

## SELECTED NARTÆ TALES



## THE NAMELESS SON OF WYRYZMÆG

A year of famine came to the land of the Nartæ. The grain did not sprout, the grass did not grow, but withered away. The Nartæ were dying of hunger, they grew down-hearted, and lost faith in their own powers. The famous young Nartæ, so brave previously, became so powerless, that they lay day and night dazed upon the meeting-place on the square, and if they woke up, all they spoke about were the glorious feats they had performed, the dangers they had overcome when they had driven the fat cattle off from their enemies pastures. About their good swords, glorious bows and arrows, they said not a word.

*Syrdon* had an impudent bitch, and it so happened, that all that time she ran about on the village square, and jumped above the heads of the sleeping Nartæ, licked some of their mouths, gnawed some of their sandals, and bit through some of their belts – it was simply pitiful to see all that.

Once *Wyryzmæg* came to the square, and there he saw how it looked more like a battle-field. There lay the brave youths, lean and hungry-looking, while *Syrdon's* insolent bitch played all her dirty and loathsome tricks on them. Anger flared up in his bosom, he threw his ivory walking-stick at the bitch, but it struck on a stone, and was broken in pieces. He gathered the broken fragments in a fury, and returned home. There he threw down the broken bits onto the floor, and slumped down with all the weight of his body in his armchair also made of ivory, and that fell to pieces as well.

“Why are your brows so black and stormy? Why did you slump down so angrily on your armchair and break it, my dear husband, master of my head?” asked *Satana*. “What has happened to you? Who has offended you, and made you look so furious?”

“Nobody has offended me”, replied *Wyryzmæg* sadly. “But how my heart aches when I see that our young Nartæ have entirely lost all their honour! As soon as they began to lie about the meeting-place on the village square, then *Syrdon’s* impudent bitch came along, jumping over their heads, even the bravest of our famous youths, licking some of their mouths, gnawing at some of their sandals, biting through some of their belts... All of them dozing and sleeping, and none has the strength, or the will to drive her away. My dear mistress, I would not grudge my life, if only I could see our Nartæ well-fed and satisfied, so that the warm blood flowed swiftly through their veins again.

“Don’t be down-hearted!” replied *Satana*. “Go and call them all! Our store-room is full of food and drink... I shall feed them all, as though they were but one man!”

Then *Satana* led *Wyryzmæg* to their pantry. One cupboard was full of cheese-pies, in the other up to the ceiling were stored up heaps of beef and mutton shoulder-blades and thighs, while in the third were stacked up bottles full of various beverages.

“You see, when the Nartæ had plenty, and were feasting, they sent home to me my honoured share, and I stored it all up carefully, and now it will serve a good purpose!” said *Satana*.

The clouds of worry dissolved from *Wyryzmæg’s* brow, and he said to *Satana* in pleased tones:

“Yes, there is even more than enough food here for all. They couldn’t eat half of it in a whole year. Make ready for a feast, my mistress!”

Then *Wyryzmæg* called the village herald, fed him up to the ears, and ordered him: “Go and cry with all your might, and tell the Nartæ: “Those who can walk should come to our feast themselves, and those who can’t – let them be carried by others. If anyone has a baby still in its cradle, let them bring baby, cradle, and all! *Wyryzmæg* of the *Æxsartæggata* calls all Nartæ to join in his feast!”

So the village-crier went around the village and cried aloud:

“Oh Nartæ, those who can walk, should come themselves. Those who can’t – let them be carried by others. If anyone has a baby in a cradle, let them bring baby, cradle and all! *Wyryzmæg* of the *Æxsartæggata* is giving a feast and calls you to join in!”

Having heard the news, the Nartæ floded into *Wyryzmæg’s* home. All, from the smallest to the greatest, from the youngest to the eldest gathered together. Tables were set up and filled with food and drink, and day after day the company kept up the feast.

Meanwhile the fire began to get low on the hearth, *Wyryzmæg* rose from his chair and went into the yard to chop some logs. Just as he was bending to pick the chopped pieces up, a huge shaggy-feathered eagle flew out from the Black Mountain, seized him in his talons, and flew off with him in its clutches to finally place

him on a single pillar of rock amidst the sea – no mountains, no trees, nought living to be seen around. Then *Wyrzmag* began to name himself a most unhappy man, uncertain about his future.

All day he sat on the pillar, glancing around. Evening came, darkness began to gather, when suddenly he saw that from beneath the water, from beneath a submerged rock, somehow light was breaking through.

“Come what may, I must know what kind of a wonder that is”, said *Wyrzmag* to himself. He slipped down from his pillar, slid into the water, moved the huge rock aside, and saw a door there before him. He opened this door, and there stood three maidens, each one more beautiful and slender than the other, who came running to greet him.

“May you come to us hale and hearty *Wyrzmag*. May you come to us sound, dear relative of ours. Come in, and be our guest!” said the maidens smiling gaily and gladly.

So he entered the house and saw a respectful old lady there.

“May there be good fortune in this house!” he greeted her.

“Be well and happy, and be welcome!” said the old lady, and invited him to sit in an armchair.

*Wyrzmag* sat down, looked around, and noticed that the floor was of blue glass beneath his feet, that the walls were studded with mother-of-pearl, and that the morning star was shining from the ceiling.

He was amazed at all this. What a wonder it was, right in the ocean depths. Of course, he soon understood that he had chanced upon some relations of his, the *Donbetyrtæ*.

Then *Wyrzmag* noticed a little boy who was running around, so light and swift he ran, that *Wyrzmag* could not follow him. He loved to look at this little fellow, and happiness filled his old heart.

“Happy is the man who has you for a son!” he thought to himself.

“Was it sunshine, or heavy rain which brought you to our land?” asked the old lady kindly. “We have been waiting to see you for so long!”

*Wyrzmag* straightway felt bolder, and thought that he would not die after all, if on the ocean bed he had found relatives, eager to see him. And he began to tell them how he had come to their land. Meanwhile the maidens served the table for him. The host brought in a well-fed ram, and asked *Wyrzmag* himself to slay it. The fire was blown up, and *Wyrzmag* had barely time to look round once more, before the table was set in front of him, full of good things to eat.

To begin the feast, *Wyrzmag* according to Nartæ custom raised a piece of meat on the point of his dagger, and said a prayer. When he had finished, he then, once more in accordance with custom, turned towards the little boy, and said kindly “Come to me, sunny-boy, and taste the offering-meat!”

Holding the meat on the dagger-blade, *Wyryzmag* stretched it out towards the little fellow. He came running quickly to take it, then stumbled and fell right on the point of the dagger. The sharp blade penetrated his little heart, and like a beautiful cut mountain lily, he fell. He trembled a time or two, and then his young spirit flew away...

Deep sorrow seized *Wyryzmag*, and all the *Donbetrytae* family. The maidens carried away his corpse into the next room.

“Why am I so unlucky, why has such a woe fallen on my head!” thought *Wyryzmag*.

Then, seeing that he did not touch the food, the old lady said: “Help yourself, *Wyryzmag*. What has happened cannot be righted – all fulfils the will of God!”

But *Wyryzmag* simply could not eat. He rose upset, bid them farewell, and returned by the way he had come. On leaving the house he heard how all the women were bewailing the loss of the little child.

No sooner had *Wyryzmag* climbed back onto his lonely pillar, than the enormous black eagle appeared in the sky, swooped down and once more took him in his talons, and carried him back all the long way to his home. There he collected the chopped firewood, and entering the dining hall, saw that the feast was still in full swing, and nobody had noticed neither his absence nor returning.

He sat down in the place, and turning to the company asked:

“What kind of story would you like to hear from me? Old or new?”

“We have heard lots of old ones already,” said his guests, “now we should like to hear something new!”

“Does anybody remember how I came out?” – asked he. “When the fire began to get low on the hearth, I rose from my chair and went into the yard to chop some logs. Just as I was bending to pick the chopped pieces up, a huge shaggy-feathered eagle from the Black Mountain seized me in his talons, and flew off with me in its clutches. For a long time he bore me over the sea, far from the shore, and finally placed me on a single pillar of rock. There were no other cliffs nearby, only sea all round – no mountains, no trees, nought living to be seen, and the only moving thing was blue water below. Evening came, darkness began to gather, when suddenly I saw that from beneath the water, from beneath a submerged rock, somehow light was breaking through.

“Come what may, I must know what kind of a wonder that is”, I said to myself and slipped down from the pillar, slid into the water, moved the huge rock aside, and saw a door there before me. I opened this door, and there stood three maidens, each one more beautiful and slender than the other, who came running to greet me. “Come in and be our guest!” said to me the maidens. There were also a respectful old lady and a young boy there. I looked around and saw that the

floor was of blue glass and the walls were studded with mother-of-pearl, and that the morning star was shining from the ceiling.

They served a table for me and I raised a piece of meat on the point of my dagger, and said a prayer. When I had finished, I then, in accordance with custom, turned towards the little boy, and asked him to come to me and taste the offering-meat! He came running quickly to take it, then stumbled and fell right on the point of the dagger.

Deep sorrow seized the host family and me myself. I did not touch the food. I rose, bid them farewell, and returned by the way I had come. Then the enormous black eagle appeared in the sky, swooped down and once more took me in his talons, and carried me back all the long way to my home”.

In the next room among the women *Satana* was sitting. She heard *Wyryzmæg's* story, and began to tear her hair, and to scratch her cheeks, and to bemoan her lot:

“Glorious men, best of the best, you deeply respected elders, do not judge me, I beg of you, that I speak before you in tears. In my parental *Donbetyrta* home I left a secret treasure. My husband was away on campaign when he was born and did not know about it. I gave him to be brought up by my relations in my father's home. But there *Wyryzmæg* found him, and with his own hand sent our immature son into the Land of the Dead. How shall we live now? Who take care of us in our old age?”

Everyone felt sad and silent on hearing her mournful plaint, and quietly they arose and went home to their houses.

Since then *Wyryzmæg* was pining. He went about with bowed head and hunched shoulders, and did not smile when someone smiled at him, and did not speak when someone addressed him.

There was a blue-grey stone at the meeting place on the village square – the stone of oblivion. Anyone who lay on that stone immediately forgot his sorrow. *Wyryzmæg* made a habit of lying himself face down on that stone, and not to arise all day long. Then the elders used to come to him and say:

“Nart *Wyryzmæg*, glorious among the glorious! You must not be so sad, and waste away with grief. Could such a griveous thing happen to anybody but you!”

To hear these words he cheered up, and sooner he became his former self.

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The dolorous *Donbetyrta* buried the body of the little boy in the earth, but his soul flew off to the Land of the Dead, and the ruler of that land, *Barastyr*, set the little fellow on his knee. But the lad was troubled, because nobody on earth remembered about him.

“What is worrying you?” asked *Barastyr*, and the lad replied:

“Many years have passed since I came to the Land of the Dead, and my father *Wyryzmag*, who finds time to bother about others, even about strangers, has no times to pay me tribute, and I am completely forgotten. He has not given a funeral feast, and not raised a memorial stone for me, and I am lonely and lost here among the dead. I beg you, *Barastyr*, release me for a little while from this Land of the Dead. I only want to prepare with my own hands all that is necessary for the funeral feast that should be held in memory of me since a year has elapsed after my death, and I give my word that I shall return at once”.

“I do not wish to offend you, but I cannot do what you ask,” replied *Barastyr*. “If any of the others knew that I let you go, then none of them would stay here. It is hard enough to hold them here now, in the Land of the Dead, so how could I hold them then?”

“I can help you there”, said the youngster. “I shall turn the shoes on my horse *Gee-gee* round the opposite way, and when the dead ones miss me, and rush to the gates of the Land of the Dead, then you can tell them: ‘Just look at these horse tracks – if he has gone out of these gates, then I have no power to hold you, but if the tracks lead back into this land, there is no way out for you!’”

To this *Barastyr* agreed.

The lad shod his horse *Gee-gee*, as he proposed, and galloped off out of the Land of the Dead. When the dead no longer saw him in their midst, they flocked to the gates, where they met the gate-keeper.

“Where are you all going?” asked *Aminon*, the guardian of the gates.

“If anyone can leave here, then nobody will stay!” shouted the crowd. “First of all make sure what has happened!” he replied. “Look at the horse’s tracks, and you will see that no one has left here!”

The dead ones looked and saw that the tracks led into the Land of the Dead, and then they all calmed down, and each one returned to his place without further trouble.

But the boy, the foster-child of the *Donbettyrtæ*, the son of *Wyryzmag*, who had never received a name, galloped afar up to the Nartæ village, to the old home of the *Æxsartaggata*, and loudly called for the master of the house to appear.

“I am looking for *Wyryzmag*,” said the young rider. “Will he not come with me on campaign? Tell him, please, that I shall wait for him at the Memorial Mound at the village pasture”.

*Satana* returned back to the house and said: “Oh, my dear husband, someone is making fun of you. At front door there is a youngster hardly seen from behind the pommel and he invites you to campaign. He says he will be waiting for you at the Memorial Mound at the village pasture.”

“Hurry up, mistress!” he replied. “Put out my breast-plates for my journey. Of course, if anyone sees me going on campaign with a young led, they will laugh

at me. But I cannot break my word. While I have eyes to look out under my brows, I shall always act honourably, and honestly. All my life I have never refused any comrade to go on campaign, and shall not do so now!”

But *Satana* did not want *Wyryzmæg* to go with that bold young lad. When evening came she baked three round honey-cakes, and prayed:

“O God of Gods, my God! If you have created me for some reason, then I ask you to show me your favour! Send down this night on earth all the snow and rain that you have prepared for the next seven years, and whip up some whirlwinds and hurricanes, and I hope that the bold youngster who is worthy of death will find it this night, but my old man will remain at home”.

She had only just finished praying, when the heavens clouded over with heavy rain, and then snow fell so thick that no one had ever seen anything like it before. The ancient glaciers swept from the mountains, the whirlwinds wheeled and roared above the earth and blinded everybody who tried to go to the next-door neighbour.

But all the same, before daylight *Wyryzmæg* saddled his old dapple-grey steed *Ærfæn*, and went off on the road, pushing his way through the thick snowflakes, the ice and the drifts. Far away he saw that through the morning mist and snow rose the village pasture Memory Mound, like a black mountain.

*Wyryzmæg* rode up to the mound, and saw there a young lad lying asleep, with his saddle under his head, on a spread-out horse-blanket, covered over with a felt cloak, and all around him the field was green. You could find place for seven thrashing floors, and there his horse *Gee-gee* was browsing.

“Whether that is a heavenly spirit, or an angel, all the same, that’s something wonderful!” said he quietly to himself.

On his faithful *Ærfæn* he climbed the mound, and addressed him: “Hey, youngster, arise! The road is long, and the day is short. We must be on our way!”

The young lad jumped up quickly, armed himself with his weapons, straddled his steed, and off they went. *Wyryzmæg* rode ahead on his dapple-grey *Ærfæn*, and behind him the youngster on his *Gee-gee*. They pushed ahead, and every passing hour the blizzard grew bolder. *Wyryzmæg*’s steed thrust aside the mounds of snow with his powerful chest, protected with a breast-plate, but it became more and more difficult for him move forward, and he stumbled. Meanwhile the youth followed in his tracks, and where he passed, the snow melted, and black earth appeared. *Wyryzmæg*’s dapple-grey started to choke for breath, and then the youngster said:

“I will ride ahead. From this day let it be not shame, should a youngster ride in front of an elder.”

As he became the leader, the breath of his horse melted the snow around him making the road wide enough for seven thrashing floors and *Ærfæn* was treading over a black earth.

So they rode on, was it a long way or a short one? *Wyryzmag* said:

“Now my lad, we must take counsel. Where shall we go? What enemies shall we attack?”

“Take me to a land where you have never been before on a campaign!”

“I have not found the way across the sea, therefore beyond the sea alone remains one land where I have not been. It is called *Terk-Turk*”, answered *Wyryzmag*. “There is not a richer land on earth. There are so many sheep and cattle, so many horses, that once they start out on the road, no shepherd or herdsman can turn them back. But it is not easy to get there. One must sail across a stormy sea, and then conquer those who keep watch over the cattle. First the shepherds and herdsmen of *Terk-Turk*, then an iron stallion, a wolf with iron teeth, and a hawk with an iron beak!”

“That is the land where we shall go!” declared the youngster.

“Let us try out our luck there. Maybe something will fall into our hands!”

They reached the shores of the stormy sea, and began to swim across on their horses. Like fishes their steeds swam, and bore them across to the further shore. They came out of the water onto dry land. Then the youngster carefully bathed his horse, and smeared him with magic glue that sticks well without water, and made him roll in the nearby gravel. Then he smeared him again and made him roll in the sand on the shore. *Gee-gee*, his steed, became enormous, like a mountain. Then our two riders went on and found the herd of horses belonging to the *Terk-Turks*. Then the youngster made haste and dug two holes – one for himself, and another for *Wyryzmag* and his horse. Going up to *Wyryzmag*, he said to him:

“Look, *Wyryzmag*, my horse will now fight with the iron stallion. At first they will kick each other with their hind legs, and their iron hooves will strike each other, and send off sparks, and set the earth slight. Take care, whatever you do, not to look out of your hole then, or terrible misfortune will overtake you! Next they will bite each other, and kick with their forelegs, and such a blast of fury will arise from their stormy breathing, that it will carry away the topmost handsbreadth of the earth. Do not move from your hole then, or your dust and ashes will blow over the hills and dales. When the time comes to act, I myself will tell you”.

Then the two horses began to fight, neither sparing the other, the iron stallion and the youngster’s horse *Gee-gee*. From the clash of their iron hooves came such sparks, that the earth took flame. *Wyryzmag* could not restrain his inquisitiveness, and glanced out of his hole, and his long beard caught alight at once. The youngster skilfully extinguished the flames, and said to him:

“From now on there will be a new custom: all will wear their beards as short as yours has now become!”

Then the iron stallion and the youngster's steed began to bare their teeth and bite, and to kick with their forelegs. Such a blast arose, that it stripped the first handbreadth of soil from the earth. Again *Wyryzmæg* could not control his inquisitiveness, and looked out of his hole, and the blast blew off the top of his skull and carried it quickly away.

“So now my dear elder is left with no top to his head!” said the youngster, and sprang out of his hole, run after the top of *Wyryzmæg*'s skull, which the blast had carried away. He overtook the wind, seized the skull, and brought it back. Placing it above *Wyryzmæg*'s brow, he said: “From this time on the Nartæ will no longer remove the top half of their heads!”

But before that any Nart could take off the top of his head in order to shave it more easily, and could then put it back on again.

The horses had still not finished their fight, when a wolf with iron teeth in his jaws came to the aid of the iron stallion. Then the youth shot an arrow at him, and may it be so with all who curse you, the wolf died on the spot. The youngster cut off one of his ears and hid it in his tunic. Then a hawk with an iron beak came to aid the iron stallion. Again the youngster showed his skill, and shot an arrow at the hawk. He had only waved his wings once, then he fell down dead upon the ground. The youngster cut off his head, and hid that in his tunic too.

But still neither of the horses could defeat the other. More than once the iron stallion bit at the neck of *Gee-gee* with his iron teeth, but then gravel and sand filled his mouth, and he could not sink his teeth in. At last *Gee-gee* began to come out on top of the iron stallion who sank on his knees to the earth. The youngster grabbed his saddle, flung it on the stallion, and bestrode him, calling out:

“Hey, *Wyryzmæg*! Quickly drive the herd of *Terk-Turk* horses off home, while I ride to inform their owners that their herd is gone”.

“While nobody is pursuing us, better both go together on the same road home!” answered *Wyryzmæg*.

“My honour will not allow me to sneak off with such rich booty, without letting the owners know!” replied the youngster.

At that time there was a feast among the people of *Terk-Turk*, and suddenly they saw a youngster gallop up on the iron stallion.

He came to the feasting-place and cried:

“Alarming news, people of *Terk-Turk*! All your herd of horses, all your riches, they are driving off”.

The younger *Terk-Turk* heard this alarming news, and informed their elders. The eldest said: “That fellow probably seeks for something to eat and drink. Invite him in, and we shall welcome him as guest”.

The younger *Terk-Turk* ran to the lad and invited him into the house where the feast was, and where the elders were sitting. He looked round the festive

board, and then took out the head of the hawk, and the ear of the wolf from his tunic pocket. The head he threw where the elders were feasting, and the ear he threw where the young *Terk-Turks* were eating. To the elders he said:

“You didn’t have enough cunning heads, dear elders! Here, take this one!” Then he turned to the younger ones, and said:

“You didn’t have enough sharp ears. Here, take this one. As for your iron stallion, he is tied up in the stall!”

The feasters were all gripped by great agitation. They understood that they had been robbed of their faithful guards. While they were recovering for a moment from the shock, the young lad went to the stall, leaped upon the iron stallion, and off he went at full gallop, to overtake *Wyryzmag* with the herd of horses.

He passed over the outskirts and saw there a gray-haired old lady, sitting between six burial mounds, weeping and moaning, and addressing herself to each of the burial mounds in turn.

“What kind of wonder is this?” thought the youngster.

At once the old lady, pointing at the burial mounds, said to him:

“I had seven sons. Six of them have departed into the Land of the Dead. When enemies tried to seize the herds of the *Terk-Turk*, they died defending them and their honour. Only one son remains to me. I know that he will gallop in pursuit of you who have driven off our horses. But your skill and bearing are obvious. You are so brave, but my son, who will be in front of all the others, will attack you. But spare him, for my sake, for the sake of a widowed mother, and do not slay him. Give him a light wound, and throw him by the wayside, so that others galloping after to attack you, do not trample him in the dust. May my only remaining son, my only support in old age, find in you a protector. So that all may be thus, be my milk-son, and let him be your milk-brother. Take my breast between your lips, then swear to me your oath”.

The young lad leapt down from the iron stallion, took the old woman’s breast between his lips, and then gave her his solemn word that means the firm promise of a Nart, that he would not cause her son any harm. The old woman thanked him, and told him what her son looked like, so that he might recognise him at once.

Again he bestraddled the iron stallion, and set off at a gallop to overtake *Wyryzmag* and the herd. When they met they guided the horses across the stormy sea to the other side, then further still, until they heard a rider galloping after them.

“You drive on ahead, *Wyryzmag*, and preserve the booty, while I will try to restrain the followers”. So they agreed.

“Hey, you son-of-a-bitch, dirty dog that you are!” cried the rider from afar, as he galloped up nearer and nearer. “Do you know whose herd you have driven

off? If you are a man, don't try to run away from me!" Then the arrows began to buzz like flies around the ears of the youngster. He turn shouted back his answer:

"I may not touch you. I have named your mother my milk-mother, I have taken her breast between my lips and given her my sacred word to preserve you. Do not hinder me then, let me go my way!"

The persecutor did not obey him. Taking aim with one arrow after another, with passionate curses he drew nearer and nearer. Then the Nart youth shot one arrow at him. That arrow, not touching his body, but catching in his clothing, tore him from his saddle, and hurled him to the earth. In vain he tried to tear the arrow from the ground where it was stuck, but to no avail.

Meanwhile the other followers galloped up, and all together began to tug the arrow to release him, but they could not move it. In the end they had to slash his clothes from him with their swords, and only then could they set him on his feet again. Then they all set upon the young Nart, and the battle began. *Terk-Turks* hit out and hewed at the young Nart, but he slew half of them, and so much blood was spilt, that it washed their corpses away. Those who remained alive understood that they could not defeat such a warrior, and they returned home.

*Wyryzmæg* and the youngster successfully drove their booty home to the Nartæ's village, and stopped at the place where spoil was divided. Then the youngster said to *Wyryzmæg*.

"You are the eldest, therefore it falls to your lot to divide the spoil between us!"

"But why should I divide the spoil which you have won?" replied *Wyryzmæg*. Then the youngster chose a white bull and set it aside, tied with a silken cord. All the remaining booty he divided into three lots, and thus he adressed *Wyryzmæg*.

"The first lot goes to you, *Wyryzmæg*, as the eldest. The second, as my comrade on the campaign, to you also. The third is my lot, which I present to you with respects. The white bull remains. Take it and arrange for me a yearly memorial feast. To all the dead you pay your respects, but to me, your nameless son, whom you placed in the home of the *Donbettyrtæ* and with your own hands sent to the Land of the Dead, only to me you never gave a funeral feast, nor celebrated my memory!"

With that he jumped upon his own steed *Gee-gee*, waved a hand in farewell to *Wyryzmæg*, and galloped off to the Land of the Dead.

Tears streamed down *Wyryzmæg*'s cheeks, and he cried to his departing son: "Glance back at me, if only once!" But his son did not look back thinking to himself that his time was running out.

So *Wyryzmæg* sadly drove the booty home, and there said to *Satana*:

"Oh, dear mistress of our house! I have been on campaign with that same youngster who was your joy and happiness in life, and whom you could not see enough of while he was alive!"

Hearing that, *Satana* went galloping off after her son. For a long time she rode and rode, and gradually began to overtake him, and cried:

“Oh, you who were my joy and delight on earth, you whom I could not see enough of when you were alive. Look back I beg, just one glance, just one, my son, just look at me!”

Her son did not look back, but called to her:

“The sun goes down, my time is running out, and I hasten to the Land of the Dead, in order to keep my word!”

*Satana*, unhappy mother as she was, understood that he could not stay even for a moment, so she prayed:

“Oh, God of Gods, my God! You can see into a mother's heart? Let it be so, that this eve on the mountain snows the sun's rays should remain a little longer, the cold sun of the Dead!”

The youngster reached the gates of the Land of the Dead, and cried to the door-keeper *Aminon*:

“Hey, open up the gates!”

“You are late, the sun has set already!” replied *Aminon*.

“No, it is still not dark! See, on the mountain snows the rays of the sun of the Dead are still shining!” and turning, he pointed to the mountains. The gate-keeper opened the gates, and at that very moment *Satana* saw her son. The edges of his garments gleamed, and for a second she saw his face, as the gates were closing behind him. But she hastened forward, and threw her gold ring after him, which itself bounced up and fell straight upon her son's finger. With that ring he returned to the Land of the Dead, this bold son of *Wyrzmag*, and took his place on the knee of the God *Barastyr*.

When *Satana* returned home, they slew the white bull and arranged a great funeral feast in honour of their son. All the remaining horses and cattle they distributed among the poorer Nartæ.