

Glüschigna

The fairytale of mermaid Glüschigna of Lej da Segl

Long, long ago, a mighty sea king lived in Lej da Segl. His wife had given him seven beautiful daughters, of whom he was very proud. Glüschigna, the youngest, however, he held especially dear to his heart. High above Lej da Segl, in a large cave in Piz la Margna, lived a dragon. He was very lonely. Therefore, he often sat on a rocky ledge and looked down at the valley. In the sunshine, he saw the mermaids' fins glitter and fell in love with the play of light. One clear spring morning, he flew to the edge of Lej da Segl and called to the sea king. „What do you want from me, dragon?“ asked the sea king grumpily in a deep voice. „I have watched your daughters and fallen in love with the glitter of their beautiful fins. Glüschigna, however, is the prettiest. Give her to me as my wife. She shall illuminate my dark cave with her beauty.“ The Sea King answered angrily to the dragon's outrageous demand: „I will never give my Glüschigna to a dragon in marriage. Her kingdom is in the water, not in a cold, narrow cave high in the mountains. The sparkle can only be admired in the water in sunshine.“ The dragon grew furious and said: „I will not withdraw my demand, but I will give you three days to decide. Then I will return. If I do not have your youngest daughter, I will curse your lake and the entire valley.“ The king turned and dived into the depths of his kingdom. His daughters, who had overheard the conversation, came swimming up. The king calmed the agitated girls: „I stand by my word. None of my daughters will ever spend their lives in a narrow, dark rock cave.“ The three days passed slowly, and Glüschigna grew increasingly uneasy. She did not want to be the cause of misfortune in her father's kingdom. On the third day, the dragon sat again in the same spot and called for the king a second time. The king emerged from the lake and said, „I have already told you that I will not send any of my daughters into the mountains. I will not give you my youngest child in marriage. This is my final word.“ The dragon, enraged, flew into the air, landed in front of his cave, and began to breathe fire and flames in a fury. From the smoke emerged a snake that slowly wound itself across the entire valley. It grew and grew, becoming ever thicker, and obeyed the dragon, who commanded it: „My Maloja snake, I who created you, let no more ray of sunshine fall upon the lakes of the Engadine. The glittering fins of the mermaids shall cease forever.“ And so it happened. The entire Engadine was shrouded in a gray cloud. The sun tried with all its might to defeat the snake, but without success. Even the infamous Maloja wind could not harm a hair on its head. All the animals, fairies, and goblins missed its warming power. Only the bravest birds could pierce through the snake and enjoy the sun's rays over its mighty body. At night, the snake retreated to the dragon's cave to sleep. At least this way you could see the moon and stars twinkling every now and then. But early the next morning, the dragon drove the snake back out across the valley and the lakes. After many dark days, Glüschigna couldn't stand it any longer. She called her best friend, the eagle. Together they searched for a way to defeat the snake. After much pondering, the eagle had an idea. He flew to his nest high up in the mountains and searched for a long time until he found a wonderful large rock crystal.

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With this rock crystal, he flew over the Maloja snake and let the sunlight reflect off it. The snake became curious and raised its head. At that exact moment, the beam of the rock crystal struck it and it was blinded. It flinched, curled up, and immediately sought refuge in the dragon's cave, filled with pain. The dragon, astonished and enraged at the snake's disobedience, heard her cries of pain and left his dark cave to see what had happened. As he reached the exit, the newly regained Engadine sun dazzled him. He saw the eagle with the enormous rock crystal, sparkling in the sunlight. This brilliance reminded him of the glittering fins of mermaids, and he called out to the eagle: „If you bring me this sparkling stone to my cave, I will spare the valley with my dark soul.“ The eagle flew high into the air above the dragon and dropped the crystal into its talons. The dragon skillfully caught it and, satisfied, retreated back to his cave. Glüschigna and her six sisters cheered with joy and waved to the eagle. The sea king blinked happily in the familiar sunbeams and embraced his youngest daughter with pride. Even today, one can observe the glittering light on Lej da Segl. If you have good eyesight and are patient, you can see the dragon sitting on a rock high above the valley. He holds his crystal up to the sun and falls in love again and again with the wonderful colors that the stone holds within. The Maloja serpent still ventures out of the cave now and then, but the sun's power is stronger, and so the monster soon retreats back into the dragon's cave.

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