

570 The Rabbit-Herd.

A king offers his daughter in marriage to whoever can herd (catch, tame, train) his 100 (more or fewer) rabbits (roosters, sheep, goats, geese, partridges) without losing any [T68, H335, H1112].

The youngest of three brothers is kind to an old woman (to whom his brothers were unkind) and receives a magic whistle with which he can summon the rabbits [D1441.1.2]. In order to avoid the marriage, members (deputies) of the royal family (in disguise) try to buy one of his rabbits. The young man demands a degrading humiliating act (e.g. jumping on one leg, dancing to the whistle, turning somersaults, attaching a pot to his or her bottom, being beaten, cutting flesh out of his/her own body, branding his/her skin, tearing an animal carcass with teeth, kissing the backside of an animal [K1288] or of a person, sodomy, eating excrement, kissing him or sleeping with him [K1358]). After the demands are fulfilled, the young man whistles and the rabbit comes back to him.

Not willing to admit defeat, the king sets another task: the young man should fill a sack of lies (truths) [H1045]. When the king realizes that the "lies" are actually truths that humiliate the royal family [K1271.1.1], he announces that the sack is filled up and agrees to the marriage.

Combinations: This type is usually combined with episodes of one or more other types, esp. 513B, 554, 571, 850, and also 303, 502, 513A, 610, 851, 853, 857, 1000, 1115, and 1020C.