

Hungarian original titled "Királylány a Lángpalotában" published in the "A Csodálatos Fa" Erdélyi Szász Népmesék", collected by Josef Haltrich

The princess in the palace of flames

A long long time ago in Transylvania there was a very poor man who had as many children as the holes in the sieve. He has already asked every man in the village to be Godfather to his kids. Now that his wife was expecting to give birth again he was looking for a new Godfather. He stood by the village road, and saw an old man passing by. The old man accepted the invitation to become Godfather, and gave the poor man a cow as a gift.

When the poor man's new little boy was born, the cow also gave birth to a bull, and that bull had a golden star on his forehead. As the boy was growing up he shepherded the flock to the pasture, and one day the bull spoke to him. "You can lay down and rest; I'll take care of the herd." When the boy fell asleep the bull rocketed into the sky to graze on flowers growing from stars, and then returned to the pasture by the time the boy woke up.

One day he said to the boy. Hold onto my horns; we will visit the king. When you talk with the king ask him for a seven foot sword, and tell him that you'll bring her daughter back. The boy did as the bull requested. The king was very agreeable to the boy's request. The princess was abducted by a twelve headed dragon, and kept hostage in a palace of flames in a far far away land on the far side of sky-high mountains,, on the far shore of a huge ocean.. Many men tried to rescue the princess, but all failed.

Once the boy had the sword the bull told him. "You just hold onto my horns, and we'll be on our way. The bull flew up in the sky, and in a few seconds he landed at the foot of the sky-high mountains. The boy said: we might as well turn back; we'll never make it to the other side. The bull said to the boy: Maybe we won't, but maybe we will. Wait here until I look around. And with that the bull started to push the mountainside with his head, and in no time the mountains were pushed out of the way. The boy hopped on the back of the bull, and they flew to the edge of the huge ocean.

We might as well turn back said the boy. We'll never be able to get to the other side of this ocean. Maybe we won't, but maybe we will said the bull, and wit that he started to drink up the ocean. He drank until the ocean was gone. The walked across the ocean floor all the way to the other side.

There they could see the flaming palace, but once they got closer they had to stop. The flames were so hot that the boy said: we might as well turn back. We'll be roasted here; we'll never make it into the palace. The bull said: Maybe we won't, but maybe we will.

And with that he started to spew all the ocean water at the palace. Very soon the flames were gone, and the smoke and steam covered the palace. Then they heard a thunder, a sure sign that the twelve headed dragon was coming. The bull said to the boy. Now it's your turn to use that sword. Just make sure you cut off all the twelve heads at once. The boy did just that, and with the death of the dragon, the palace doors opened up, and the princess ran out.

The bull said to the boy: You are on your own from here" and the bull flew up into the sky to graze.

The boy took the hand of the princess, and lead her all the way home. The king was so happy that he called for a wedding of the princess and the boy. Since that day there was happiness in the entire kingdom.