The Giant on top of the Mountain

By Ben Droste

Edited by Jade

myla.giroue@colorado.edu

Once there was a princess that was kidnapped by a Giant. The Giant said that if no one could be him in his challenge after some time he would take the princess as his wife. The king promised the kingdom and the princess’s hand to anyone who could beat the giants challenge.

The youngest son of a farmer heard of the king’s promise and decided to go after the giant. The farmer heard of what his son wanted to do and gave him directions, “First head through the forest and get on the road. Follow the road away from the castle and once at the end of the road, look for the lone mountain. There you will find the giant's lair.” With that said the farmer gave the boy his blessing.

The boy began his journey through the forest that was renowned for housing thieves. As the boy continued through the forest he overheard laughter. Under the cover of night the boy headed towards the sound. The source of the laughter was a group of drunken thieves. The boy overheard one thief saying “That foolish merchant, did he think giving us his magic drinking horn would stop us from robbing him of everything. Not even his life was safe” The boy fearing for his life decided to hide where he was and wait for the thieves to pass out. As the thieves began to pass out one by one the boy saw the drinking horn was left unattended, so the boy sneaked into the camp and took the horn before he continued through the forest.

When the boy reached the road, it began to rain. As he continued down the road he came upon an old woman huddled under a tree to stay out of the rain. The boy, being a kind soul, greeted the woman and offered her his cloak. The old woman accepted the cloak and as thanks, gave the boy an apple and a large round stone stating, “These items will help you on your journey. This apple will heal any wound. Take it as thanks from this old woman. Many people have passed by without a glance, and you were the first to stop.”

“What about the stone?” the boy asked.

“You will know what to do with it soon” replied the old woman. With that said the boy accepted the gifts and continued on.

Further down the road the boy came upon a troll pulling a cart. The troll said to the boy. “Hello young man, I am a traveling merchant. Would you be willing to buy something from this cart. How about this cloak, it is very useful. It is said to make the wearer invisible.”

The boy thought ‘that cloak would be useful in my journey. This troll does not look that smart. Maybe could trick him into giving me the cloak.’ The boy replied to the troll. “I would love to buy the cloak, however I don't have any money but I do have something to trade. Look at this stone. Is it not amazing? This stone will turn lead into gold with but a touch. Surely this would be a worthy trade for such a cloak.” the boy lied.

The troll thought to himself ‘This boy is foolish. A stone like that would be priceless. I could make all the gold in the world and live life as the richest troll in the land.’

“Such a stone worthy. Here is your cloak.” the troll said.

The boy took the cloak fastened it around his neck and disappeared. Now invisible he continued down the road, hear a cry of frustration and thought ‘That was a very foolish troll. Every merchant would know to test the object before they made the trade.”

Once at the end of the road the boy began to head to the lone mountain.

Once at the base of the mountain the boy found a large ram that had a broken leg. “I assume that you are here to challenge the giant. If you help me I will help you. This mountain was my home before the giant moved in and took the land. Help me get better and I will show you a secret path to the giant's house.”

The boy agreed to help the goat and gave the goat his magic apple to heal the goat’s leg. As the ram stood up he said “Follow me. The path is this way”. The boy followed the Ram to a small well-hidden hole in a rock. After crawling through the rock the boy found a small goat path that climbed the mountain. After following the ram up the path the boy was standing next to a cliff. “If you can, get the giant to come to this cliff. Here we will defeat the giant.” the ram said. The boy agreed.

After leaving the ram at the cliff the boy reached the giant's house, with the giant sitting outside. “So you seek to challenge me do you boy. Well first you must give me a gift or else I will eat you.”

The boy, thinking fast said “Oh great giant, here is my gift to you. This is a magical drinking horn. It will always be full with wine. I hope it is grand enough for me to earn the right to challenge you.”

“This gift is worthy. Come inside and feast while I tell you my challenge.” replied the giant. The boy followed the giant into his home, leading him to the great hall, where the princess was sitting. “Here is my challenge, boy. You must determine the name of this home in three guesses, or else I will eat you. I will tell you, several people better than you have not been able to discern the name” Boasted the giant. “You must guess once right now or else I will count it as twice wrong guesses.”

“How is that fair?” asked the boy.

“I never said my challenge is fair, boy do you refuse to answer?” The giant said grinning.

“Well then. Is the name ‘Storms Rest’ because the storm outside does not hit the home?” The boy guessed.

“That is a good guess, but no. That is one mark against you. You have one day to before you next guess. Enjoy the home and eat to your hearts content.” replied the giant.

The next day the giant said to the boy “It is time for your second guess.”

“Is the home called ‘Twin Tree Rock’ for the rock outside with two trees growing out of it?” guessed the boy.

“Again a good guess, but no. That is two marks against you. One more and you will be my next meal.” said the giant.

That night the boy put on his cloak of invisibility and snuck around the house trying to find out what the home was called. The boy came upon a great door and decided to go in. Once inside the room the boy saw the princess and removed his cloak. “Are you the giant’s challenger?” she asked.

“Yes I am. Would you know of what this house is called?” asked the boy.

“No. He has made sure to not tell me” she replied. However as luck would hold, the giant had decided to celebrate his future victory against the boy by drinking heavily from the magic horn.

“Hahaha. The foolish boy will never determine what this home is called, and after I eat him I will take the princess to be my bride. For he will never learn that my home is called ‘Ram Horn Point’ because of the great ram that I forced away. Hahaha” the giant exclaimed drunkenly.

The boy and the princess looked at each other and grinned. They were going to pass the giants challenge.

The next morning the giant called the boy outside to the cliff the Ram told the boy about and said “Boy, it is your final chance! Tell me my home's name and you will be free to go with the princess. Else I will feast on you.” The giant said smugly.

“Your home is called ‘Ram Horn Point’. Now we will take our leave.” stated the boy.

“Fine. Leave my home and never return. I never want to see hair or hide of you again.

“Of course. You will never see me again. You will also never see your home again.” Said the boy. With that statement the Ram came charging in and hits the giant in the back. Knocking him off the top of the cliff. The giant hit the ground with a ground shaking crash and did not move.

With the giant defeated the Ram reclaimed his home. The boy and the princess return to the King. The King was overjoyed and gave the boy the kingdom and the princess to marry.

I decided to create my own magic tale. Some of the characteristics that I used to in my tale are: the number three, magic helpers, magic items, the Other, and several tropes that have appeared in Scandinavian folk tales. I decided to show the number three in a couple of places. One location that I demonstrated the number three is in the number of magical objects: the never ending drinking horn, the cloak of invisibility and the apple of healing. The other location that the number three shows up is also a trope seen in some of the folktales we have read, the three days to guess the name of the home. The magic helper in this tale is the old woman during the farm boy’s journey. She provides the boy with a means to get a magical item and a magical item. Both items are essential for the boy’s quest. The healing apple is used to heal the Ram, who shows the farm boy the path up the mountain. The cloak of invisibility is the item the magic helper helps the boy get. The stone she game him along with the boys wit was what the boy needed to trick the troll into selling the cloak of invisibility.