

{AT577} The King's Tasks.

The three brothers; the oak in the king's castle yard. The king's daughter is promised to the one who is able to perform certain difficult tasks, usually to cut down a large tree. The three brothers set out, and the youngest is the only one who pays attention to certain things they see on the way, or who shows kindness toward an old woman. Accordingly he receives magic objects. With these and with the information he has he succeeds where the others fail.

— Adapted from Christiansen FFC XLVI 25. Cf. Type 550.

Motifs:

[H335] Tasks assigned suitors. Bride as prize for accomplishment.

[T68] Princess offered as prize.

[H1115.1] Task: cutting down huge tree which magically regrows.

[D1602.2] Felled tree raises itself again.

[D950.2] Magic oak tree.

[H1242] Youngest brother alone succeeds on quest.

[L13] Compassionate youngest son.

[Q2] Kind and unkind.

[H961] Tasks performed by close observation.

[H971.1] Tasks performed with help of old woman.

[H821] Magic object received.

[D1581] Task performed by use of magic object.

[D1601.14] Self-chopping axe.

[D1601.18.2] Selfplaying violin.

[D1601.15] Automatic shovel.

[D1601.16] Self-digging spade.

[L161] Lowly hero marries princess.

Bibliography :

**Christiansen " 'Displaced' Folktales" *Humaniora* (Taylor Festschrift, Locust Valley, N.Y. 1960)
161—171;

Christiansen *Norske Eventyr* 87;

Coffin 1.

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Lappish (577*) 1;

Finnish-Swedish (576**) 1;

Swedish 4 (Uppsala 2, misc. 2);

Norwegian (577**) 14, Solheim 1;

Danish 1;

Irish 4;

Dutch 1;

German: Ranke 1;

Austrian: Haiding No. 67;

Italian (Tuscan 554 c 1);

Slovenian 1;

Greek 3.

— Franco-American 2;

Spanish-American: Hansen (Dominican Republic) 2;

West Indies (Negro) 6.

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