



# The Squire's Bride



Peter Christian Asbjörsen

and Jorgen Moe

translated by George Walle Dasent

illustrated by Timothy Banks

Once upon a time there was a rich squire who owned a large farm and had plenty of silver at the bottom of his chest and money in the bank besides; but he felt there was something wanting, for he was a widower.<sup>1</sup>

One day the daughter of a neighboring farmer was working for him in the hayfield. The squire saw her and liked her very much, and as she was the child of poor parents, he thought if he only hinted that he wanted her she would be ready to marry him at once.

So he told her he had been thinking of getting married again.

“Ay! One may think of many things,” said the girl, laughing slyly. In her opinion the old fellow ought to be thinking of something more proper for him than getting married.

“Well, you see, I thought that you should be my wife!”

“No thank you all the same,” said she, “that’s not at all likely.”

The squire was not accustomed to being contradicted,<sup>2</sup> and the more she refused him, the more determined he was to get her.

But as he made no progress in her favor, he sent for her father and

<sup>1</sup>widower—a man whose wife has died

<sup>2</sup>contradicted—stated the opposite of

told him that if he could arrange the matter with his daughter, he would forgive him the money he had lent him, and he would also give him the piece of land which lay close to his meadow into the bargain.

“Yes, you may be sure I’ll bring my daughter to her senses,” said the father. “She is only a child, and she doesn’t know what’s best for her.” But all his coaxing<sup>3</sup> and talking did not help matters. She would not have the squire, she said, if he sat buried in gold up to his ears.

The squire waited day after day, but at last he became quite angry and impatient. He told the father of the girl that if he expected him to stand by his promise, he would have

to put his foot down now, for he would not wait any longer.

The man knew no other way out of it but to let the squire get everything ready for the wedding; and when the parson<sup>4</sup> and the wedding guests had arrived, the squire should send for the girl as if she were wanted for some work on the farm. When she arrived, she would have to be married right away, so that she would have no time to think it over.

The squire thought this was well and good, and so he began cooking and baking and getting ready for the wedding in grand style. When the

---

<sup>3</sup>coaxing—getting something by being nice or gentle

<sup>4</sup>parson—a clergyman or minister

---



guests had arrived, the squire called one of his farm lads and told him to run down to his neighbor and ask him to send him what he had promised.

“But if you are not back in a twinkling,” he said, shaking his fist, “I’ll—”

He did not say more, for the lad ran off as if he had been shot at.

“My master has sent me to ask for what you promised him,” said the lad, when he got to the neighbor, “but there is no time to be lost, for he is terribly busy today.”

“Yes, yes! Run down into the meadow and take her with you. There she goes!” answered the neighbor.

The lad ran off, and when he came to the meadow, he found the daughter there raking the hay.

“I am to fetch what your father has promised my master,” said the lad.

“Ah, ha!” thought she. “Is that what they are up to?”

“Ah, indeed!” she said. “I suppose it’s that little bay mare of ours.

You had better go and take her. She stands there tethered<sup>5</sup> on the other side of the pea field,” said the girl.

The boy jumped on the bay mare and rode home at full gallop.

“Have you got her with you?” asked the squire.

“She is down at the door,” said the lad.

“Take her up to the room my mother had,” said the squire.

“But master, how can that be managed?” said the lad.

“You must do as I tell you,” said the squire. “If you cannot manage her alone, you must get

the men to help you,” for he thought the girl might turn rebellious.

When the lad saw his master’s face, he knew it would be of no use to contradict him. So he went and got all the farm-tenants who were there to help him. Some pulled at the head, and the forelegs of the mare and others pushed from behind; at last they got her up the stairs and



---

<sup>5</sup>tethered—tied up

into the room. There lay all the wedding finery ready.

“Now, that’s done, master!” said the lad; “but it was a terrible job. It was the worst I have ever had here on the farm.”

“Never mind, you shall not have done it for nothing,” said his master. “Now send the women up to dress her.”

“But I say, master—!” said the lad.

“None of your talk!” said the squire. “Tell them they must dress her and mind and not forget either wreath or crown.”

The lad ran into the kitchen.

“Look here, lasses,” he said; “you must go upstairs and dress up the bay mare as a bride. I expect the master wants to give the guests a laugh.”

The women dressed the bay mare in everything that was there, and then the lad went and told his master that now she was ready dressed, with wreath and crown and all.

“Very well then, bring her down!” said the squire. “I will receive her myself at the door,” said he.

There was a terrible clatter on the stairs; for that bride, you know, had no silken shoes on.

When the door opened and the squire’s bride entered the parlor, you can imagine there was a good deal of tittering and grinning.

And as for the squire, you may be sure he had had enough of that bride, and they say he never went courting<sup>6</sup> again.

---

<sup>6</sup>courting—trying to win love or affection

---

