



Projekt Grundtvig: LINA



Vzdelávanie a kultúra

Program celoživotného vzdelávania

BREAKWOOD

In Slovak Fairy Tales – Rose Anne, Mladé letá 1988

From Pavol Došinský's Collection Adapted for children by Pavel Glocko, Translated by Heather Trebatická

The story is about three friends who are all very powerful – Breakwood who can break wood with his bare hands, Mouldiron who can mould iron like dough and Topplehill who can move mountains. They have to carry out tasks in order to rescue the princess. In this except there is also the dwarf Longbeard, who is a negative character.

Excerpt

When they came home, the first thing they said was, “Well, have you cooked a meal for us?”

“Yes, I’ve cooked it, you can take it off the fire.”

“And what about you?”

“I’m ill, I won’t eat.”

They removed the gruel from the fire, tasted it – only to find the gruel half-cooked and the meat quite raw.

“Why didn’t you cook it longer?” Breakwood demanded. “And haven’t you even finished making the rope?”

“You can see I’m not well,” Topplehill groaned. He didn’t confess what had happened.

“We’ve completely wasted the day today,” said Breakwood. “We neither found the pothole, nor ate our fill. But tomorrow Mouldiron will show himself a better man and we’ll carry on the search.”

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The next day Brekwood and Topplehill searched everywhere, in all directions, but they found nothing. Mouldiron cooked the gruel and twisted the rope. When the gruel was almost ready, he went to stir it and remove it from the fire. At this moment Longbeard called down the chimney, “Cook gruel you may, cook, ... but eat it you won’t.”

“Neither will you, but my friends will,” retorted Mouldiron.

A while later Longbeard spoke up again, “Cook gruel you may, cook, ... but eat it you won’t.”

“Ah, but neither will you, Breakwood and his friends will.”

And the third time, as Mouldiron was taking the cauldron off the fire, Longbeard called down the chimney, “Cook gruel you may, and is it ready to eat?”

“Yes, it is, what’s that to you?”

“What? I’ll eat it hot on your bare belly!”

Longbeard dropped down the chimney, pinned Mouldiron to the ground, tipped the gruel out onto his belly, gobbled it all up and disappeared from where he came.

“Ow, you ugly dwarf, you got me this time!” cursed Mouldiron, humiliated. Once more he carried in wood and water and cooked as well as he could.

In the evening the hungry friends came home and sat down to their meal. The gruel was half-cooked and the meat quite raw.

“Why didn’t you cook it better?” asked Breakwood, “and haven’t you even finished making the rope?”

“I would have,” Mouldiron tried to make excuses, “but I’m feeling out of sorts today, nothing has gone right.”

“Well, it can’t be helped,” said Breakwood, “we didn’t find the pothole either. Tomorrow you two will go into the forest and I’ll stay at home.”

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On the third day these two set out into the forest, taking some food with them, because they were afraid they would come home to a poor meal. Breakwood carried in wood and water, chopped up an ox and put the gruel on to boil, and while it was cooking he even finished making a rope three thousand fathoms long. He was about to remove the gruel from the fire when Longbeard began to call down the chimney to him, “Ha, what are you doing in my house? Are you cooking gruel?”

“Yes, I am, but if you want to know, it ’s already cooked. Come down and I’ll give you a taste of it!”

Longbeard slipped down the chimney, intending to eat it on this man’s belly too. But Breakwood gripped Longbeard firmly by his beard. He had already guessed that something was wrong the day before, so he had prepared a log of beechwood, which he had split slightly. He dragged Longbeard over to the log and trapped his beard and fingers in the crack and then began to beat him with his cudgel. Longbeard begged as best he knew to be set free, promising to leave them in peace. But Breakwood did not let up and ordered him to give him his beard, in return for his freedom. He knew very well that the dwarf’s strength was all in his beard. Longbeard didn’t want to agree for a long time and begged to show them the hole in the ground they were looking for. Breakwood pretended to be even more angry and said, “Very well, if you won’t of you own accord, you’ll have to give it up against your will. We’ll see which of us can keep it up longer – me beating or you howling!”

Longbeard saw there was nothing to be done and so he gave up his beard.

Breakwood hid it in his pocket and let Longbeard go, saying, “Yes see, you fool! If you’d done as I told you once, you’d have got off without a hiding.”

Once freed, Longbeard took to his heels and fled like lightning. In the middle of the meadow he lifted up a stone and disappeared underground. But

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Breakwod took good note of the direction in which Longbeard fled and the spot in the middle of the meadow where he disappeared. That was all he needed.

Late in the evening the other two, Toplehill and Mouldiron, returned home. They had deliberately taken their time so that they wouldn't have to eat uncooked gruel.

“Well, did you find that hole?” Breakwood greeted them.

“Only if it's meant to be a mouse hole,” they retorted irritably. “And have you cooked the gruel?”

“Yes, I have, come and eat!”

“You just leave it to cook a bit longer and then let it cool,” Mouldiron goaded Breakwood.

“Well, taste it and see whether you like it,” Breakwood laughed at them.

They tasted it, but the gruel was cold. They realized immediately that Breakwood had fared differently to them. They were nettled to think that their bellies were scalded and Breakwood's was not. But they said nothing, just glancing at one another, as if they had already come to some agreement.

When Breakwood told them how he had trapped Longbeard and got him to hand over his beard, and what's more that they needn't look a step further, that the hole leading to hell was in the middle of the meadow – then these two *were all the more angry with him, but even now they didn't show it*

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