

EUROPEAN FOLKLORE SERIES

A COLLECTION
PUBLISHED UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE COUNCIL
FOR CULTURAL CO-OPERATION
OF THE
COUNCIL OF EUROPE

VOLUME N° 1

EUROPEAN FOLK TALES

1963

ROSENKILDE AND BAGGER
COPENHAGEN

EUROPEAN FOLK TALES

Edited by
LAURITS BØDKER
CHRISTINA HOLE, G. D'ARONCO

1963

ROSENKILDE AND BAGGER
COPENHAGEN

ICELAND

(translated by Anthony Faulkes)

THE STORY OF PRINCE HLINI

There was once a King and a Queen in a certain kingdom. The King's name was Ring, but it is not told what his Queen was called. They had a son who was called Hlini. He began early to show promise, and was held to be a man of great courage.

The story tells that a certain peasant and his wife lived in a cottage. They had a daughter whose name was Signy.

One day the Prince went hunting with his father's courtiers. When they had hunted down a number of animals and birds and were about to go home again such a thick fog came down and they lost sight of the Prince. They searched for him a long time, but couldn't find him, so they turned homewards. When they came to the palace they said that they had lost Hlini and could not find him anywhere. The King was very upset at this news, and next day he sent many men to look for his son. They searched the whole day until evening, but they didn't find him, and so it turned out on the three successive days of the search; Hlini was not found. The King was so sorrowful that he took to his bed like a sick man. And he had it announced that whoever found his son and brought him back home should win half the kingdom.

Signy, the cottager's daughter, heard of the disappearance of the Prince, and also of the reward his father had promised if Hlini were found. So she went to her parents and asked them for food for a journey and new shoes, and then she set out to look for the Prince. Now there is this to tell concerning Signy's travels that when she had been walking the greater part of the day she came, towards evening, to a cave. She went inside, and saw there two beds; on one was a quilt of cloth-of-silver, on the other a quilt of cloth-of-gold. She had a better look round, and saw the Prince lying in the bed with the cloth-of-gold quilt; she tried to wake him, but she couldn't. Then she noticed that some runes were written on the bed which she did not understand. After that she went out to the entrance of the cave and hid behind the door. When she had been in this hiding-place a little while she heard an enormous din outside, and

ICELAND

saw two coarse-featured troll-wives coming into the cave. As soon as they were inside, one of them said:

"Fi Fo Fum! Man-smell in our cave!"

But the other said it was only from the Prince, Hlini. Then they went to the bed the Prince was sleeping in and said:

"Sing, O sing, O swans of mine,
So that Hlini wakes."

The swans sang, and Hlini awoke. The younger troll-wife asked him if he didn't want anything to eat; but he said No. Then she asked him if he would marry her. He flatly refused. So then she raised her voice and said:

"Sing, O sing, O swans of mine,
So that Hlini sleeps."

The swans sang and he went to sleep. The troll-wives lay down in the bed with the cloth-of-silver quilt. In the morning when they woke, they roused Hlini and invited him to eat; but he would not. The younger one again asked him if he would marry her; but he refused as before. So they sent him back to sleep in the same way as last time, and afterwards they went away out of the cave.

When they had been gone a little while, Signy came out from her hiding-place and woke the Prince in the same way as the troll-wives. She greeted him, and he replied in a friendly manner, and asked her for news from home. She told him everything, and all about the grief his father was suffering for his sake. Then she asked him what had been happening to him. He told her that as soon as he had become separated from his father's courtiers he had met two troll-wives, and they had brought him to this place. One of them intended to force him to marry her, as Signy had heard, but he always refused.

"Now," said Signy, "when the troll-wife asks you this evening if you will marry her, you must agree on condition that she tells you what is written on the beds, and what they do in the day-time."

This seemed to the Prince an excellent plan. He took up a chequer-board and invited Signy to play chequers with him, and they played until evening. But when it began to get dark, she sent him back to sleep and went into her hiding-place. A little later she heard the troll-wives come striding into the cave with bundles of dead fowls. They lit a fire, and the elder one began to dish out the food; but the younger one went over to the bed and woke Hlini, and asked him if he wanted to eat. He said Yes.

When he had finished she asked him if he would marry her. He said he would if she told him what the runes on the bed meant. She replied that they read:

"Run, O run, O bed of mine,
Wheresoe'er I will."

He was pleased at this, but he said she would have to do more than that to get what she wanted. She must tell him what they did out in the forest in the day-time. She answered that they went out hunting animals and birds; but in between doing that, they would sit under a certain oak and throw their life-egg to each other. He asked if there was any danger in handling it, and the troll-wife said it mustn't be broken, for then they would both be dead. The Prince said it was good of her to tell him this, but that now he wanted to rest until morning. So she said he should have his way, and sent him back to sleep. In the morning she woke him up to eat, and he accepted the food. Then she asked him if he would go into the forest with them that day; but he answered that he would rather stay at home. Thereupon she bade him goodbye and sent him to sleep, and with that, the two troll-wives went away.

Now, when they had been gone a fair time, Signy woke the Prince and told him to get up.

"We will go out into the forest," she said, "to where the troll-wives are. You must take your lance with you, and as soon as they begin to throw the life-egg to each other, you must throw the lance at the egg; but your life is at stake if you don't hit it."

This seemed to the Prince an excellent plan. They both got up on to the bed and chanted:

"Run, O run, O bed of mine,
Out into the forest."

The bed set off with them both and didn't stop until it was out in the forest by a certain oak. There they heard a lot of loud laughter. Signy told the Prince to climb up into the oak, and he did so. He saw the two troll-wives under the oak; one of them was holding a golden egg and throwing it to the other. At that moment the Prince threw his lance, and it hit the egg in mid-air, so that it broke. At this, the troll-wives were so overcome that they fell to the ground and foamed at the mouth. Then the Prince came down from the oak, and he and Signy went back to the cave on the bed in the same way as before. They took everything of value in the cave and filled both beds with it, after which they each

climbed on to one of the beds and chanted the runes. So the beds trundled off home to the cottage with them and all the treasures.

The peasant and his wife welcomed them and invited them to stay with them; they accepted, and stayed there overnight. Early next morning Signy went to the palace, approached the King, and hailed him. He asked who she was. She said she was a peasant's daughter from a poor cottage, and asked how he would reward her if she managed to bring his son safely home. The King said there was no point in answering that, for she would scarcely be able to find the Prince when none of his men had succeeded. Signy then asked whether he would not let her have the same reward as he had promised others, if she did manage to find his son. He replied that it should be so.

So Signy went back home to the cottage and asked the Prince to go with her to the palace. He did this, and she took him straight into the palace and up to the King, who welcomed his son and told him to sit down on his right and tell him all that had happened from the time that he became separated from his companions. The Prince sat on the throne next to his father and asked Signy to sit on his other side, and then he told the story just as it had happened, and said that this woman, by freeing him from the hands of the trolls, had saved his life.

When he had finished, Hlini got up, stood in front of his father, and asked him to let him take this girl as his wife. The King willingly gave his consent, and straightway arranged for a feast to which he invited all the nobles in his kingdom. The wedding celebrations lasted a week, and when they were ended everyone went home, praising the liberality of the King who had sent them away with fine gifts. And Signy and the Prince loved each other deeply and for many years. With this, the story ends.

WAKE-WELL AND HIS BROTHERS

Once there was a peasant and his wife. They had five sons, and there was a year between each of them. No one else lived in the cottage besides this couple and their sons. Once, as on many other occasions, the father and mother went out to the fields to mow hay, and left the brothers behind at home, alone; for at this time they were old enough to be left on their own without harm. The weather was fine that day, and the brothers were playing around the farm. An ancient and decrepit old woman came to them. She asked the boys to give her something to drink,

and they did so. When she had quenched her thirst she thanked them kindly and asked what their names were. The brothers said they had no names. Then the old woman said:

"I was very glad to get a drink from you, for I was dying of thirst; but I am now so poor that I can't reward you properly. But still, I am going to give you each a name. The eldest shall be called Wake-well, the second Hold-well, the third Cut-well, the fourth Track-well, and the fifth Climb-well. I give you these names in return for the drink, and I hope they will turn out to be right."

Then she said goodbye to them, and told them to remember the names carefully. She went on her way. In the evening when the boys' parents came home they asked if any one had come during the day. The brothers told them what had happened and all about the names which the old woman had given them. The peasant and his wife said they were pleased about this.

The brothers grew up with their parents until they were grown men. Then they said they wanted to go away from the cottage and seek their fortune elsewhere. Their parents gave them permission. So they set out, and nothing is told of their travels until they came to the King. They asked him for a winter's lodging and said they wanted it either for all of them or else for none of them. The King said they could stay with him for the winter if they were willing to watch over and guard his daughters on Christmas night. They agreed, and so they all stayed with the King.

Now the position was this. The King had had five daughters. But on the last two Christmas nights two of them had vanished, one on each night, from their bower, even though there had been someone watching over them. No one knew how they had disappeared, and they could not be found anywhere, in spite of all the expeditions and searches which the King had had made. When the brothers heard how things were, they asked the King to have a new bower made, very strongly built, and in a separate building.

Now Christmas came. The three Princesses who were left went into the bower, and all five brothers with them. They intended to keep watch over the Princesses throughout the night; but they all went to sleep, except Wake-well. There was a lamp burning, and the bower was firmly locked. During the first part of the night Wake-well saw a shadow come to one of the bower windows, and soon afterwards, a horribly big and monstrous hand stretched in over the bed of one of the Princesses. Then Wake-well quickly woke up his brothers, and Hold-well grasped the paw that was stretching in, so that the person it belonged to could not pull

it back, though he struggled to do so. Then Cut-well came and cut off the hand against the window-frame. The person outside ran away, and the brothers chased him. Track-well was able to follow the tracks, and finally they came to some very steep cliffs which no one could scale except Climb-well. He climbed up the cliff, threw a rope down to his brothers, and pulled them all up. They found themselves at the mouth of a great cave. They went in, and there they saw a troll-wife; she was weeping. They asked her what was the matter with her. She was reluctant to tell them at first, but in the end she did so. She said that during the night her husband had lost one of his hands, and this was why she was so upset. The brothers told her to cheer up and get hold of herself; for they could cure her husband.

"But no one may watch us," they said, "while we are carrying out the cure. We are so careful with our secret knowledge that we tie up any one who is near, so that no one can come to us while the cure is going on; for much depends on this."

They offered to cure the troll-wife's husband right away, if she would let them tie her up. She wasn't very keen on this, but finally she let herself be persuaded. So they tied her up tightly, and then they went in, along the cave, to her husband. He was the most horrible troll, and they didn't beat about the bush, but killed him straight away. This done, they went back to the troll-wife and killed her. They searched the cave but found nothing of value that they wanted to take away with them. Nor did they notice any more trolls there. But while they were searching they came upon a little side-cave opening off the main one, and when they went into it they saw both the lost Princesses there. They were chained up; one of them had plenty of flesh on her, but the other was only skin and bone. They were bemoaning their fate, and the plumper one was saying that she was to die today; for the trolls were going to have her for their Christmas dinner. But at that moment, the brothers went in and freed them, and told what had happened. Then the sisters cheered up, as one might expect, and the brothers took them home to the palace and put them in the bower with their sisters. The day had not yet dawned.

But when morning came the King went to the bower to see how the brothers had succeeded in guarding the Princesses. And when he heard everything that had happened during the night and saw all his daughters reunited there, he was so happy that he could scarcely contain himself for joy. Then he prepared an enormous feast, and that feast ended with each of the brothers celebrating his wedding with one of the King's

daughters. Afterwards, the brothers all became very great men, and they lived good and long lives, in the greatest good fortune.

And now the story is over.

THE STORY OF HILD THE GOOD STEPMOTHER

Once there was a King and a Queen in a certain kingdom. There was only one thing to spoil their happiness – that they had not been granted any children. The King had a counsellor whose name was Rufus: he was disliked by nearly everyone except the King and the Queen. He was the Queen's constant companion, and he was always with her wherever she went.

One fine day when there was snow on the ground, the Queen went driving on a sledge, and Rufus was with her. She became very hot on the sledge so that her nose bled, and she let the blood drip on to the snow. She told Rufus she wished she had a daughter whose complexion was as beautifully red and white as the blood on the snow. Rufus said her wish would be fulfilled; but yet the first time she set eyes on her daughter, she would not be able to avoid putting a spell on her which would compel her to burn her father's palace, have a baby before she was married, and kill a man. The Queen was willing to do anything to get a daughter, and when some time had passed it became evident that she was with child. Eventually the time came for her to be brought to bed, and all went well. But as soon as she heard the midwives say she had given birth to a beautiful baby girl, she begged them earnestly to take the child away from her as quickly as possible, because she didn't want to look at it. The midwives thought this very strange, but they took the baby to the King and told him what the Queen had said. He thought his daughter promised to be amazingly beautiful; he had her christened and called Ingibjörg, and then he sent her away to foster-parents in another part of the kingdom, a long way from the palace.

The Queen soon recovered in the normal way, and no one noticed that anything was wrong. The King often asked her to go with him to see their daughter, or to let the child come to them. But the Queen would not allow either. She said she could not see her daughter, but she did not say what would come of it if she did.

So time passed until Ingibjörg was ten years old, and so beautiful and promising that many people remarked on it. About this time, the Queen contracted a serious illness, which she thought would bring about her

death. So she sent for Ingibjörg, for she felt she had to see her, in spite of everything, before she died. When the girl arrived the Queen sent everyone out of the room where she lay, so that she could talk to her daughter in private. Ingibjörg came in and bent over her mother, intending to embrace her; but the Queen pushed her away, and laid on her the spell to which she was doomed, and which has already been described. After that, the Queen died, and Ingibjörg fainted away; she was still unconscious when the Queen's people came into the room. Everyone was amazed at what had happened. With careful nursing, Ingibjörg soon recovered; but she was very upset and sorrowful about her fate, though everyone thought this was because of the loss of her mother.

The King too was full of grief for a long time. He deeply mourned the Queen, and paid little attention to the government of his realm. He had a friend in his kingdom whom he trusted more than any one else because he had long proved himself to be a good and loyal counsellor. This man, when he heard of the King's neglect of affairs of state, set out to visit him. The King welcomed him, and was very glad to see him. Then this friend pointed out to him that continual sorrow and neglect of state affairs did him no good, and it would be much better for him to take another wife. Though his loss had been great, he could best forget his sorrows by choosing another Queen in place of the one who was dead. At first the King was reluctant to do this. He didn't want to hear any more about it, and said that second wives seldom turned out well. But his friend pressed the matter all the harder, and offered to go himself to find a wife who would be a consolation to him; he would, he said, choose him a wife no less carefully than if he were choosing for himself. So the King, because he trusted his friend better than any one else, allowed himself to be persuaded by his arguments.

The ambassador set out, and searched far and wide. He went to many kingdoms and saw princesses and noble ladies, but by no one was he so taken that he wished to make a proposal on behalf of his friend, the King. At last he heard of a certain Princess whose name was Hild. He was told that she was very like Princess Ingibjörg in appearance, and that her father ruled over a certain island. So the ambassador sailed there and, on leaving his ship, he went before the King and told him for what purpose he had come. The King said he would make no decision until he knew his daughter's wishes. He told the ambassador to wait in the hall till she came, so that he could be sure he had no secret words with her meanwhile, and then he was to make the proposal to her himself when she arrived.

The ambassador did as he was told, and waited until the tables were set up in the hall. Then a door at the side opened, and the Princess came in, with her maids-in-waiting, went up to her father, and bowed to him. The ambassador looked at her, and she seemed to him both fair and courteous, and very like Ingibjörg in appearance. He went up to the King and his daughter, made his speech, and asked for her hand on behalf of his own King. The King of the island said he had heard only good reports of the ambassador's King, but that his daughter must make up her own mind whether she wanted to betroth herself to him. The Princess said she would willingly accept the match that was offered to her, and she would go back with the ambassador, but that the engagement was to last for three years, because she was still young and largely inexperienced. The ambassador said he could promise this on behalf of his King; and so it was agreed that, on this condition, the Princess should be betrothed to the King.

Another ship was got ready for her journey, and she and the ambassador sailed away together. When the King saw them coming, he went down to the shore with his daughter and his courtiers to receive his Queen-to-be. He was straight away captured by her beauty; and everyone was amazed to see how alike were the Princess Ingibjörg and Hild, they being so distantly related. It was soon obvious also that they would get on very well together.

They all went to the palace, and the King wanted to celebrate his marriage with Hild immediately. But his friend said he could not do that, for Hild had consented to be betrothed to him only on condition that the engagement should last three years. The King agreed to this.

Hild had not been there very long before she asked him to have a separate bower built for herself and Ingibjörg. She said she expected that they would soon become good friends, and that it would be best for them both to be as near each other as possible. This was done, and they both went to live in the bower. The two friends got on wonderfully well, so that even their wishes always ran together.

When some time had passed Ingibjörg began to be much quieter than before. Hild asked her what was making her unhappy and urged her to speak out; but Ingibjörg would not tell her. Then Hild said there was no need for her to ask about the matter, for she knew that she was under a spell that would compel her to burn her father's palace. The Princess admitted that this was true, and she was in a terrible dilemma because of it. Hild told her not to worry, they would find some way out.

Towards the end of the summer, the King went away to collect the

taxes from his land, and about the same time everyone left the palace to go far and wide in search of apples. But Hild and Ingibjörg remained at home. Then Hild said that now they must take everything valuable out of the palace, and burn it while it was empty of people. They did this, and set fire to the palace in many places so that the fire spread over it in a very short time. When the people who were out apple-picking saw great flames coming from the palace they turned homewards, to try and save it. But when Hild and Ingibjörg saw them coming they took buckets and poured pitch on the fire as hard as they could, so that there was no chance of stopping the fire, even if all the palace men came to help. So it came about that the palace was burnt to ashes, and nothing could be done about it. Hild said that since this accident had happened, it was no good being idle. Everyone must start to build a palace in another place, and anyway, it was not such a great loss that the old palace had been burnt, for it had been so ugly that she could never have enjoyed being there for long.

So now all was hurry and bustle. They began work on the new palace, and put as much craftsmanship into it as they could. It was finished by the time the King came home, and was much more beautiful than the old one. The King was amazed at the change, and Hild told him about the accident that had happened to the old building, and begged him not to be angry with her for having the new palace built in its place, for she could never have lived with him in the old one. The King thought the new palace was so beautiful that he thanked Hild for the improvement that had been made to his home.

When the second year came round Ingibjörg again became sad, and wouldn't tell Hild, much less any one else, what was making her unhappy. Everything went as before; Hild guessed that now the time was coming when Ingibjörg would be compelled to have a baby before she was married, and Ingibjörg said this was true, and that she now had absolutely no idea what to do.

"We shall not die without trying something," said Hild. "You must go out into the forest. There is a certain house there, and you must stay in it for three nights; a man will come to you there, and you must do as he says. After that, you must come back home, and I will see to it that no disgrace falls on you because of this."

Then Ingibjörg went and was away for the time that had been arranged. Some time later Rufus went to the King and said he had a difficult matter to discuss with him. The King asked what it was, and Rufus replied that, though he might think it unlikely, his daughter was then with child.

The King told him not to talk such nonsense, for that was beyond belief. Rufus said he had not expected to be believed, but that the King could test the truth of the matter by laying his head in Ingibjörg's lap when he went to the friends' bower on Saturday, and seeing whether he didn't find something amiss.

On the Friday before the King was going to the bower for this purpose, Hild warned Ingibjörg that Rufus had told her father she was going to have a baby, and had advised him to put the matter to the test in the way already mentioned. At this, Ingibjörg became so frightened that she was quite overcome. Hild comforted her, and said:

"You must take the puppies away from our dog, wrap them up in a cloth, and put them under your apron. When the King notices the kicking of the puppies, he will think that what Rufus says is true. Then you must stand up and drop the puppies from under your apron, so that he sees."

Soon Saturday came, and the King went to the friends in the bower, as was his custom every Saturday. Ingibjörg did just as Hild told her. The King laid his head in her lap, and jumped back rather quickly when he felt the movement under his head. He asked her if she was going to have a baby. She did not reply, but stood up and dropped the puppies from under her apron. Then the King thought he understood what was what; he went to Rufus and was very angry with him for his wickedness and his slander against his daughter. He said he deserved to be slain, but that he would spare him because his late Queen had been so fond of him. Rufus said he had been telling the truth all the same, but that here there were tricks in the game which were concealed from the King. The conversation was then dropped for the time being, but later on, Rufus suggested that the King should get a doctor to examine some of Ingibjörg's blood, to see whether she was a virgin. The King could cut her a little on the hand, and pretend it was an accident; and thus he could obtain the blood and give it to the doctor to find the answer. The King answered that there was no need for him to make this test, because he trusted his daughter absolutely; but yet, perhaps he might do this.

Now it went as before. Hild knew what the King intended to do in the bower on the next Saturday, and she told Ingibjörg, who was just as frightened as before; but Hild said:

"We shall not die without trying something. We will sit next to each other and hold hands when the King comes; and when he cuts you, I shall move my hand against the edge of the knife and let a few drops of my blood drip on to your lap, and then wrap a cloth round my hand.

Then you must give your father your apron with my blood on it; but be careful not to let any drops of your own blood fall on to it."

Everything went according to plan. Hild moved her hand against the edge of the knife just as the King cut Ingibjörg, let the blood drip on to her lap, and then wrapped a cloth round her hand. The King asked Ingibjörg to take off her bloodstained apron and give it to him. She did so, and he took it to the doctor and bade him examine the blood. It then turned out that it was from an untouched virgin. The King was now even angrier with Rufus than before, but he let matters stand for the time being.

Time passed until the King's birthday. Then Rufus told him that now it would be proved that what he had said was true; for Ingibjörg was accustomed to dance the whole night through then, but she wouldn't do so this time, and he could take that as a sign. Hild knew of this plan of Rufus', and she said to Ingibjörg that, as it had long been said they were so alike, they must now exchange places and clothes. Ingibjörg must sit by the King during the night and pretend to be Hild, and she would dance in her place. So it came about, as the story-books say, that they each played their part. The Ingibjörg who was really Hild danced the whole night; towards morning, she had danced everyone off the floor and was left standing there alone, and then she said she wished the dance was only just beginning. But the King sat by Ingibjörg, thinking she was his betrothed, and feeling very pleased that Rufus had again been proved a liar.

After this, he rebuked Rufus, and said it was not because of any virtue in himself, but because of the former Queen, that he was not slain as a slanderer and a liar. But Rufus said his words would prove to be true, even if it were only later on.

Soon the time came for Ingibjörg to be brought to bed. Hild got a room ready for them both on the highest floor of the bower, and herself acted as midwife for Ingibjörg, letting no one else come in. She swaddled the baby, and put a three-stringed necklace of her own round its neck, and put it out on the bower wall. After that, she stayed with Ingibjörg all the time, and allowed no one to come in, not even the King, saying that Ingibjörg felt so ill that she could not bear any moving about or chattering. After a fortnight, Ingibjörg got up and went about again. She was somewhat paler than before, but Hild said this was due to long lying in bed, and everyone believed her.

Some time later, when Ingibjörg had completely recovered, so deep a depression came over her that she was almost beside herself. Then all

happened as usual. Hild guessed what was making her unhappy, that now she must kill a man. Ingibjörg said this was the reason, and that she was inconsolable and at her wit's end at the thought of it. Hild told her not to worry; for again they would find some way out.

Soon the time came round for the people to go out in search of apples. It happened that in one place there was a great tall apple-tree growing halfway down the sea-cliffs; the apples on this were the finest and the biggest, and someone had to be let down to it on a rope. No one dared to do this except Rufus. So now Hild suggested that they should go with the King when Rufus was being let down the cliff; Ingibjörg was to ask her father to let her hold the rope, and she was to lose her grip on it, so that Rufus fell to his death, for it would be fitting that his wickedness should fall on his own head. But Ingibjörg said she could never bring herself to do such a thing. Then Hild said she would take hold of the rope with her, at first. So it was decided between them. Ingibjörg asked her father to let her hold the rope when Rufus was let down the cliffside, to see how strong she was. The King let her do as she wished; both Hild and Ingibjörg took hold of the rope, but Hild quickly let go of it, and Ingibjörg a little later. And that was the death of Rufus. The two friends pretended that this accident was a terrible blow to them, so that the King should not be angry with them, but most people were well pleased that Rufus was dead, for everyone had some grudge against him.

So the next winter went by, and then the King arranged for his wedding feast and married Hild. She sat on his right, and Ingibjörg on his left. When evening came, there was a knocking at the door, and Hild said she ought to receive the guests. She went to the door, and the guest came into the hall to meet her, and straight away, she fell on his neck and kissed him. The King began to get rather annoyed; but Hild took the newcomer up to him and said he was her brother. Then she took him to Ingibjörg and told her this was the man she had slept with in the hut in the forest, and he was the father of her baby. The King was not very pleased at this news, but Hild went out of the hall, and came back a little later with a baby of about a year old in her arms. She gave it to Ingibjörg and said it was her own, and Ingibjörg recognized the necklace round its neck, and knew that what Hild said must be true. Then Hild told the King the whole story of the evil spell that had been laid on his daughter, and how she had escaped from her difficulties. She also said that a spell had been laid on her brother, that he should be a monster in the daytime, but a man at night, and that he should never escape from this enchantment until some Princess was willing to free him from it by

sleeping with him on three successive nights. Then Ingibjörg had lifted the spell from him, and had borne his baby, and in return Hild had helped her.

After this, Queen Hild's brother asked for Ingibjörg's hand in marriage, and this was willingly granted, both by her and by the King. The feast was extended, and both weddings were celebrated together.

So ends the story of Hild the good stepmother.