

## **Stith Thompson - The Folktale - p 155**

The princess as a prize for correct guessing is the principal feature of The Louse-Skin (Type 621). She has had a louse fattened until it becomes as big as a calf and at its death has had a dress made from its skin. She agrees to marry the man who can guess what the dress is made from. The hero learns by trickery, and thus wins her. The major interest in this tale is concerned with the tricks whereby the puzzle is solved.(7)

As an autonomous story, we find it here and there all over Europe, whence it has been carried to Indonesia and the Philippines. Within Europe, the overwhelming majority of the variants are from four east Baltic countries. In other parts of Europe, the tale is more likely to serve merely as an introduction to Cupid and Psyche (Type 425B), King Thrushbeard (Type 900), and The Robber Bridegroom (Type 955). In some cases our story proceeds, like the next one we shall consider, with the giving of the princess to the suitor to whom she turns in the night.

A tale very closely related to the last two, since in part it is like one, and in part like the other, is The Birthmark~ of the Princess (Type 850). The hero here, like the rabbit-herd, has a magic pipe which causes hogs to dance. The princess covets his dancing hogs, and he sells them to her in return for seeing her naked. By using his knowledge of her birthmarks thus acquired as a basis for blackmail, he wins her as his wife. As a further test, the princess is to be given to the suitor to whom she turns in the night. The hero and a rival suitor are put to bed with her. They each strive to entice her and finally she turns to the hero.

(7). For the guessing or finding out of the nature or cause of a mystery, see The Danced-out Shoes (Type 306) and Tom-Tit-Tot (Type 500).