

Excerpt from Jacob Grimm and Wilhelm Grimm, *Grimm's Household Tales*, Volume 2 (1884), trans. Margaret Hunt.

Then he landed and saw a beautiful castle before him, and set out to go to it. When he entered it, however, he found that it was bewitched. He went through every room, but all were empty until he reached the last, where a snake lay coiled in a ring. The snake, however, was an enchanted maiden, who rejoiced to see him, and said, "Hast thou come, oh, my deliverer? I have already waited twelve years for thee; this kingdom is bewitched, and thou must set it free." "How can I do that?" he inquired. "To-night come twelve black men, covered with chains who will ask what thou art doing here; keep silence, however; give them no answer, and let them do what they will with thee; they will torment thee, beat thee, stab thee; let everything pass, only do not speak; at twelve o'clock, they must go away again. On the second night twelve others will come; on the third, four-and-twenty, who will cut off thy head, but at twelve o'clock their power will be over, and then if thou hast endured all, and hast not spoken the slightest word, I shall be released." ... Then said he, "I will gladly set thee free." And everything happened just as she had said; the black men could not force a single word from him, and on the third night the snake became a beautiful princess, who came with the water of life and brought him back to life again. So she threw herself into his arms and kissed him, and there was joy and gladness in the whole castle. After this their marriage was celebrated, and he was King of the Golden Mountain.