

EPIC HELPERS IN ENGLISH FOLK TALES WHO REVEAL THEIR NAMES THROUGH SONGS

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Abstract. This article analyses specific features of epic helpers in English fairy tales. There are many types of helpers (fairies, magicians, dragons, animals, birds, people, etc.) who assist the protagonist in all fairy tales of the world. Helpers in English folk tales are so different and unique that one type of them help the main character in condition of guessing their name in a few days, however they reveal that name by accident through songs.

Key words: Fairy tale, folklore, motive, protagonist, donor, helper, animal helper, magical helper, song.

In world folklore, there are many types of folk tales in which a protagonist defeats a mysterious and threatening helper when he finds his name: Tom Tit Tot (England), ХЛАМУШКА (Russia), Whuppity Stoorie (Scotland), Pancimanci (Hungary), Rumpelstiltskin (Germany), Daiku to Oniroku (Japan), Myrmidon (France), Ruidoquedito (South America), The lazy beauty and her aunts (Ireland), Giltrutt (Island), Бибігул (Kazakstan) and etc. Eventhough these people live far from each other, it is surprising that the similar motive is observed in their folklore.

Vladimir Yakovlevich Propp, Russian scientist explored a donor character in fairytales. This character tests the hero, questions, sets tasks before assisting or giving advice. In old fairy tales, the “donor” or animal helper is a crucial element to the survival and success of the main hero, since they are typically animals that provide assistance in the journey or quest.

The following English folk tales show the same motive, i.e. an unknown creature, a fairy, a devil or an elf helps the protagonist and lays down only one condition: his name. Otherwise his will should be fulfilled. But, he reveals his name through a song unintentionally.

Duffy and the Devil (England, Cornwall). This story tells that there was a rich Squire by the name of Lovel of Trove in Cornwall. He lived with his housekeeper, an old woman who was unable to properly mend and knit her employer's clothing. One day, the Squire sets out to find another housekeeper when he hears a local woman berating a girl because she is shiftless and lazy. The girl, Duffy, is immediately hired by the Squire and the two go to his home. When confronted with her duties, the lazy Duffy somehow finds a way to destroy the only sewing machine. Uttering an oath, she is quickly joined by a little three-foot tall devil. The devil informs the girl that he will do all her chores and after three years he will take her away with him. That is unless, of course, she guesses his name within those three years. Duffy is a careless sort, and she readily agrees. The clothes the devil makes are fabulous and after a while the Squire and Duffy wed. When the time comes to pay the devil's due, Duffy panics and finds she cannot discover his name. With a little help from Old Jone, the older servant, the problem is solved and everyone is able to get back to things the way they used to be. Old Jone hears the devil sing a song in which he reveals his name.

Whuppity Stoorie (Scotland) A Scottish variant of **Rumpelstiltskin** and **Tom Tit Tot**. Grumphy, a beloved pig, is ill. A fairy woman dressed in green appears and asks the animal's owner, "If I cure your pig, what will you give me?" Too quickly the woman answers, "Anything your ladyship asks." The price exacted for the cure is the woman's daughter, Kate. The green lady will return to claim the child in three days, unless they can guess her name. The mother grieves the first day. The next day she decides to go through the wood and comes across that fairy spinning and singing where she finds out her name.

Gwarwyn-a-throt (Wales). An elf helps the girl with the housework and spinning. But never shows himself. Once the girl cheats him telling that all are leaving the house for some time. The elf comes out, spins and sings a song telling his name. As soon as hearing his own name the elf runs away and never comes back.

Tom Tit Tot(England). The main character is a young woman, confronted with an impossible task of spinning. She must produce a ridiculous amount of thread. There's no way for her to do it, until she receives otherworldly help from a strange being. However, she must now guess this creature's name. All of a sudden, her husband goes hunting into the wood and discovers a strange creature spinning and singing a song that reveals his real name.

Peerie Fool.(Orkney Islands, Scotland) In the story of Peerie Fool we meet three princesses who, after their father is dead, live with their mother in a small house in Rousay. They grow cabbage in a yard. One day they discover that some of the cabbage has been stolen. It turns out to have been stolen by a giant, and the princesses decide to take it in turns to be on guard in order to confront him. Over the course of three nights, the giant picks up each of the princesses and carries them home in his straw basket. On their arrival at the giant's house, the princesses are told that they have to milk the cow, put her to the hill, make food, tease, card and spin the wool and make cloth before the giant comes back. The first two princesses make a poor job of their work, and it is made worse by their refusal to share their food with a group of fairy folk who arrive at the house. The giant then peels the skin off them and flings them into the hen-house. When it is the turn of the third princess, she agrees to share her food. A little yellow-headed boy of the fairy folk then offers to help her with her wool work and the weaving. All he wants in return is for her to guess his name when he comes back. The group of fairies then goes away with the wool. Later, an old woman arrives and asks if she can stay the night. The princess is worried what the giant might say, and sends her away. She instead finds a resting-place at a nearby mound, where she suddenly hears and sees the fairy-folk through a crack. They are busy teasing, carding and spinning, and urging them on is the yellow-headed boy saying

“Tease, teasers, tease!

Card, carders, card!

Spin, spinners, spin!

For Peerie Fool, Peerie Fool is my name.”

The old wife runs back to the princess with these news, so when the yellow-headed boy comes back with the cloth, she is able – after pretending to guess some wrong names – to tell him his name. He and all the fairy-folk run away, and on their way they meet the giant, who notices their ugly looks. The fairy-folk tell him that the hard work with the wool is to blame for their looks, and he vows that the princess shall never work again. He is also very pleased when he sees the cloth. Sometime later, the princess is longing for home. She finds her sisters, gets their skins back on, and manages to smuggle them home by tricking the

giant into carrying them home hidden in his straw basket with hay on top. Last, she smuggles herself home in the same way, where the mother and sisters await the giant with boiling water. This kills the giant, and the queen and princesses live happily ever after.

Penelop (Wales). A young man falls in love with a fairy. The fairy agrees only if he finds her name. The young man reveals her name while walking in the wood. They get married, but make a deal. After many years of marriage the man throws iron to the fairy by accident, the deal is broken and the fairy comes back to her family.

The Rival Kempers(Ireland). According to the tale, Shaun was a brave young man and all girls of the country wanted to marry him. Shaun decided to marry the girl who wins the kemp, a competition of spinning. Bidy and Sally are rivals who try to win. Bidy's brother Johnny helps his sister in revealing the name of the woman who promised to assist spinning if her name is discovered.

Fairy tales reflect national aspects as well. Kempers are still preserved in Ireland. In the north of Ireland there are spinning meetings of unmarried females frequently held at the houses of farmers. Every young woman who has got the reputation of being a quick and expert spinner attends them.

This type of folk tales are investigated in Aarne-Tompson classification under the type 500 and called "Name of the Helper." There are hundreds of such tales throughout the world with the same motive in which a mysterious and threatening helper is defeated when the protagonist discovers his name.

Conclusion: To sum up, fairy tales can include magic, talking animals, or a touch of realism. Fairy tales don't always contain a moral or lesson, they can be pure entertainment, but often teach about consequences and values like kindness and patience. Helpers can be seen in most fairytales throughout the world and they have different characteristics, specific features as they belong to different nations.

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