

301 The Three Stolen Princesses.

(Including the previous Types 301A and 301B.) This type combines various introductory episodes with a common main part:

Introductory episodes:

(1) A king banishes his three daughters to the underworld (they are abducted by monsters [H1385.1]). Three brothers (a supernatural hero with his extraordinary companions) go to find the daughters.

(2) A monster (dragon, snake, etc.) steals golden apples from the king's garden. Three brothers (princes) lie in wait. Only the youngest is able to wound the monster. The brothers follow his bloody tracks [F102.1, N773].

(3) A child of magic birth (son of a bear or horse [B631], born from tears) grows into a youth gifted with exceptional strength [T615]. He takes to the road for adventure (luck), and allies himself with two companions with extraordinary powers [F601]. When they prepare their food, twice a little man (dwarf, devil, giant) spoils it (eats the food and beats up the cook) [F451.5.2]. Only the hero is able to catch and punish the little man, who then shows the companions the entrance to the underworld.

Main part:

The companions (brothers) come to a well (pit, cave) [F92] and lower the hero (youngest brother) into it [F96]. The hero overcomes monsters (dragons, devils) and rescues (the three) princesses (with the princesses' help, using a weapon, only by his strength, by magic means) [R111.2.1]. (The princesses give him presents.) His treacherous companions pull the princesses up but leave the hero below [K1931.2] (cut off the rope [K963], overturn the basket). They force the maidens to name them as their rescuers [K1933].

The hero returns to the upper world with the help of a spirit, which gives him the ability to fly (a bird to whom he has to feed his own flesh [B322.1]; he ascends on a climbing plant which he himself planted, etc.). The princesses delay their wedding (for a year). On the wedding day, the hero comes to the castle and is imprisoned. But the truth comes to light (the hero is recognized by the princesses when he shows the presents [H80]), and the impostors are punished (banished, killed) [Q262]. The hero marries the youngest princess [L161] and becomes king. Cf. Type 300.

In some variants, the hero has to go to much deeper regions of the underworld before he is able to come back to the upper world, because he mistakenly mounted a black animal (ram, sheep, goat, horse, lion, snake) instead of a white one. Finally the white animal carries him up again.

Combinations: This type is usually combined with episodes of one or more other types, esp. 300,302,313,400,550, 650A, and also 300A, 303,304, 312D, 314, 327B, 400, 402, 506, 513A, 516, 530, 1060, 1088, 1115, and 1910.