witch. Jack will be their guide to the place and will have command of them when they reach the castle."

Jack thereupon took leave of the unfortunate Prince. As he turned to go Princess Magda, caught his hands in hers and held them tightly.

"Jack, friend of my brother, and friend of all of us, come back to us safely and bring that evil creature alive, able to undo the wrong that she has done to my brother."

Overcome with emotion Jack raised her hand to his lips.

"Princess Magda, to serve you and your family is my dearest hope in life.

CHAPTER III
Kills a giant and
HE CAPTURES a WITCH

Two days of hard riding brought Jack and his armed companions to the mountain where the giant's castle stood. They climbed the giant's path on foot, not daring to bring so great a number of horses near the castle lest the noise of them should give warning to the witch. The soldiers were to remain in hiding near the castle to guard against escape of the witch from any door or window.

Jack's plan was to have a soldier dressed as a shepherd, carrying a shepherd's crook and wearing a long cloak. The soldier would conceal himself behind one of the great pillars of the gate. If Jack could lure the witch from the castle this soldier was to spring from his concealment and fling the cloak over her head. The other soldiers were instructed to close in and capture her. Should the plan fail the whole company would meet at an inn in the village.

Jack was wearing a cap to shade his eyes and thus ^{to} protect him from the deadly stare of the sorceress. When the soldiers were safely concealed the bold youth approached the castle gate. He blew a loud blast on the horn. There was at first no sound from within. Again Jack put the horn to his lips and blew more loudly than before. He listened at the gate. Just as he was to blow a third time the gate creaked and the face of the old woman appeared in the opening:

"Go away, Jack," she whispered hoarsely. "Flee for your life. There is dreadful danger here."

"But I have brought word to the lady concerning Karl, her dog. He is injured and needs her help," *said Jack*

"Go away. The lady is very angry with you."

"How can you say that, Kitchen Drudge? On the contrary, I am fond of him."

The witch appeared at the door, her lips smiling but her eyes aglitter

with deadly intent.

"My dog is injured you say - your knife, I suppose."

"Yes, my Lady, he pressed too close to my blade. I have had three doctors for him. None can save him but you. He calls for you most piteously."

"And you understand his language?" she sneered.

"I do, and I have promised to bring you to him," *urged Jack.*

"Come in my dear boy while I make ready to go."

"I will wait for you in the sunshine, my Lady."

"Not to be thought of my dear boy. Come in, I insist. Why do you shield your eyes. I like your eyes, boy."

"I will wait outside."

"Then my little boy will come out to play with you. Yes, Sam-Sam you may go out but don't be too rough," she cackled.

The witch flung ~~open~~^{open} the door. Her "little boy" proved to be a huge and frightful giant - larger than his brother Gilgal, bristling red hair, red beard and red eyes. His war club was in his hands as he sprang through the doorway. The descending club smote the earth where Jack had been but an instant before. Fleet of foot the lad raced away, with the giant at his heels.

It was fortunate that Jack did not rely upon the soldiers for protection - all of them were running away in horrified alarm. Jack's flight, as it had been from Gilgal, was straight to the beanstalk. With the agility of a monkey, Jack flung himself into the green vines, sliding and scrambling out of reach of the flailing war club.

At a safe distance down, he paused and gazed ~~up at his~~ up at his baffled enemy.

"You are Gilgal's brother," he taunted.

"And you killed Gilgal - you imp of Satan."

"Gilgal killed my father three years ago."

"And now I kill you," shrieked Sam-Sam, flinging his war club straight at Jack's head.

But the lad had guessed his purpose. As the club left Sam-Sam's hands Jack, clinging to a stout vine, leaped sidewise and the great club went slightering down the beanstalk. Jack swung back onto his vine ladder.

"Come and get me," he ~~taunted~~ ^{challenged}.

"I'm not a fool as Gilgal was. No bean vines for my ladder."

The ugly face disappeared but was back in an instant. A stone was in the giant's fist and he flung it with such aim that Jack would have been killed if he had not swung out again. This time Jack did not pause to parley with the giant. The great beast was gathering more stones, so down the beanstalk Jack slid, watching for missiles as they came. When his feet touched the ground his terrified mother was in the open door. One of the stones had landed with a mighty thump on the thatched roof of her cottage.

"Jack, Jack. What has happened?"

The boy brushed some broken bean leaves from his jacket.

"Well, mother dear, I just had an ~~argument~~ ^{encounter} with a giant. He is very ^{mad} ~~made~~. He throws stones."

"Where did that dreadful war club come from?"

Jack tried to pick it up but it was too heavy. He dragged it into the woodshed.

"That will burn well in our fireplace at Christmas," he ^{chucked} ~~chucked~~. "The ^{giant} ~~giant~~ will have to hunt himself a new club."

He kissed his mother and followed her into the cottage.

"Now my dear boy, I ^{hope} ~~hope~~ you are done with this foolish fighting with giants."

"Why Mother, how can you talk that way? My ^{father} ~~fater~~ was a brave man. Don't you want your son to be a brave man?"

"I do indeed but I wish you to be a wise man as well. Your father was brave but he is dead for all his bravery. You are all I have left in this world."

"You forget the red hen that is making you a rich woman."

"Do not jest with me, my son. All the riches in the world could not comfort me if you were dead."

Jack flung his arms around his mother and kissed her. "Bless you, my angel Mother, but have no fear that any giant will kill me."

He removed his jacket and held it up for her to see.

"Jack, ^{where did you get that jacket with} how ~~in the world~~ do you have the royal crest of Sylvania on the collar ~~of your jacket?~~"

~~"If you will not tell the neighbors, here is the answer."~~ His Majesty, King Erik, gave it to me as reward for killing the Giant Gilgal. It was once work by Crown Prince Karl and fits me perfectly."

"You have seen King Erik?"

"Yes, Mother, and Queen Emma and Princess Magda. They were very kind to me. I am on a mission for the King and fear that I will have to kill that evil monster, Gilgal's brother, whose war club is in our woodshed. He threw it at me, you know, and a dozen rocks besides."

After a hearty noonday meal with his mother Jack went to the inn in the village to meet the king's soldiers. They clustered around him, overjoyed at his escape from the giant. The lad told them of his adventures ~~with San-San~~.

"We were fearful he had been the death of you," explained their captain. ~~"We know~~ that giant is too big for us. He is guarding that witch. We can't get either of them."

"Not so fast, sir," cried Jack. "We have got to kill ~~San-San~~ ^{the giant} tomorrow morning. I have a plan that I believe will work."

That afternoon they made preparations to carry out Jack's plan. In the village Jack borrowed from farms ~~who he knew~~ picks and shovels as if to repair a road in the woods. He bought boards and timbers for a bridge. Toward

nightfall the soldiers toiled up the mountainside with the lumber to a spot near the top of the beanstalk where Jack had made his escape that morning. Returning to the inn at sunset they feasted well while waiting for the moon to rise.

Before midnight the soldiers were working with pick and shovel digging a great pit to carry out Jack's plan. Long they labored but when morning came there was no evidence of the pit. It was nicely covered over with boards. Turf had been used to conceal the flimsy scaffolding. It would bear the weight of a man but not the weight of a giant.

Breakfast eaten the soldiers returned to their appointed concealment around the castle gate. Jack straitly charged them not to permit the witch to escape - to blindfold her with a cloak or blanket if she stirred from the castle.

All things in readiness Jack advanced boldly to the castle gate. He raised the horn to his lips and blew a mighty blast.

He continued to raise a most insulting challenge to infuriate the giant. Suddenly the gate flew open. Sam-Sam, with a new war club in his hands, leaped forth and charged in hot pursuit of Jack.

The agile youth crossed the pit but paused on its further side to throw a stone at his pursuer. The raging monster, with club upraised, leaped fairly upon the platform. With a roar that shook the mountainside he vanished into the pit. Several of the stoutest soldiers raced to the scene and soon finished the wicked giant.

Leaving them to their gory task Jack ^{raced} flew to the castle gate just as the witch emerged. Snatching the cloak from the soldier on guard Jack flung it over the witch's head and clasped it about her with his arms. The struggle was soon over. Soldiers swarmed around them and tied the woman hand and foot.

The kitchen drudge came blinking into the sunlight. Jack greeted her kindly.

^{This giant}
~~Sam-Sam~~ is finished," he informed her, "and ^{the} ~~this~~ witch will answer for her crimes."

Without a word the old woman flung her arms about Jack's neck and kissed him on the cheek.

The dangerous prisoner was a problem for Jack to solve - how to take the witch across country to Sylvania's Capital City and how to protect himself and his soldiers from being turned into a pack of yelping dogs. They took the prisoner to the village and soon fashioned a litter in which she could be carried between two horses - a sort of sedan chair. In this conveyance she could sit but ~~not be able~~ ^{was unable} to see beyond the draperies of her moving prison. Her hands were unloosed so that food and drink might be passed to her, but the witch was guarded by a network of stout cords so that escape was impossible.

Two mounted soldiers were sent on ahead to inform the king that Jack was on his way with the sorceress. So eager was King Erik to talk with Jack and the prisoner that he rode forth from the palace with a retinue of mounted men. He met the returning group some miles out of the city.

"Jack, my boy," he cried, "the men have told me of your battle with the giant and of your capture of the witch. What can I do to show my gratitude for this great service?"

"Your Majesty, if Prince Karl can be restored to his rightful state that will be all the reward that I could wish, except that I would be happy to serve you and Karl in any way possible."

"That you shall, Jack, but now let us talk to the witch."

The caravan halted. The soldiers were sent to refresh themselves at an inn. Jack and the King reined their horses on either side of the sedan chair. King Erik parted the ~~c~~urtains so that the prisoner could see his face.

"Witch, you have done me and mine a great wrong. You are again in my power. If my son can be restored to me your life will be spared."

"He has already been restored to you," *said the witch*

"Not so, but only in the form of a dog. He must be restored as a royal prince."

"But if I do not choose to lift the enchantment, what then?"

"Consequences most painful and unhappy for you."

"King Erik, I am an old woman and have not long to live. Why should I fear your threats? I have powers not of this world."

"Of that I am well aware. I have already summoned the holy men and the magicians of this realm to meet at the palace and to deal with you as may seem necessary."

The journey ^{was} resumed, ^Wwithin the hour the witch was ^{finally} lodged in a stout prison with ^{the} castle walls, a heavy guard of soldiers being stationed to prevent her escape.

An order was given by the king that the prisoner be fed on bread and water and that the holy men and magicians be permitted to keep constant vigil around her cell. Christian sermons and heathen incantations were to follow each other in endless succession, night and day.

CHAPTER IV

THE PRINCE IS RESTORED to HEALTH

On the third morning after Jack's return to the Palace he was summoned to the council chamber. King Erik greeted him most joyfully.

"Jack, my boy, the witch has just sent me word that if I will spare her life she will restore Karl to his proper station."

"This is glad news, your Majesty."

"Glad news indeed, but we must guard against treachery. She insists that she be taken to her cottage in the woods where Karl's clothing is hidden. There she will perform the magic rites that will lift the enchantment from the Prince. But I must rely upon you to take her in charge and to carry her a prisoner, bound hand and foot until she reaches the cottage!"

"How can we guard against her unholy powers?," asked Jack.

For answer the King opened a package that lay upon the council table.

"This is for you, my good lad, brought to me only this morning by the greatest magician of this nation. It is a magic sword that can paralyze or slay whatever enemy you may turn it upon."

Jack received the gift, gazing upon it with shining eyes for it was very beautiful. It was in a jeweled scabbard, with a hilt that glittered with precious stones. He buckled the sword about his waist and drew the glistening blade.

"Your Majesty, I no longer fear the power of the witch."

"That is good. And Jack, you are to take Karl with you and the soldiers that you had before. Go at once and God be with you."

As Jack ran down the marble staircase he met Princess Magda, with an armful of roses from the royal garden. She greeted him joyfully. "News, Jack, news?"

"I am on a mission for your father, Princess, and must call the soldiers to accompany me."

"In such haste! Well, good luck, Jack."

At the sight of the sword the girl dropped her burden of roses and ran after him.

"Oh Jack," she pleaded, "let me see it - the sword."

"Not now, dear Princess, but when I return you shall see it, I promise you."

He waved at her gaily and vanished through the Palace gate. Within the hour Jack's expedition was on its way - the witch in her litter, the horsemen guarding it. Jack and Karl followed after.

"I do not trust the promises of that witch," muttered Jack as the caravan paused to rest the horses.

"Nor I, Jack," added Karl. "She is a demon. She must be watched. We must be on guard night and day."

"How far is it to her cottage now?", *asked Jack*

"We are about half way as I remember it."

"What is this about having to take you where your clothes are before she can lift the enchantment?"

Jack, *Karl answered*
"That I cannot tell, but this I know. She has chests and trunks that are locked with magic locks. When she changed me into a dog all my garments were left in a pile on the floor. She put them into a chest with stout hinges and a heavy lock."

"Would you know that chest if you were to see it again?" *demanded Jack*

"Yes, Jack, for it was different in shape. She marked it with the letter K."

Toward evening they reached the cottage in the forest. It was so covered with vines that it might have been thought an abandoned cabin. Candles being lighted, Jack saw that it was richly furnished.

The witch asked to be taken to her bedchamber, saying that she must rest until morning before she could be strong enough to lift the enchantment.

Jack stationed soldiers outside her window, arranging that two were to be on duty at all times while the others slept. He and Karl, with several soldiers

guarded the chamber door, Karl lying beside the door so that it could not be opened without awakening him.

Unknown to them there was a trap door in the floor of the bed chamber. Karl, with the keen ears of a dog, could hear sounds that his companions could not detect. A great tempest was rising out of doors when Karl signaled to Jack that the witch was astir! Jack listened but could hear nothing. Karl insisted that the witch was moving a chair or a table. Jack flung open the door as the witch was in the act of escaping into the cellar.

"Stop," cried Jack in a voice that roused the sleeping soldiers. "Stop where you are or my sword will cut you down."

The witch turned upon him a face of fury.

"Your sword, indeed. No sword can shed my blood. Down on your four feet and be a dog yourself."

But Jack's magic sword flashed as she spoke. Its sharp blade pierced her shoulder. Not only did it draw blood but the touch of it dropped the witch to the floor as though paralyzed.

"Have mercy," she pleaded. "Do not strike again. I will do what you ask."

"Lift the enchantment now or I will cut you into ribbons."

"I must have the chest," ^{warned the witch} "It is in the attic marked with the letter K."

"Go Karl and show them the way," ^{said Jack}

Soldiers, with a candle, followed Karl up the cobwebbed stairs and presently returned with the chest.

"This is it, Jack, but the key is lost!" ^{declared the witch} "I cannot open it without the key."

The sharp point of the magic sword touched the lock and a sound was heard within. The aged crone put forth her hand. The lock opened. Jack raised the lid. By the light of the candle he saw rich garments, the sword and belt and the hunting boots of the Crown Prince of Sylvania.

"Prince Karl," she intoned. "I command you to return to mortal form and resume your garments as a royal prince."

At this instant the storm outside burst in full fury. A thunderbolt shook the cottage in a blinding flash of light, then another and another! Jack and his companions were sent sprawling and lay there on the floor in a trance but when they revived Crown Prince Karl stood before them holding the candle. He was as tall as Jack, a handsome youth, with flashing eyes and a look of joy upon his face.

"Jack, my friend, rise up and know that I am free at last."

They clasped hands. The soldiers cried out in joy that their beloved Prince had come back ~~from the dead~~ ^{to life}. Long they rejoiced but then they noted that it was morning and that the wicked witch was dead. The thunderbolt had killed her.

"The world is better off with such an evil creature removed," said Karl, ~~as the soldiers carried the dead woman to her bed and laid her upon it.~~

"How fortunate that she lifted the enchantment from you before she died."

"Yes, Jack, but if you had not cut her with your sword she would have escaped down the trap door."

"True enough, Karl. I wonder where she was going."

Candle in hand Jack went down the stairs, calling back that there was a secret cellar under the woman's bedroom and that a tunnel led from the cellar. Two soldiers were sent to explore the tunnel. They returned shortly to report that it came out in a grove of pine trees not far from the cottage.

~~Jack decided to bury the witch before leaving the place.~~ Shortly after noon the two friends and their soldier escort were on their way home.

"To breathe the air again as a human being is very wonderful," confided Karl.

"How fortunate that your father sent your own saddle horse along to bring you home."

"I am so happy to be alive again that I feel like shouting,"

said Karl.

"Shout by all means," laughed Jack.

No happier band of mounted troops ever rode the forest trails or highways of Sylvania than on this glad afternoon. Jack had sent a swift courier that morning to inform the anxious king that the Crown Prince was now fully restored to health and would reach the royal palace before sundown. The success of his mission and the gratitude of the handsome prince, as they rode abreast down the highway after leaving the forest, filled Jack with rejoicing.

"Prince Karl, our messenger should be at the palace by now. Your father and mother and Princess Magda must know by this time that you are safe and well."

"Thank God for that, and thank you, my good friend, for all that you have done to save me. If you had not come to the giant's castle, Jack, the witch would still have me in her power."

"True enough, Prince Karl, but if you had not interfered the witch would have turned me into a dog - or a rabbit. You helped me and I helped you."

"And we will be friends forever, Jack, you and I - and Magda."

"Your sister loves you very much."

"She always has. She is two years younger than I. We have been playmates ever since she was born."

CHAPTER V

King Erik *Guid*
JACK RECEIVES TWO PRESENTS

The arrival of the Crown Prince late that afternoon found the royal palace wild ⁱⁿ with excitement. King Erik, ^{with} a glittering cavalcade, had met them outside the city and now, ^{with} his son beside him and Jack leading the procession, they entered the ^{town} ~~city~~. The streets were lined with cheering men, women and children. Loud shouts of rejoicing greeted them ~~on every hand~~. When they reached the palace none but the King, the Crown Prince and Jack were permitted to enter.

Queen Emma, Princess Magda and little Fritz fairly smothered Karl with kisses and tears of ^{joy} rejoicing. Jack, ~~with~~ the king's arm about him, watched the glad greetings. Magda, in a wild fever of ^{happiness} rejoicing, suddenly ^{turned to} ~~swooped upon~~ Jack as the savior of her brother. To his embarrassment and delight she expressed ^{to him} with arms and lips her gratitude, ~~while King and Queen and Karl himself chortled with joy at the demonstration~~.

"The Princess has expressed the feelings of her family," smiled the king, taking Jack's hand in his. "I shall have more tangible rewards for you ~~later on~~."

"But none more appreciated or unexpected," said the still blushing Jack, "and ~~now~~ if you will excuse me I will go to my lodgings."

Oh no Jack
"Will you indeed, my dear boy?" cried the Queen taking his hand in hers. *we are so grateful to you that we want you to stay here with us*
"Then let me tell you that your lodgings are no longer to be ~~in the inn outside the Palace~~. The King and I have decided that you are too valuable to ~~this family to live anywhere else than~~ in the suite next to Karl. Let us take you and Karl to ^{the} your rooms at once."

For a youth who had lived all his life in the humble cottage at the Beanstalk the royal apartments were dazzling in their beauty and furnishings.

A color scheme of ivory and gold in the suite of Crown Prince Karl caused Jack to ^c exclaim with wonder. Karl himself, sixteen years old and like Jack a man in stature ^{nevertheless} broke down and ^{to be} wept again in his familiar rooms.

"I never dreamed that anything could be so beautiful," murmured Jack to shining eyed Magda, ~~who clung to his arm at the moment.~~

"Your rooms are quite as beautiful, Jack, and we are so happy to have you here, safe from those horrid giants."

Tears came into Jack's eyes, not so much for Magda's words but because he thought of his mother, alone in her humble cottage. He must write to her at once.

~~Karl's rooms~~ ^{only} inspected, the Queen and Magda, Little Fritz joyously accompanying them, ~~and~~ conducted Jack to another apartment across the corridor. As Magda had said it was fully as beautiful as Karl's. ~~The~~ The sitting room of each apartment had as its central features an ornate fireplace, flanked by lounging chairs and well filled bookcases. The windows opening out were hung with draperies of gold brocade. Darkness having fallen they carried golden candlesticks as they trod the soft carpets of the three-room suite.

"This is all too wonderful," said Jack reverently, "but really I could not think of living here."

"Tut, tut, Jack," exclaimed King Erik who had followed them into the apartment. "Of course you will live here."

"But Your Majesty, I have lived in such humble ^a ~~state~~ ^{home} all my life I would not know how to act, to sleep or to live."

"Nonsense, Jack, you would soon ^{grow to like} ~~get used to~~ it. Besides I need you and Karl will need you very much."

"I will need you," ^{added} ~~announced~~ ^{triumphantly} Little Fritz, grasping Jack's thumb in his little fist.

"That settles it," ^{smiled} ~~shortly~~ ^{laughed} the King. "Fritz ~~makes the vote~~ ^{unanimous.}"

The Queen opened a closet in the bedroom of the suite. Jack's eyes popped at ^{the} ~~such an~~ array of garments, rich hued and of regal splendor.

"You are to use these clothes of Karl's until the court tailors can make the like for you. We will meet at dinner within the hour. I will send Karl to you as soon as he is dressed."

The royal party withdrew. Jack dropped into a chair and covered his face with his hands in an effort to compose himself.

A tap at the door ^{somewhat later} announced the arrival of Prince Karl. Jack stared at him in amazement. Clad in purple and gold Karl was unbelievably handsome. He was tall and straight, his large blue eyes asparkle, his lips curved in a merry smile. He was a royal prince once more, heir to the throne! Jack would have fallen to his knees in homage.

"None of that, my friend," ordered Karl joyously. "You and I are pals forever. I am to help you dress for dinner - and perhaps - just perhaps, you know, you will soon learn how to do it yourself."

Karl's joy in his task was so great that Jack willingly submitted to the transformation that royal garments soon brought about.

"Now look at yourself in the mirror," cried the Prince gaily, seizing Jack by the shoulders and whirling him around. In the candlelight Jack's dark hair and hazel eyes matched in nobility of expression the proud features of the Prince himself. They stood there shoulder to shoulder, shining examples of young manhood. Dressed as they were in identical garments of purple and gold Jack might easily have passed for a prince of the blood royal.

"Whew," whistled Jack. "We are as like as twins,"

"So we are, Jack. My clothes fit you as neatly as though the court tailor had done them for you. Now buckle on your sword, my friend. We will wait upon my father, the King."

The sensation created by the pair as they came down the marble staircase! Fritz and Magda came ^{racing} ~~to~~ to meet them. Their "ohs" and "ahs" and screams of delight brought the king and queen into the main hallway.

"They are twins," cried Magda joyously.

"Clothes make the man," smiled Jack. "I merely occupy Karl's finery."

"But you shall have the like yourself," said the king, astounded at Jack's transformation. Then he turned to Karl.

"Unbuckle that sword. I have one for you that is exactly like Jack's."

Magda darted away and returned immediately with a gaily wrapped package. The family beamed as Karl, with the aid of Little Fritz, unwrapped the sword. It was ~~indeed~~ like Jack's in every particular.

"Is this a magic sword like Jack's," he asked eagerly.

"Yes, my son, a magic sword. And I have some other gifts for you and Jack - all to celebrate your miraculous return to our Court."

"More presents, daddy! You have not shown them to me."

"No, Magda. They have not come yet."

"What are they, daddy?"

"You will find out when they come."

"But I want to know now."

"Impatient as ever, my dear Princess, but you must wait."

"Are they magical things, daddy?"

"If they succeed in making them, yes."

Dinner being announced by a richly liveried butler, the royal party strolled into the dining room. Since both Magda and Little Fritz claimed Jack he was seated between them, directly opposite the king. To Jack it seemed that the dinner was all a part of a dream - a glorious dream from which he must awaken presently.

The meal ended and the dream continued. The King led the way into the gorgeously furnished drawing room. When they were seated, Jack on a richly upholstered divan with Magda and Fritz on either side, the King beamed upon them.

"Jack, ~~my boy~~ we have heard rumors about your adventures with the giants. Perhaps you would ^{tell} ~~give~~ us the facts."

"We are dying to hear," urged Princess Magda.

Little Fritz snuggled at his elbow and added volume to the murmur of request.

Jack told them ~~how~~ how the ugly giant from "sky mountain" had raided his father's farm for weeks, carrying off cattle and sheep. The lad, then only thirteen, had gone out with his father one moonlight night to investigate a great commotion in the barnyard. They had seen the giant. Jack's father, ~~being a brave man,~~ had attempted to drive the creature away. The giant had killed him with a great war club. ~~Then and there~~ Jack had sworn to kill the giant and thus avenge his father's death.

He told of years of poverty; how he had been sent to market with the last cow; how a man had told him a story of magic beans that would make him rich; of his mother's despair and how she had flung the beans into the garden at the foot of a great cliff. He told of the miraculous growth of the beans, and how he had climbed the bean stalk and had visited the giant's castle.

Little Fritz and Magda were greatly excited by Jack's adventures at the castle, of the hen that laid golden eggs and of the harp that talks, but even more by the pursuit down the beanstalk and how Jack had killed the giant. Jack's later adventures with the witch, the killing of the second giant and capture of the witch were also ^{recited.} ~~related.~~

"Where is the hen that lays golden eggs," ^{asked} ~~demanded~~ Princess Magda.

"At my mother's cottage at the Beanstalk."

Just then the butler came ^{bearing} with a message for the King.

"A man on horseback is at the gate, your Majesty, and he refuses to wait until morning. He says that he has packages of great value for you."

"I will see him at once," said King Erik rising to follow the butler.

"It must be important," murmured Crown Prince Karl.

"No doubt of it," smiled Queen Emma. "Your father was disappointed that the packages did not come this afternoon."

Magda declared that it must be the promised gifts for Jack and Karl. The butler brought the packages into the room and silently withdrew. The king eagerly undid one of them.

"A pair of boots for Jack," he announced. "A very special pair of boots."

Jack received them gratefully.

"Put them on, my boy," the king commanded.

The boots fitted perfectly. The king pointed to a golden button on the leg of each boot.

"These are magic boots, Jack. If you wish to walk very fast press this button and lo, you fly. They are seven-league boots."

"How would you like a pair yourself, Karl?" Smilingly the king pressed a package into Karl's hands. The young man joyously opened ^{it} and found a similar pair of boots. When he had put them on he stood up with Jack.

"Where shall we go for our first trip, Jack?"

"To visit my mother at the Beanstalk."

"Bravo," cried the king. "But here are two other presents." He handed one to each boy. They were gold compasses each with an arrow that pointed north.

The way to any place you may wish to go - a
"They tell me that these compasses will point ^A good thing to have when traveling with seven league boots."

"How wonderful," exclaimed Jack. "Will it point the way to my home at ^{Cliff side} ~~the~~ Beanstalk?"

"Try it," smiled the king.

Cliff side
"The ~~Beanstalk~~ ^{Cliff side} - my home at ~~the~~ Beanstalk," whispered Jack hopefully.

The ^{needle}~~hand~~ on the compass revolved several times but finally settled in a northeasterly direction.

"If you follow that magic compass, Jack, I am sure that it will take you safely home."

"Seven leagues at a step!" exulted Jack.

"I can hardly wait for morning."

"But Jack, I am going with you," said Karl.

CHAPTER VII

TRAGEDY for JACK'S MOTHER

In his Council Chamber King Erik gave close attention to the Crown Prince and Jack as they recited their adventures at the Beanstalk.

"This is indeed serious," he said. "Jack's mother is certainly in grave danger. No time is to be lost. I will send a troop of soldiers to guard the cottage until we can capture the giant."

"But your Majesty, should I not return at once to protect my mother? It will be two days at least before your men can reach the Beanstalk."

"And we can be there within an hour," urged Karl.

"By all means go to protect her, for her own sake and for Jack's also. If Jack is a grandson of Duke Robert Morganshe³en we will need all the evidence that Jack's mother can give us to unravel the mystery. Duke Robert was one of the greatest nobles of this realm. My father nearly lost the throne of Sylvania in the great war that Duke Robert led against him."

"I never understood the reason for this war," said Karl. "Why two brothers should fight each other for the throne."

The King arose and paced the floor. "It was this way, my son. My grandfather, King Erik I, became a Christian. He had two sons Knut the Elder and My father John. Knut adhered to the pagan religion, while my father became a Christian. After my grandfather's death Knut seized the throne although in our country the Assembly is supposed to elect its kings. But Knut began a cruel persecution of the Christians of the realm. He became such a tyrant that the people rose up and overthrew him. Then the Assembly elected my father king of Sylvania. My father had reigned for ten years and was loved by his people when Knut began a great war to recover the throne. He had conspired with some of the nobles who were his friends but he had raised a large foreign army as well.

Duke Robert Morgansheen, a skilful general who lived at the border of the kingdom, became the leader of the revolt. My father was hard pressed but in a great battle he finally won a decisive victory. Duke Robert was slain. His estates were seized, that being the usual ^{custom} ~~thing~~ in case of treason. I was only a small child at the time so knew nothing of Duke Robert's family."

"My mother has told me," said Jack, "that my father was the Duke's only child - that the Dutchess was obliged to flee the kingdom with her little boy. They went to live with her people. But when her son, my father, grew up ~~he hoped to regain his title so~~ he changed his name and came to live in the cottage at the Beanstalk which had been in his father's estate."

"Jack, that is why we need your mother. Her story will be very important in helping to establish your claim to the estates of Duke Morgansheen."

"But he was a traitor and forfeited his estates," faltered Jack.

King Erik smiled.

"That is of the past, my brave lad. You are not a traitor. It will give me joy to restore the estates to you if we can but prove that you are the rightful heir."

The two friends made hasty adieus to Queen Emma, Princess Magda and Little Fritz. A few minutes later they were at the Beanstalk. Jack's mother was overjoyed to see them again so soon. While she was preparing supper Jack excitedly told her what King Erik had said.

"Oh, Jack! How wonderful. The king will actually give you the castle and Duke Robert's estate!"

"Every acre of it," assured Prince Karl. "And Jack will be Duke John Morgansheen."

The Crown Prince of Sylvania beamed happily.

Preparations for supper were forgotten for the moment. Finally the woman smiled through her tears as she turned to Karl.

"It was his father's dearest wish - for Jack, but not for himself. He never expected the estate for himself. Often and often he told me that."

"Why did he come here and live in obscurity?" asked the Prince.

"Well, he and his mother went to her country and lived for years with her brother, a Duke or an Earl, but his mother died. He was a young man then and very independent, not willing to live an idle life. When he asked me to marry him he told me that he would go back to his father's country under an assumed name and make a home for us. It was two years before he came back for me."

"Then you came here to live at this cottage?"

The Prince was deeply moved by the story.

"Yes, your Highness. We came here to live and we were happy - poor but happy. His dreams were all for little Jack."

"Of course, you have documents to prove that your husband was the son of Duke Robert?"

"Oh, yes, documents of highest authority - a thick bundle of papers. He was a most careful man and he often told me that Jack might need them some day."

Supper was soon over. Mother and son were really too excited to pay much attention to food. Prince Karl was in a very happy mood. Sincerely devoted to Jack it gave him pleasure to contemplate the possibility of the youth's elevation from a humble station to one of great power and wealth.

"I can hardly wait to see the ducal honors come to you, Jack," he exclaimed suddenly. "A few weeks ago you climbed the bean ladder and now just think of the change."

"It does seem like a dream. But here we are and there is the bean stalk - out there on the mountainside so it can't be a dream."

"Not a dream, which reminds me that I told Magda that I was going to climb that bean stalk." Prince Karl was viewing it from the window.

"Why not do it now? The sun is still an hour high. We can climb partway up. It will be fun," urged Jack.

"Splendid. The sunset should be glorious from the mountainside." The lure of adventure was strong and Prince Karl was enjoying his excursion into a world apart from royal restraints upon conduct.

Jack's mother followed them out of doors and watched their lively scramble side by side up the leafy ladder. The vines were now more sturdy, seasoned by days of sunshine. The boys soon tired of competing with each other. Jack, in the lead, set an easy pace. Well above the church steeple they paused to view the valley and the neat little village below them.

"So all this belonged to Duke Robert," exclaimed Prince Karl, admiration and wonder in his glance.

"Yes, Karl - all this and much more than this," replied Jack.

"The estate stretches out for miles along this border of the kingdom. My mother has often told me of the estate but I never before knew the reason why she was so interested in it."

Chatting happily they completed the climb and then because the sunset still lingered in the west and a moon was in the sky they decided to follow the giant's path to the village and thence home. The path led through a tract of dense forest. Even before they reached the valley the boys were aware of an unusual commotion in the village.

"Prince Karl, there's a fire somewhere in the village," cried Jack. "Let us hurry. It seems to be in the direction of the Beanstalk."

Thanks to the magic boots the two friends were there in an instant, viewing with horrified alarm a giant pillar of flame as the thatch of Jack's cottage went roaring upward into the sky.

"Where is my mother?" cried Jack to the excited group of men near the barn. A bucket brigade was at work to drench the roof of the barn.

"We don't know," yelled the leader. We haven't seen her."

~~"Where is my~~

"The magic compass - the magic compass," screamed Prince Karl in Jack's ear.

"Where is my mother," said Jack to the compass, prayer and pleading in his voice. By the light of the burning cottage they watched with horror as the ~~hand~~^{needle} revolved and came to rest pointing directly into the flames.

Brave as he was Jack reeled and would have fallen except that Prince Karl seized him in strong arms and dragged him away from the fire.

"My friend - my friend," mourned the Prince as he drew Jack from the heartrending scene. But the compass again caught Karl's eye. It was still pointing, but not at the fire. In moving from the scene they had gotten out of range of the burning cottage.

"Jack, Jack! Look at the compass. It must have pointed not into the fire but beyond it."

"So it did. Heaven be praised," murmured Jack. "The giant must have done this. He burned the house. Mother may be his prisoner. We must rescue her."

Again the magic boots came into play and the two friends swept upward until the compass needle told them they had overtaken the giant as he climbed the mountainside.

"Out with our swords," ordered Jack. "You on that side of the path and I on this. We will close in on him and stab him in the legs."

Suddenly in the moonlit path they saw the ugly head of the giant coming up the steep incline. They also saw a sight that stirred them to warlike frenzy - Jack's mother across the giant's shoulders, lying as though dead, her arms swaying with his strides as the great beast labored up the mountain. The giant was unsuspecting of pursuit, much less of ambush.

With a shriek of fury the two friends closed upon the giant, their swords biting deep into his legs. Jack caught his mother's body as she fell but Prince Karl, the blood of warriors in his veins, tangled with the huge creature as he rolled down the pathway.

Jack had laid his mother on a bed of pine needles under a great tree when Karl rejoined him.

"She is alive," breathed Jack. "Her heart is beating but she is unconscious."

"I will go to the village for men and a litter to carry her down," said Karl.

"What of the giant?"

"Don't worry, Jack. That giant is finished. I find I am a giant killer myself when I get started - and have a magic sword to work with."

Before midnight Jack's mother, still unconscious, was at the Inn in the village being attended by the local physician. Prince Karl departed in the morning for the King's Palace, to make arrangements for the care of Jack's mother.

It was a melancholy experience to visit the still smoking ruins of his childhood home. The cellar and the chimney were all that marked the place so dear to him. His room and all his belongings were now ashes. He wondered what had happened to the Harp that Talked. Then it occurred to him that the giant must have come to the cottage to steal the harp and might have carried it away.

The magic compass was consulted. It pointed to the mountainside. Following the needle Jack was soon back on the mountain trail. At the scene of the encounter with the giant, the Magic Needle suddenly turned to the left. An instant later the missing harp was discovered where it had rolled after the giant had dropped it. Workmen were busy with pick and shovel nearby.

With the harp under his arm Jack paused for a moment.

"How is your mother?" asked the foreman of the group.

"She is still unconscious," replied Jack sadly. He returned to the Inn and carried the harp into his room before going to his mother's bedside.

The physician was watching her but upon seeing Jack he motioned to him that they were to go outside for a conference.

"You say you rescued her from a giant?" ~~carrying her to the castle on the mountin.~~

"He had her over his shoulder and was carrying her to the castle on the mountain."

"She must have fought him. She is badly injured. An arm and leg are broken."

"What are her chances of recovery?" pleaded Jack.

"It is too early to say."

Prince Karl returned by midafternoon, bringing word that King Erik was ~~send~~^{sending} the most skilful physicians of the nation to examine the injured woman. He reported that the Queen and Magda were deeply concerned and added that Princess Magda had sent Jack a written message.

Jack opened the letter and found beautifully worded expressions of sympathy. At its conclusion she wrote:

"If I only had a pair of those magic boots I would be with you this minute but as it is I must come in a slower manner. I will come with the nurse and physician~~s~~ that daddy is sending."

"So your sister is coming to help us," cried Jack, his eyes aglow.

"Whether she will be a help or not remains to be seen. But she actually tried to borrow my boots and make the trip alone."

"She did?"

"Oh, yes, she said that I wouldn't be of any use here but that she could help greatly."

CHAPTER VIII

PRINCESS MAGDA MAKES A JOURNEY

On the morning following Prince Karl's return to the village the condition of Jack's mother had not changed. She was still unconscious. In an effort to divert his friend's mind from the anxiety that oppressed it, Karl suggested to Jack that they try to rescue the hen that laid golden eggs. The Harp that had given Jack valuable advice had been silent ever since the incident on the mountain-side. The magic compasses, nowever, still pointed to the mountain whenever asked about the hen.

Jack consulted those in charge of his mother and told them that he and Prince Karl would be absent for a time on an exploring trip. Mountain climbing with the magic boots in a few minutes brought the youths to the castle grounds.

"It is best for me to go alone to the gate," said Jack, "but you should be behind this great tree where you can watch for giants."

"Do you suppose there are more giants, Jack?"

"I hope not," he replied, "but we must be on our guard."

Jack walked briskly to the castle gate and raised the horn to his lips. He blew loudly, then waited minutes on end. The second blast, however, brought the old woman to the gate.

"Oh, it is you," she faltered. "I feared it was another giant."

"No giants here now?" asked Jack.

"No, my boy, not yet," ^{she} replied, ~~the old woman~~.

"No witches, either."

"Thank heaven, no witches, Jack."

"Is the red hen all right?" Jack's face was eager.

"The hen is well. Happier than I have seen it since Duke Robert was killed," she replied.

"Did you know Duke Robert ~~Mergersheen~~ ^{Kragcastle}?" asked Jack excitedly.

"I was a young girl when he was killed but we all loved him for his kindness to us."

"I am happy to have you say that," Jack murmured gratefully.

"Just why are you happy?" the old woman opened the gate and looked at Jack.

"You are the boy that I hid under a kettle. You are the boy that stole the hen and the harp. You are the boy that has been killing giants and witches."

"Yes, I am the same boy but you do not know who I am. If I were the grandson of Duke Robert you would not say that I stole the hen or the harp, would you?" There was challenge in Jack's tones.

"No, I would not." The woman's voice rose in wild excitement.

"But you, no, no, you can't be."

"Why not? Didn't Duke Robert have a son?" Jack demanded.

"Yes, yes, he had a son - a dear little fellow. It broke my heart when the Dutchess and little ~~Jack~~ ^{John} were driven out of here by the King. The King said Duke Robert was a traitor." Tears came into the woman's eyes as she spoke.

"So he was," said Jack earnestly. "Duke Robert fought against the King, -King Erik I of Sylvania. But Erik II, who is now King, has said that if I can prove that I am the grandson of Duke Robert he will forgive the treason of my ^{grandfather} ~~family~~ and restore to me this castle and all the lands that belonged to Duke Robert."

With a cry of joy the old woman flung open the gate. She swayed and would have fallen had not Jack supported her. She sobbed on his shoulder.

"I might have known that no boy but Duke Robert's blood could be so brave as you are. When you came to this gate the first time it seemed that my little ~~Jack~~ ^{John}, your father, had come back to me. That is why I hid you from the giant."

"So you knew my father when he was a little boy?" Wonder and delight were in Jack's voice.

"Know him I did. He loved to play in the kitchen. The Dutchess trusted him to me. I was only a young girl then." The woman sighed.

"He was a wonderful man," said Jack, "A wonderful father. He was brave. I saw father fight with Gilgal the Giant three years ago."

"And you killed Gilgal?" the woman's voice was exultant.

"To avenge my father's death," replied Jack.

"What was your father's name?"

"Mother said he changed his name from John ^{Kingcastle} Morgansheen to John Robertson."

"Son of Robert - yes, yes," the old woman muttered.

"I have a friend with me," said Jack. "Crown Prince Karl of Sylvania."

At his signal the Prince came forward. Jack introduced the woman as one who had known his father and grandfather.

"I have met this good lady before," laughed the Prince. "But of course, she wouldn't remember me."

The woman stared at the Prince incredulously.

"You say I have met the Crown Prince of Sylvania before - but I don't remember it, your Highness."

"No, no, of course not. But you do remember the witch that came here not long ago," said Karl.

"Yes, yes, the witch - the dreadful witch."

"And you remember the big dog - the Great Dane that you were so kind to - that you fed in the kitchen." Karl smiled at her.

"Oh, yes, yes. But he ran away - chased Jack away from this door."

"I was that Great Dane - enslaved by the witch and under her enchantment until Jack saved me by forcing her to release me."

The ~~old~~ woman was too amazed to speak.

"Jack and I are friends forever," said Karl. "My father, the King, loves Jack. If we can prove that Jack is the heir of Duke Robert he will soon be Duke John ^{Kingcastle} ~~Morgantheen~~ and owner of this castle and all the estates of Duke Robert.

"That will be the day I have lived for all these weary years," breathed the woman. "But now come with me to the kitchen."

She barred the gate. They followed her into the great room where feasts for generations had been prepared - for lords and ladies but of late years for giants.

"I would feed you," said the woman, "but alas! I have no meat or food except milk and cheese."

"When we killed the giants we took away your means of support," said Jack.

"We must bring her food at once," cried Karl.

"Yes, yes, Karl. But I have no money now that the cottage has burned and the golden eggs melted into the ashes. But stay! The hen is here - the hen that lays golden eggs."

The old woman nodded.

"The hen will be glad to see you, Jack," said she, leading the way down a long corridor to a small room. There indeed was the red hen ~~lying in~~ ^{sitting in} a bed of straw where sunshine could ~~play~~ ^{play} upon her through the window.

"She is dreadfully old," apologized the woman to Crown Prince Karl, "so she stays in the sun, she does."

At the sight of Jack the red hen rose and came toward him. He picked her up and held her in his arms.

"Good old girl," he said. "I am glad to see you again. But here is a friend of mine, the son and heir of our King."

The hen cocked an eye at Karl and said something in hen language.

"Princess Magda will be here tomorrow?" he asked.

"Yes, Jack, and we will have to bring her to see this famous hen," smiled Karl.

A loud "cut, cut ca-dar-cut" now rang out. Jack retrieved the egg, patted the hen lovingly and handed the heavy egg to Karl. The prince whistled with amazement.

"This egg should buy plenty of food for the lady of the castle. Let us make haste to supply her needs."

Within the hour, thanks to the magic boots, Jack and Karl had visited the jeweler ^{in the village} to sell the egg. Well supplied with money they now purchased groceries and meat for the castle kitchen. The two laden youths returned to the castle. The aged servant could ^{not} find ~~no~~ words to express her gratitude. She insisted that Jack and Karl share her noonday meal.

They lingered in the great kitchen with its huge fireplace. The woman told them that her name was Gretchen. As she worked she unfolded the story of her woes during the years since the death of Duke Robert.

"The Dutchess, dear lady," Gretchen told them, "was very beautiful. I remember that she stood where you now stand with little Jack. She said to me, 'Gretchen, stay here for our sake. Never leave this castle. When my boy is a man he will come back as lord and master.'" But the giants came and I have been a slave ever since."

"I will ask my father, the King, to set a guard over this castle at once, so that no more giants may live here," cried Karl earnestly.

"That will be wonderful, your Highness. Then if Jack can prove his rights to the castle and the estates of Duke Robert I can be happy in my old age."

An hour later Jack and Karl took leave of Gretchen, promising to return with additional food supplies next day.

"We must seek out the most ancient men in the village," said Jack. "They may know something about my father - when he built the cottage at

the Beanstalk."

"A good idea, Jack. Sylvania's court of justice will need all the facts that we can discover."

At the Inn conditions were unchanged so far as Jack's mother was concerned. The boys went at once to one of the aged citizens of the village, well known to Jack since his early childhood.

"Oh, yes, Jack, I remember when your father came here - all of twenty years ago. Fact is I helped build his cottage. He hired Jacob Hauser to do the job. I worked for Hauser then."

"Did you know where my father came from?" Jack demanded.

"No, I never knew. Your father didn't know much about farming - nor 'bout livestock. But he learned, all right."

"And my mother?" prompted Jack.

"She was young and sweet-looking. Folks said they had just been married when he brought her to the new cottage near the mountain."

They visited aged Jacob Hauser. The old man remembered when John Robertson hired him to build the cottage.

"He uster hang around while we worked on the cottage," he explained.

"He didn't know nothing 'bout working with his hands in them days. People said he was kind of stuck up - above ordinary folk. But he learned - yes, yes, he did."

"Did you ever know where he came from Mr. Hauser?" asked Jack.

"Some said he come from over the border but he seemed to know everybody here - yes, yes, from the day he come here, he knew everybody that was anybody in the valley."

Everywhere the boys went they found the same opinion - that Jack's father had come from across the border and seemed to be eager to learn how to earn his living as a farmer.

The boys returned to the inn and Jack spent an anxious hour at his mother's bedside. His heart was like lead. How he wished that the King's physicians would come. ~~early~~

Early that evening Jack was thrilled at the arrival of Princess Magda. Two days of hard riding had brought her, travel stained and weary, to the door of the Inn where Jack and Karl happened to be standing at the moment.

"Oh, Jack," she cried as he caught her from the saddle of her palfrey.

"How is your mother?"

"Still unconscious, dear Princess, but the doctor thinks she will live."

"The court physicians ^{and nurse} are nearby. I came on ahead of them," explained the Princess.

Her groom drove off to the stable while Jack and Karl escorted the Princess into the Inn. Karl had already arranged for a room and a maid for his sister's convenience and comfort.

"You are hungry," said Karl.

"Starved, positively starved," replied Magda.

"I will order ham and eggs, sister."

"Yes, you would," laughed Magda, "but it suits me this time."

A surprisingly fresh and beautiful "red head" accompanied the boys into the dining room that evening. Jack thought Magda had never looked more radiant than at the supper table. Her spirits had revived amazingly.

"I am going to have seven league boots if I have to steal them," she declared, with a roguish look at her brother. "It is a shame to have to be jolted and tortured on horseback for two days when if I had been able to step into a pair of seven-league boots I could have been here in a few minutes."

"I agree with you, Princess," said Jack, "and when you go back to the Palace you shall go in my boots."

"You are a prince," she cried, her eyes shining as she gripped Jack's hand across the table.

"No!" he laughed. "Not a prince - only a giant killer."

That night at the Inn, in the silence of his room, Jack spent sleepless hours. He loved his mother very tenderly. The knowledge that she was lingering in the borderland of life and death, with broken limbs and possible internal injuries - that she might die - caused him great anguish of spirit. The friendship of Karl and Magda was his only consolation. He must carry on and bear his part like a man. Toward morning he slept.

CHAPTER IX

They visit
MAGDA VISITS the GIANT'S CASTLE

A conference of physicians was in progress next morning when Jack and Karl escorted Princess Magda on a tour of the village. Their first objective was of course the tragic scene of the burned cottage at the Beanstalk. The great rock where the bean vines had been was now blackened by fire. Above the flame-swept area they could see withered leaves of the bean vines extending up the mountain side.

As they reached the desolate cellar and the gaunt chimney rising from its midst, Princess Magda, pale faced, gripped Jack's arm.

"Oh, how horrible for you," she breathed. "Your home and everything in it."

"That reminds me, Jack," said Karl, "your mother said that there were five or six eggs - golden eggs - in the cottage. Those eggs must have melted. The gold should be under the ashes on the cellar floor."

"You are right, Prince Karl. There are shovels in the barn. We can do a bit of gold mining this morning."

"Oh, how exciting," cried Magda, "but where would it be in all that mess? Just where did your mother keep her valuables?"

"Princess Magda, what a wise girl you are! Of course my mother kept them in the safest place in the house. They are probably not in the cellar at all. They may not even be melted. Do you see that iron door in the chimney - a few feet up, beside that fireplace? That was in Mother's room. It is a valut built into the chimney. She would naturally have put them there. I will get the ladder."

Jack ran to the barn and opened the door. But the ladder was nowhere in sight. Perhaps it had burned in the great fire. Karl and Magda appeared in the doorway.

"No ladder here," called Jack, "but I can use this plank - the distance is not great."

Karl shook his head in disbelief.

"How do you expect to use a plank for a ladder?" Jack smiled.

"See this rope, my friend? If I fasten the rope to one end of the plank and lean the plank against the chimney perhaps I can get up there."

"How exciting," cried Princess Magda as Jack began the hazardous experiment. The plank was heavy and moreover somewhat twisted. When upended against the chimney the rope slipped from its place. A second trial fixed the rope firmly and when the plank was again upended Jack attempted the climb.

"Wait, Jack," cried Magda, fear in her voice. "Karl and I will ^{Steady} hold the plank."

In spite of protests from Jack, the eager girl made her way through the ashes and soot of the cellar to lay hands upon the plank. Her brother followed her example. Thus safeguarded Jack clutched the rope and made gingerly progress upward until he could reach the iron door. The rope, coiled about one arm, he tried again and again to open the door.

"It is locked," he declared and came sliding down the plank. "I should have known that mother would never have left the door unlocked."

"Where did she keep the key?" asked Karl.

"I never knew and never saw the key but a few times in my life." Jack's hands were covered with black soot. He gazed at them ruefully.

"Look at my shoes," said Karl.

"And mine," added Magda. "We must go back to the Inn for repairs."

A group of horsemen were in the yard of the Inn.

"At last," cried Karl, "the soldiers are here."

"We have come to guard the cottage of Jack's mother," announced the Captain when greetings were over.

"It is too late for that," said Jack. "The cottage has been ~~destroyed by fire~~ ^{destroyed by fire}. But you can guard the castle on the mountainside against

any more giants."

The ~~men~~^{fishers} needed no introduction to the castle or to the mountain terrain on which it stood since they had been there so recently in the expedition to capture the witch.

"We have food supplies for another week," said the bearded Captain. "We can pitch our tents on the terrace."

"That will do very well for the present," agreed Prince Karl. "In the meantime we will arrange for provisions and supplies for your comfort."

"Comfort is the wrong word," grinned the Captain, "but tell me, are we to besiege the castle to keep the giants in?"

"Not so," laughed the Prince. "As yet no giants have appeared. You must keep them away from the castle."

"Think how surprised a giant would be," said Princess Magda, with a glint of merriment in her eyes, "to find this brave company eating breakfast in front of the castle gate."

"Ye, gods! How surprised we would be if another of them roaring, club-swinging monsters came down on us ~~like that.~~^{at such a time}"

Jack was greatly relieved to find that there was a change for the better in his mother's condition. The physicians agreed that she had probably passed the crisis and with rest and care might be conscious again in a few days.

Princess Magda's maid had by this time cleaned the ashes from the girls shoes and restored her to dazzling perfection. Magda was eager to visit the castle and willing to perch herself on the saddle of her palfrey for the climb up the mountainside.

Prince Karl decided to go on ahead to warn aged Gretchen that she was to have a troop of horsemen at her gate.

"Jack can stroll along with you," grinned Karl as he adjusted his magic boots for the trip.

~~Princess Magda made a face at her brother.~~

"I will have you know that Duke John will be my escort. He will ride one of the finest steeds from the royal stables of Sylvania."

"That means your groom will have to walk," teased Karl.

"No, your Royal Highness. The groom will stay here and rest."

Jack and the Princess watched Karl's departure. Their horses were brought from the stable - a sleek black steed for Jack and the dainty palfrey for the Princess. He assisted her to the ~~saddle~~ ^{saddle} an elaborate affair on which she ^{sat} perched very prettily. Jack sprang into his own saddle and wheeled his spirited horse to fall in beside the palfrey. The Princess was an excellent rider. As they took the uphill trail through the forest the girl's spirits rose. This was adventure - a climb to giant-land !

"Jack, I love it," she exclaimed. "This is wonderful - such huge trees! I do hope you have your magic sword ready for use. Suppose a giant should be hiding in yonder thicket!"

"At your service, my dear Princess," cried Jack gaily, unsheathing his sword and flourishing it in a warlike manner. "This sword, my Lady, has tasted the blood of giants and witches. I dedicate it to your defense. No giant shall harm you while I live."

Magda's merry laughter was music to his ears.

The trail grew more difficult. They paused to rest their horses.

"Princess Magda, this is where your brother and I overtook the giant. In that little glade down below us they buried him."

The girl shuddered at the mental picture of the contest.

"And did Karl really kill the giant?"

"He certainly did. Your brother is as brave as he is strong. Hello, there is the giant's war club, down there between those big trees. It must have rolled there when he fell."

"How exciting," cried the bright eyed girl. They dismounted, ^{and} half-running, half-sliding in the pine needles of the mountain side the pair reached the spot.

Jack laid hold upon the war club and upended it.

"This will give you an idea of a giant's size. I can't lift it, this club is so heavy."

The Princess shuddered very prettily. Jack suspected that she was playing a part. Not being acquainted with girls he was not sure.

"I should not have let you come down here," he said, taking her hand and half-supporting her in the climb back to their horses.

They reached the castle grounds and alighted.

"That is where the beanstalk was," explained Jack, pointing to the lower level.

"I can see the vines now," exclaimed the Princess.

"And here is the path where Gilgal chased me when I had the Harp under my arm." Jack tried to be as modest as possible.

"How did you ever escape being killed?" The hazel eyes of the Princess were bright with concern and Jack loved it.

"It was nothing, my dear Princess. You should have seen old Sam-Sam, ~~chase me~~. He chased me across here twice. The first time he threw rocks at me as I slid down the beanstalk.

"How dreadful! You must have been scared."

"Not much, really. I was too busy dodging the rocks. But the second time I had a surprise for old Sam-Sam. You see that big spot this side of the bean stalk?"

"All that fresh dirt! Was that where you had the men dig the pit?" asked ~~gassed~~ Magda.

He is in there,

"Yes, the pit was there - covered over by boards and turf. When old Sam-Sam chased me the second time I hop-skipped across the pit but when the giant reached it he went down with a great roar."

"And did they bury him in the pit?" gasped Magda.

"He is in there, all right," exulted Jack.

"How brave you are!" cried the girl, gripping Jack's arm and gazing with awe at the freshly turned grave.

The tableau was interrupted by a merry laugh. Karl had been watching for them. He loved to tease his sister. Brother-like he usually regarded Magda's enthusiasms somewhat lightly but on this occasion fully justified.

"Jack is my hero, too," he said as he joined them. "But Jack hasn't told you how I chased him. Honest, I think he was more scared of me than of any giant."

"You are right, Karl. You did look very savage. Snapping jaws and long teeth! Ugh! I shudder now."

"Poor darling," said Magda turning tender eyes on her brother. "You were in a terrible state."

"Yes, I hated all the world. Why, I didn't bite that witch I can never understand," mused Karl.

"You were scared of her," said Jack, "and no wonder. She was a dreadful creature, all eyes like a snake."

At the castle gate Jack's blast on the horn was followed immediately by a faint toot from the lips of Princess Magda. She tried it, too. The gate opened a crack, then swung on its creaking hinges. Faithful Gretchen, bright-eyed and smiling, greeted Jack and Karl but the sight of a royal princess - there was no mistaking Magda for a lesser being - caused the aged woman to gasp and then to execute an awkward curtsy.

"This is my sister," smiled Karl. "She insisted upon coming with us. She wants to see a live giant."

"I do not," protested the girl. "I came to see the guardian of this castle - and the hen that lays golden eggs."

"Com^e in - come in," urged Gretchen, her eyes still on the radiant young Princess. Gretchen had never before seen such a beautiful girl. Of course, she apologized for the unkempt condition of the castle itself as they

went down ^a the long corridor to visit the red hen. Magda's enthusiasm knew no bounds as the hen in Jack's arms cocked an eye at her and uttered a few appreciative comments in hen language. But when the ancient hen performed the usual rites on the nest and cackled at last the Princess gazed at the result in wide-eyed astonishment.

"It is beautiful - beautiful!" she gasped.

"She laid it for you," laughed Jack.

The girl put forth her hand to take it.

"How heavy it is! she cried in ~~astonishment~~ ^{astonishment} ~~triumph~~ ^{astonishment}.

After the red hen had been sufficiently petted by dainty fingers and fed by Magda, while Jack held the heavy egg, they returned to the great kitchen. The boys had brought fresh provisions including juicy steak from the village market. Gretchen insisted that she must celebrate the day by preparing a hearty meal for her visitors.

The soldiers had arrived. Magda and the boys, in the castle yard, watched with ~~delight~~ ^{interest} as tents were pitched and preparations completed for encampment of the military band. The ancient stables, unused since the days of Duke Robert, were cleared of rubbish and horses again stamped and whinnied within. Tiring of these activities they took Magda on a tour of the broad terrace on which the castle stood.

"This is a mighty fortress," she exclaimed, gazing at the towers and battlements of the castle from the rear.

"It was built for the ages," declared Karl. ^{But did} "How [^] they ever raised [^] those great stones." ~~best me~~

"There may be a quarry farther up the mountain," ventured Jack.

"In that event," replied Karl, "they could have slid the stones into place by using beams and scaffolding."

"I mean to climb this mountain to the top," declared Jack, "and search out all its mysteries."

"How exciting!" cried Magda.

"Exciting or not, I am starved," announced Karl, whereupon the young people returned to the castle, even as Gretchen was about to sound the horn as a signal that the feast was spread.

CHAPTER X

THEY EXPLORE the CASTLE

Gretchen's guests ^{ate heartily of} ~~discussed the quality of~~ the broiled steak and savory food brought to them in the dining room of the castle. The aged servant had scrubbed the great oak table and had brought ancient silver that had not graced that table since the Giants came to live in the castle. Princess Magda was never more radiant ~~with delight~~ than during the progress of the meal.

"Oh, Jack, what a treasure you will have in this castle! I can picture you as Duke ^{Kragcastle} ~~Morganseen~~ entertaining my father and mother at your own castle. This place must have been magnificent in the days of your grandfather. It can be as magnificent again when you have had it repaired and cleaned from dungeon to turret. By the way, there is a dungeon?"

"Oh, yes," murmured Gretchen, "and rooms and apartments that would take an army of servants to keep clean."

"Closed up I suppose, Gretchen?"

"Oh, yes. The giants were so beastly they did not care for anything, so I tried to keep Duke Robert's best things locked in the apartment where the family had lived."

"Blessings on you, Gretchen," exclaimed Jack. "May we visit the apartments when you have eaten your dinner?" ~~Gretchen had refused to eat with the young people even though urged to do so.~~

After an exploring trip in echoing corridors and stairways they returned to the kitchen having discovered for themselves that the Ducal apartments were on the second floor of the castle. Gretchen arose happily, a great iron key in her hand.

"It will be dreadfully dirty there," she smiled, "but at least the giants didn't live in it."

She led as they retraced their way up the long staircase and paused before the locked door of the apartment. The heavy bolt at length yielded to the key and the aged servant, somewhat wheezy from climbing the stairs, ushered them into a dimly lighted room. A mere slit in the shutters banished utter darkness. Jack and Karl sprang to assist Gretchen in throwing open the shutters. Welcome daylight revealed a high ceilinged reception room, magnificent in appearance yet so coated with dust and festooned with cobwebs that Magda shrank from touching anything.

Gretchen, however, was as much at home in the Ducal apartments as in her own kitchen.

"Thirty-five years since I closed these rooms," she exulted. "And no giant ever stuck his ugly face in here."

"It must have been beautiful," murmured Magda as she surveyed the scene.

Portraits hung upon the walls.

"Was that the Dutchess?" asked Jack pausing reverently before the likeness of a young woman of singular beauty and grace.

"That was the blessed lady herself and Duke Robert is beside her."

Jack gazed with reverence at each in turn - his grandparents as he believed, the gentle lady and the strong jawed Duke who had later given his life for a lost cause. The little group progressed from room to room and at length reached the bed chamber of the Dutchess. It was an eerie experience to look upon the dust covered canopies of the very bed that the Dutchess had left when she fled the castle thirty-five years before.

Jack was profoundly moved but even more so when he visited an alcove room where a child's bed and even a child's toys were in evidence - his father's childhood speaking to him across the years.

An exclamation from Princess Magda brought Jack from his reverie.

"Here is her desk - her very desk, Jack, your grandmother's desk!"

"Her desk - yes, her desk," muttered Gretchen, passing a cloth over its surface to reveal a section of polished wood. The desk stood against the wall beside a window, with a sort of cabinet above a central door and pigeon-holes now empty.

"She must have gathered up her papers before leaving," ventured Karl as he inspected the cabinet. "The little door is stuck."

"So it is," said Jack vainly trying to open it.

"There may be a secret lock," suggested Princess Magda.

"The Duchess probably kept her valuables here."

"I never saw that door opened," said Gretchen.

Karl and Jack joined forces in a search for hidden levers or catches that might unlock the door. Just as they had given up hope of success Karl chanced to press his knee against a bit of carved decoration of the desk. There was a slight metallic sound and lo! the door began to open before their eyes.

"Look - look," cried Jack. "Papers, documents - a whole bundle of them - tied with a ribbon."

He took the package to the window.

"They are important but should be taken to the King unopened," breathed Jack.

"You are right. There is writing in a foreign language on the outside of this parcel," added Karl.

"My grandmother came from a foreign country. So did my mother. She and my father sometimes talked with each other in a strange language but they did not teach it to me."

Princess Magda laid a hand on Jack's arm.

"Perhaps that was to guard against discovery that they were living in Sylvania in disguise."

"That probably is true," agreed Jack.

When they had inspected the entire Ducal apartments Gretchen led them to others, long guarded against intrusion. Royal guests and visiting nobility had at times long past found lodgment here.

"Now where did the giants live," demanded hazel eyed Princess Magda.

"You wouldn't care to see, Princess," said Gretchen with distress in her voice.

"Oh, but I would, Gretchen. I never saw a giant but I would like to see what kind of beds they slept in."

"Beds," snorted Gretchen. "No beds could hold a giant - as heavy as an ox and as big around."

"But how did they sleep, Gretchen?" protested Magda.

"As an ox sleeps - on the floor - in a bed of straw."

Down stairs they went, following Gretchen, Jack in the rear, cradling precious documents in his arms. In the rear of the castle, the ground floor, were two great rooms, straw littered, as unlovely in appearance as could be imagined. A huge warclub stood in the corner of one of the rooms. A monstrous arm chair covered with skins was the only furnishing except a wine-stained table beside it.

"Ugh, the dirty beasts," shuddered Gretchen. "Wine, wine. I was forever fetching wine from the cellar. Gilgal would drink himself drunk and roll onto the floor at last."

"Suppose there were two giants, Gretchen, where would the other giant sit and drink?"

"Never two at a time, Princess, no, no. You don't know giants as I do. They live by stealing from farmers and shepherds. The village and valley could not support more than one such thief at a time."

Jack was glad to be out of doors again. "Maybe the Captain would know this language," he said to Karl, glancing at the parcel again.

"No harm to ask him, Jack."

But the captain could do no more than to inform them it was not Sylvaniaian writing. The down hill course of the giant's path was pleasant in spite of the heat of the summer afternoon. Forest trees shaded them a good part of the way to the village. When they arrived at the inn good news awaited them. Jack's mother was definitely better.

The doctors believed that she would soon be conscious and that Jack should remain at the inn to comfort her as soon as she should call for him. A conference between the young people resulted in a plan to let Prince Karl carry the parcel of documents to King Erik. They could be examined by learned men to discover their contents and any possible bearing on Jack's parentage. The Prince was eager to use his magic boots again. Jack generously offered to loan his boots to Princess Magda if she wished to make the trip with Karl.

"Trying to get rid of me," she teased. "Unless you order me to go I shall stay here and help."

"Stay by all means, dear Princess," exclaimed Jack.

After Karl had gone on his journey Jack and Magda set out for the Beanstalk. The distance was not great. Childhood friends of Jack were popping up to greet him but he knew very well that their eyes were on Princess Magda. The girl was gracious to them, genuinely glad to meet Jack's friends - shepherd lads, milkmaids and urchins of all descriptions. The girl's beauty and costly attire held the youngsters spellbound. They had never seen a royal princess before. Before reaching the ruined home Princess Magda paused with Jack to watch some boys swimming in a brook-fed pool.

"Jack, this is a glimpse of life that means much to me. You are very good to let me be here with you."

"My dear Princess," he replied. "It is a great comfort to have you with me in this time of trouble. You are very good to me."

They walked silently on until they reached the blackened cellar and gaunt chimney.

"What a pity," murmured the Princess.

"Yes, but that giant paid with his life for the harm that he did here."

"True enough. Jack, I have an idea. A mason could open the bricks of that vault if the key is lost."

"So he could. Well, Mother will know where she kept the key."

"But it may now be in those ashes, Jack."

He sighed and shook his head.

"Sad isn't it, to see my home in ashes !"

"Yes, Jack, but I hope you are moving into a new life - out of poverty, into wealth and power."

"As fate wills it, dear friend. But there will be cares and responsibilities and dangers."

"Yes, but ^{you} would not be contented to live as a shepherd or a farmer."

"You are right, Princess Magda, I could not be content to live as my father did in so humble a station."

"Why did he do it, Jack ? My father would have been kind to him."

"I am sure of that. It must be that my father was so happy to get back into his own country that he wanted to prove that he could be a good citizen. Mother says that he didn't care for the duchy himself but did hope that I would someday be Duke Morgensheen."

"And so you will, Jack, and my father will be happy to set you in your rightful place as Duke."

Upon their return to the inn the Princess went to her room but Jack hurried to his sick mother. The nurse informed him that the invalid had spoken his name twice in the last hour. At her bedside he seated himself, watching his mother's face. A restless hand on the coverlet moved toward him - the other helpless in a splint. He took her hand in both of his and held it tenderly. After a moment her eyelids fluttered. She turned her head slightly.

"Jack," she breathed faintly.

"Yes, Mother dear, I am right here beside you."

He leaned and kissed the palid cheek.

"I am so happy to have you getting better," Mother," he said.

"Where am I, Jack ?"

"At the inn with nurses and doctors. You will be well soon."

She sighed, "Yes, I will be well soon."

Her eyes closed. She slept and Jack sat beside her until a nurse came into the room. He signaled to her and then followed her out to tell her the good news.

CHAPTER XI

IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS

Jack and Princess Magda were strolling together near the inn that afternoon when a nurse came to tell the young man that his mother was calling for him.

"I will wait outside for the news," beamed Princess Magda as Jack hastened to the sick room.

His mother was watching for him, visibly stronger than she had been that morning.

"I am so glad you are here," she breathed as he stooped to kiss her.

"Thank heaven you are better, but you must rest, dear mother."

"That dreadful giant. What happened after he hit me?"

"Don't worry about that giant. He wont hit anybody else. Karl and I rescued you and Karl killed the giant with his magic sword."

"Where is Karl now?" she asked.

"On a little trip but he will be back soon. His sister, Princess Magda is here now."

"The Princess here? I would love to see her."

"Are you strong enough to see her?"

The invalid smiled.

"I think it would make me happy/"

"She is waiting outside - eager to see you."

Jack went to the door and returned with the radiant girl. The pallid face lighted. Impulsive Magda, profoundly moved by the sudden development, bent down and kissed her reverently on the cheek.

An indignant nurse came bustling in full of reproaches for Jack, to find Jack's mother and Princess Magda in tears. The Princess confronted the nurse:

"My father, the king, let me come here to help Jack and his mother. She wanted to see me. Jack is not to blame."

"But she is not well enough to see visitors."

"I am not a visitor. I am a nurse. From now on I am a nurse."

"The Princess is better than medicine for me," said Jack's mother.

"Please let her and Jack stay with me for a few minutes."

"I will speak to the doctor," said the nurse smiling.

The two young people, so youthful and vibrant with health knelt at the bedside, Magda's hand on that of the patient.

"You are to get well, dear lady," assured the Princess. "Jack needs you. There are bright and happy days for you that will make up for all that you have suffered."

"This is a bright and happy day when a princess of my husband's homeland is so kind to me."

The woman closed her eyes but the pressure on the girl's fingers assured Princess Magda that she was not asleep. Minutes passed and then the invalid spoke.

"You may go now and I will sleep, happy in the knowledge that you are near."

Later that afternoon the nurse called them saying that Jack's mother was much stronger; that they might stay as long as she wished. The Princess was so overflowing with gladness that her presence in the sick room acted as a tonic to the patient, a fact that the king's physician noted with satisfaction. Princess Magda had been a great favorite with him since her early childhood.

Returning strength had kindled the sick woman's interest in happenings during ~~since~~ her period of unconsciousness. How long had it been? What of the cottage at the beanstalk? Knowledge that her home was now a blackened ruin would have caused deep distress except for Princess Magda's tactful handling of the situation.

"Why should you and Jack ever want to live there again, with a great castle and half a dozen villages of your own to choose from? When Jack wins his title and estates you will be a great lady. You can help him now by telling us about Jack's grandmother. Was she the Duchess of ^{Kragcastle} ~~Morgan~~ ~~sheen~~?"

"She was the Duchess. Her brother was the Duke of Umbaland, rich and powerful but he had enemies and was almost always at war. He was cruel to his sister after her husband's death - tried to force her to marry a horrid friend of his. Jack's father grew up to hate his uncle the Duke. Then the ~~Dutch~~ Duchess became very ill - was sick for two years before she died. Jack's father refused to leave his sick mother and go off to war with his uncle. They ~~qu~~ quarreled terribly. I was afraid the Duke would kill him."

"You knew Jack's father at that time?"

"Oh, yes, he and I were very much in love. After his mother's funeral John told me that he was going to Sylvania and make us a home. He said he would live as a farmer in a little village at the foot of the mountain where his father's castle had stood."

"Then he remembered his childhood," asked Jack eagerly.

"Oh, yes, he was nine years old when Duke Robert was killed. He used to tell me about this little village."

"And you wanted to come here to live?" Princess Magda's eyes were shining with eagerness. She was romantic by nature.

"I would have gone anywhere with him. I loved him very dearly."

"But didn't your people object?"

"My people were dead. I was living with some kind friends - companion to their only daughter. I had a little money but my John would not touch a farthing of it. He went away and was gone two long years - then we were married and I came hereto live - about eighteen years ago."

"You told me and Prince Karl that you had proof that my father was the son of Duke Robert ?"

"Oh, yes, yes, plenty of proof ?"

"Where is that proof ?" asked Princess Magda.

"In the vault in my bedroom. The vault was built into the chimney - ^{an iron} ~~a wooden~~ door over it."

"A key, you had a key, Mother ?" urged Jack.

"Yes, a key - you couldn't open it without a key," she replied.

"But where did you keep the key ?" Jack's eagerness was almost painful.

"In the little closet by the chimney - a secret drawer underneath the shelf."

Jack exchanged glances with ~~the~~ Princess Magda. "I remember the closet, Mother, on the opposite side of the chimney."

"The key should be there, Jack."

"It will be easy to find it, dear. I will go over right away."

"And I will help you," cried Magda excitedly.

On the way to the ^{place} ~~cellar~~ Jack called at a neighboring farm and borrowed a ladder.

"The key will be at the base of the chimney," he assured his excited companion as ladder-laden they neared the ruins. "With this ladder and the key it will be a simple matter to open the vault."

"Oh, Jack, how exciting," cried the eager Princess.

She dashed to the barn and brought the shovel. Jack was lowering an end of the ladder into the cellar. Shovel in hand he ran nimbly down the ladder to the base of the chimney.

"It should be about here," he called to Princess Magda, calculating the probable fall of the heavy key.

"Unless it lodged on the brick work," she replied, then circled the cellar for possible clues.

Jack was beginning a cautious clearing of ashes at the chimney base when Magda's excited exclamation halted his progress.

"Jack, Jack. There is something on the bricks that looks like a key." She pointed frantically.

~~In wild excitement~~ ^{Eagerly} Jack upended the ladder against the chimney. An instant later ~~with a whoop of joy~~ his fingers grasped the precious key - soot-covered but very real. Down the ladder he came and moved it to a new position, spurred on by excited clamor from Princess Magda.

"I was never so excited in my whole life," she exulted as he fitted the key into the lock of the vault. The bolt yielded but the heavy door could not open because the ladder was leaning across its path. Down came the excited youth. This time the ladder had been properly set. The door swung on its hinges.

"Oh, Princess Magda, - it is here - it is here - the proof that we need!" There ~~were~~ bundles of papers, impressive in appearance, sealed with red seals. Down the ladder Jack came, then by the ladder he climbed out of the cellar to Magda's side. One glance at the documents and the girl, ~~forgetting~~ ^{exclaiming} everything in the joy of the moment, flung her arms about Jack's neck in a fervent embrace. "Duke Morgensheen," she breathed. They clung to each other like two happy children until the owner of the ladder suddenly appeared.

"The papers were safe," cried Jack. "The fire didn't get them. You may have your ladder now. Thank you very much."

The farmer grinned happily, ~~he~~ ^{he} pointed at the open door of the vault. "Shall I close it for you - and lock the door?"

"Yes, please."

They watched the man climb the ladder and close the door. He flung the key to Jack's feet. They thank him and hurried away.

Jack's mother wept at the sight of the precious documents.

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"We can read the inscriptions on one of them - those about Duke Robert Morgensheen, but the others are in a foreign language."

"Not foreign to me, my dears," she smiled. "They are in my language - Duke Umbraland's language. But we should not break the seals."

"We know that, mother. Prince Karl has already taken the papers that we found yesterday at the castle to King Erik to be examined by his court of Justice. They were in this same language."

~~"Not foreign to me, my dears," she smiled.///~~

"Not foreign to me, my dears," she smiled. "They are in my language - Duke Umbraland's language. But we should not break the seals."

"We know that, Mother. Prince Karl has already taken the papers that we found yesterday at the castle to King Erik to be examined by his Court of Justice. They were in this same language."

"That is good but these papers are complete. Your father's lineage in this packet - your grandmother's - the Duke of Umbraland's line - her marriage to Duke Robert and all. This packet has my family line - my marriage to your father - your birth - everything needed to prove that my son is the rightful heir to Duke Robert's estate."

Their rejoicings were interrupted by the arrival of Crown Prince Karl. His exclamations of joy at finding Jack's mother so improved was heartwarming to her. She was human enough to glow with pride to have the future king of Sylvania as well as Princess Magda at her bedside showering her with attentions.

"Those papers were important," he told Jack. "Your duchess-grandmother came from Umbraland. Her ancestry runs back to the Roman Empire, - to a son of Charlemagne. Her marriage contract to Duke Robert was in the lot and the baptism of your father John Morgensheen. ^{Krag castle} But we need more proof they say."

Then Jack told Karl that his mother came from Umbraland and could read all the documents in the three packets - that she had said they were complete.

"We need proof that your grandmother went to Umbraland with her son John and that after he grew up he married your mother and came here to live."

"And that Jack is our son," added Jack's mother. "It is all there - in those papers. Jack's father knew how important it would be to have every possible item of proof. That is why he built the vault in the chimney."

"That settles it," exclaimed Prince Karl, his face alight with joy. "We should take the papers to my father tomorrow morning."

"Will Jack be proclaimed Duke John ^{Krugcastle} ~~Morgenshoen~~ at once?" demanded Princess Magda eagerly.

Karl smiled at his sister.

"Hardly that. There will be a court hearing after Jack's mother is able to attend and there will be some necessary evidence from people in this village. It will take time."

"How exciting," exclaimed Magda. "Then Jack can live in the castle!"

Karl chortled. "In all that dust and dirt! No, Magda, it will take months and months to restore the castle."

"~~And~~ it would cost a fortune," added Jack ruefully. "~~Besides~~ ^{and} I haven't any money."

"My father says you are not to worry about money. He told me that if you are the rightful heir he will have the royal chamberlain go over the accounts of the ^{Krugcastle} ~~Morgenshoen~~ estates for the past twenty years and set off the net earnings as a trust fund for you to draw upon. That should be a large sum - a very large sum. ~~Then~~ ^{soo} the income from the estate will be coming to you from now on."

A nurse now came to break up the happy party but Jack and his two friends continued to discuss the new developments at supper and into the evening. It was agreed that Jack and Karl should leave next morning with the precious

documents and that the Princess should remain with Jack's mother.

CHAPTER XII

~~DUKE JOHN MORGENSHEEN~~

Jack becomes Duke of Kragcastle

King Erik II at once summoned the chamberlain and other officials to examine the documents that Jack had brought. The smiles and nods of satisfaction with which they examined the papers as they laid them out on the council table assured Jack and Karl even before the official verdict that everything was in order. The two friends retired from the chamber while the officials reported to the king. They strolled forth from the palace and turned their steps to the Summer House in the Park beside the pond.

For half an hour they conversed happily but when the expected messenger appeared in the distance they could not restrain their eagerness and hurried to meet him. The king's face was aglow with happiness. When they reached the Council Chamber, he took Jack's hands in both of his.

"I might have known that the blood of heroes was in your veins, my brave lad. It is good to have the proof."

"You make me happier than words can express, Your Majesty. My grandfather, Duke Robert, was loyal to the wrong branch of your royal house."

"But Jack, he and my uncle were in school together - close friends from childhood. That makes a difference, you know. By the way, you and Karl are of the same age?"

"Yes, your Majesty."

"Education is not complete at sixteen, my boy. Karl has two more years of tutoring ahead of him. How would you like to live here at the Palace and study the same subjects with him while your estate is being put in order?"

"It would be a happy privilege, your Majesty."

"Then it is settled. We will have your mother come here to live with you if she wishes it. As soon as papers are complete you will be proclaimed Duke of ~~Morgensheen~~ *Kragcastle* and entitled to ample funds until you are eighteen when the estate will be turned over to you."

These words of King Erik sang in Jack's heart as he and Prince Karl made their return journey to the village at the Beanstalk. Not even the speed of seven league boots could bring him to his sick mother quickly enough to suit ^{his} mood. His dream and hers - yes, and the dream of his dead father - now a certainty! Heir to Duke Robert - lord of the great castle on the Mountain and of the villages of the plain - it was almost too much for reality and yet here he was streaking through the summer sky swifter than a bird of passage to tell his mother the news.

Always since infant days his mother had been his first thought in moments of joy or of sorrow. Now he had news indeed! Then too there was Princess Magda. She would be waiting and Prince Karl keeping pace with him would be there to join in the chorus of rejoicing.

What a glorious homecoming it proved to be! Jack's mother wept for joy at the news.

The young people had not completed their supper that night when excited clamor outside the inn attracted their attention. For days the villagers had been agog with sensational rumors. Jack, the local boy had killed another giant. Then he had set off on a journey to the King's Palace. The Crown Prince had returned with him, the King's daughter had come to the village and the King's physician, but now the nurse's had spread the astounding report that Jack was the grandson and heir of Duke Robert ^{Kingscastle} ~~Morgansheen~~ whose memory all the people of the valley revered. So they began to gather at the inn to greet their rightful lord - the modest lad who was now entitled to consort with the highest nobles of the land.

Crown Prince Karl was the first to realize the significance of the growing clamor.

"They have heard the news," he exclaimed. "The people are here to see you Jack - to see you!"

"To see me - why they have seen me all my life!"

"Yes, but you were only a poor boy. They thought you one of themselves. By some miracle they now know that you are to be the Duke of this Province."

Magda laughed.

"No miracle," she said. "I told that nice nurse this afternoon that Jack was Duke John Morgensheen."

"Good Heavens! We are in for it I guess," smiled Jack. "Karl you must be my bodyguard and chief adviser."

Just then the head man of the village, hat in hand, came into the room. Emboldened by a smiling greeting from Jack he approached the table.

"Please sir, we have heard some wonderful sort of report - that you are not Jack Robertson but Duke John ^{Kragcastle} Morgensheen - heir of Duke Robert of blessed memory."

"The report is true so far as my relationship to Duke Robert is concerned but it will be several weeks before the King can proclaim my title as Duke. Crown Prince Karl can bear witness to that."

"I can bear witness that my father, the king, loves you well and that he will proclaim you as Duke within the present year."

The expression of joy in the man's face was heartwarming to the young people.

"You will come out and let the people see you, Duke ^{Kragcastle} Morgensheen? The sun is still an hour high."

"We will be out as soon as the Princess has finished supper."

The man was speaking to the multitude when they reached the door.

"Listen," said Princess Magda, her finger on her lips, pausing with the door open a crack.

"Yes, men, it's the truth," the man was saying. "Little Jack Robertson what we've known ever since he could walk is the grandson of the great Duke Robert ^{Kragcastle} Morgensheen. No wonder Jack killed giants and saved us poor folks from having our cows and sheep stole right out of our pastures and barns - and now King

King Erik has the proof that our little Jack - grown up since his father died - is Duke Robert's only grandson. And there he sits - our Jack, eatin' supper, calm as you please, with the Crown Prince and the Princess - so pretty she is she'd almost strike a man blind - sitting there eatin' supper. He's my Duke he is - he's your Duke and we love him."

The cheer that went up from the crowd was nothing to the yell that burst forth when Jack himself stepped from the doorway. He grinned joyously as cheer upon cheer rolled through the village. Finally he held up his hands to still the clamor.

"What is all this hubbub about? It's the biggest noise I've heard since I killed old Gilgal."

"The Princess, the Princess," yelled a voice.

Jack disappeared to return instantly with flustered and blushing Princess Magda on his arm. Crown Prince Karl appeared also and roars of joy disturbed the setting sun.

"You talk to them, Karl. I'm bashful."

Karl lifted both hands in a gesture that brought silence.

"Men and women - friends of Jack. You are happy I know to learn who Jack really is. Proof has just been brought to my father, the King, that Jack of the Beanstalk - Jack the Giant Killer - of your little village is the hero grandson of one of the great nobles of this kingdom. It is true that Duke Robert ^{Kingcastle} Morgensheen fought against my grandfather, that he lost his life and forfeited his estate as a traitor. But his grandson Jack is no traitor. He has rid this land of giants and my father will very soon proclaim him Duke John Morgensheen and restore to him the castle on yonger mountain and all this rich valley as his property forever."

When the roars of joy from the multitude would permit the Prince continued:

"Jack and I are of the same age. My father, the King, wishes Jack to be my companion for the next two~~o~~ years while he and I study under a tutor at the Palace. Then when the castle up yonder is repaired and fit to live in he will return to you as one of ~~the~~ the great nobles of this realm. My father loves him and so do we all."

Fresh roars of applause were followed by calls for the Princess.

"Jack, Jack," she pleaded clinging to his arm. "I can't say anything." Prince Karl had a happy thought. "They want to see you - you little goose."

Seizing Magda in strong arms he stood her upon an upended barrel. For five/^{tumultous}minutes Jack and Karl kept her from falling while she blushed and ~~curtsied and~~ blew kisses at the crowd. Karl and Jack then whisked the laughing girl into the inn and bolted the door. The show was over but the uproar continued out of doors until the glow faded in the western sky.

"I was never so excited in my life," was the beginning of Princess Magda's report to Jack's mother. That report came bubbling forth for half an hour until a smiling nurse chased the Princess out of the sick room. Prince Karl remained but Jack took Magda out the back door of the inn into the cool evening air of the garden. They strolled happily together, their conversation concerning the castle whose distant turrets were outlined against the sky.

"I really wouldn't care to live there," was Jack's frequent protest. Magda was trying to convince him that his new station in life would demand the restoration of the castle as his home.

"Home dear Princess - that is a fortress."

"But think how old it is - what a noble legacy of the past."

"How old it is," echoed Jack. "That is the trouble with it. Stones piled upon stones, dark and damp and filled with dirt."

Princess Magda had a sense of humor. Her merry laughter rang out on the evening air.

"My dear Jack, my cottage-minded friend! Well, I can see that your education is going to tax my strength but I mean to keep trying. And since you are to live with us at the Palace for two years what a chance I will have to educate you in the virtues of ancient castles."

"For two farthings I'd give you the castle," Jack laughed.

"I wouldn't accept it at such a price," retorted the girl as Karl came to join them.

The next morning at breakfast the hazel eyed Princess smiled across the table at Jack.

"My Lord Duke, we must go to the castle this morning. Gretchen should have more supplies, you know."

"Do you mean to climb that mountain?" he demanded, his eyes full of merry banter.

"No, my Lord. I mean to borrow Karl's boots."

"The first I've heard of it!" jeered her brother.

"I am a desperate woman. You gay blades go off and leave me here while you travel in seven league boots. I mean to try them myself today. I have already borrowed your magic sword. It is boots or bloodshed, brother."

"As bad as that! She is a dangerous little imp, Jack! I surrender but not until I get something to wear while you are gone."

Somewhat later the excitement loving Princess experienced a new thrill - a flight with Jack across level country before attempting the more difficult mountainside. Laden with supplies for Gretchen they finally greeted the soldiers who ~~l~~anged about the castle walls.

"I have just thought of the loveliest idea," she smiled archly at the Captain.

"And what is that, Princess?"

made much of the Duchess, as she called Jack's mother, finding her a witty and agreeable companion. King Erik II also admired the visitor and rejoiced daily at Jack's steady influence over the Crown Prince, who at last was taking a deep interest in his studies - history, philosophy and mathematics.

As the Christmas Season approached and the legal formalities of the Morgensheen estate were completed King Erik set the date for the formal proclamation of Jack's elevation to the title of Duke ~~Morgensheen~~ ^{Kragcastle}. Elaborate preparations were made. It was to be the most brilliant social event of the season. The ceremony would occur in the throne room of the Palace. All the great nobles of the Kingdom were invited to attend.

The royal tailors really outdid themselves in the purple and gold vestments of the youthful Duke. Princess Magda insisted upon attending every fitting. Her "oh's" and "ah's" were decidedly helpful. The day came and the hour arrived for the great pageant of the ceremony.

A glittering array of nobles, with their families were in their places when King Erik in royal robes, a jeweled crown upon his head, entered and took his place upon the throne. On the dais at his right sat Queen Emma, aglitter with jewels, an ermine train falling from her shoulders, wearing her royal crown. Jack's mother transfigured by gorgeous attire and happiness sat ^{near} ~~beside~~ her.

Princess Magda, her youthful beauty set off by regal garments and a jeweled tiara sat at the left of the throne. Little Fritz, a bit self-conscious in his unaccustomed finery, was beside his sister.

The door opened. A herald, plumed and bearing a mace advanced to announce the approach of the candidate for ducal honors. A drum throbbed and trumpets blared in the outer room; through the doorway strode two young men - so alike in attire and so resplendent in purple and gold as to evoke gasps of admiration from all ladies of the court. It was difficult to say which of the newcomers could be Crown Prince Karl and which the candidate for honors.

As they approached the throne the Crown Prince bowed low to the King.

"I have the honor, Sire, to present to your Majesty ^{id} and this Court John ~~Morgansheen~~ ^{Kragcastle}.

So saying he escorted his companion to the dais and falling back took his place behind him.

King Erik arose and addressed the youth, - "John ^{Kragcastle} Morgensheen, the officials of my Court of Justice, after duly examining all necessary documents, have informed me that you are the sole and lawful heir to the castle and estates of the late Duke Robert ^{Kragcastle} Morgensheen. You will now take the oath of allegiance to your king and country."

Whereupon Jack knelt at the King's feet, solemnly kissed the royal hand and in firm voice took the oath of allegiance. At its conclusion the tall King, his face aglow with gladness, made formal proclamation of the re-establishment of the Duchy of Morgensheen, discharged of any taint of treason. Raising Jack to his feet the Monarch introduced him to the Court as the new Duke, - Duke John Morgensheen.

Jack's mother, overflowing with maternal pride was the first to congratulate him. The Queen and the Crown Prince were next in order. Princess Magda clung to his hand and murmured, "You are my Duke." Little Fritz, not to be outdone gripped a finger of the Duke's left hand and exclaimed in childish treble, "You are my Jack the Giant Killer."