

554 The Grateful Animals.

(Including the previous Types 553, 554*, 554A*-C*, and 556A*-E*.)

This miscellaneous type comprises various tales dealing with helpful deeds of grateful animals. In numerous tales the type occurs only as episode. Most of the variants present the following basic structure:

A man while travelling meets three animals (from air, water and earth) who are in trouble. Because he rescues them, they promise to help him if needed. Later he falls in love with a princess whose father sets three impossible tasks for him to accomplish. With the help of the grateful animals he succeeds on three successive days [B582.2, H982, B571] and wins the princess.

In some variants a part is added in which the man accompanies his elder brothers. When they try to injure some animals, he prevents them from doing so or compensates for their misdeeds and carelessness. When they trample on an ant-hill, he builds it up again, when they leave wounded animals, he takes care of them, etc.

Combinations: This type is usually combined with episodes of one or more other types, esp. 300,302,400,531, and also 303,313,314,317,329,402,465, 513A, 513B, 551, 552, 552A, 556F*, 560, 570, 610, 613, 667, and 673.