

At Holstad in Ås there is a large round mound. Now there is a garden there, but in ancient times it was overgrown with birch and aspen. The autumn wind whistled ugly in the dry branches and loose bushes. They told many strange stories about what they had seen and heard, but the people did not understand that language, not even the most skilled among them. Every Christmas and St. Hans, singing and music were heard inside the Rishaug.(Trollmound) Occasionally, some well-to-do person could see the happy crowd come out of the mound and dance across the meadow without the trees moving a single leaf. Beautiful tones were heard, purer than any human instrument can produce.

In the mound lived the rich Lodde with his family. A large farm with beautiful horses and cows and full of everything. Lodde had seven daughters, but no son. All seven had beauty and human thoughts, but no immortal soul. However, their tails distinguished them from others. If they could win the love of a human being, they lost that ornament (the tail) and also gained a soul. - The youngest of the daughters was called Herløg; she was the most beautiful and thoughtful. On the bright summer nights and when the northern lights spread their light over the white snow, she would sneak out of the mound and go to the places where humans were having fun. Unseen, she stood and watched them, while she thought: "Couldn't I join in their play?" When youth in the ringing frost swept over the slopes on skis and sledges, it seemed to her that it was many times more fun than inside the mound - although there was plenty of beauty there.

Åsolv was then the most handsome boy in the village, intelligent and cheerful. Herløg saw him once, in the company of others, having fun at the St. Hans bonfire. She liked him; for goodness shone from his eyes. She hovered near him that evening and often later, when he was having fun with his friends in all innocence. Herløg became quieter, although her parents and siblings did everything to please her.

Lodde's best friend lived in Frognerhaugen. (Frogner Mound) His son had fallen in love with Herløg and often came to Rishaug. He did what he could to cheer Herløg up; but she became quieter. "Mother knows what to do," thought Herløg, and she told her everything. The mother listened to her with sadness and asked her to drive Åsolv out of her thoughts; but Herløg begged that she must help her, if there was any way. Can a mother's heart resist a child's tears? The mother began to think about how her daughter could get what she wanted.

In Vardeåsen at Herum lived a wise old woman, and there she advised Herløg to go. Her father and four sisters were out in the earthen mound to visit an acquaintance, and then Herløg set off. Their little dog followed her; it trembled as they entered the hole at Grønlund, for that was the entrance to Vardeåsen. She patted the dog and strode forward. Large stones lay in the way, so she often crawled on all fours; then there were puddles with all kinds of hideous crawling things, and there they came to a heavy iron gate. Fortunately there was a small hole next to it, so both she and the dog could squeeze through and at last they reached the farm. The wise woman looked hideous: a wreath of lizards around her head and playing with a viper; Herløg greeted her, but she was afraid. The woman said to her: "Show yourself to Åsolv in your most beautiful clothing, and if he feels kindness towards you, then be careful that a needle or button tears you to bleed, then you are his and will have an immortal soul." Herløg then went home; she remained silent; but now there was hope. St. Hans held a feast for his friends, both old and young. There was joy - so that even the elders joined in the games at Rishaug. Across the meadows floated crowds followed by the most lovely tones. Herløg shone like the sun and she was amused. Åsolv came walking and heard the tones and saw the playing flock. He stood still in amazement, Then Herløg came to him, mentioned his name and held out his hand to him. "Come along and have fun here!" she said. "What are you so happy about then?" asked Åsolv. Herløg sang:

"Every St. Hans and Christmas we hold a party,

Then our fleeting spirit rejoices best.

We rejoice in the sun and starlight,

- Oh dear, just share your soul!"

The whole flock now stood around these two. "You can't have much to be happy about, can you? You are downcast spirits!" said Åsulv. Herlög put his hand over his mouth; The notes died away and a wailing filled the air - more painful than the weeping in the chamber of death. They took Herlög and carried him into the Hedge, and there they all went; but the wailing persisted. Åsulv went to the Hedge and said, "Can human words do you neither good nor harm?" Then Herlög's mother came out of the door and sang in a weeping voice:

"It is possible, we will get our fiddle going;

but it will never get its right sound!"

The Hedge closed and has never opened since. Åsulv stood alone: Herlög floated away between her parents' hands. Her longing was deep and pure. In those parts, where the clouds shine like purple and gold, Herlög walks about far more beautifully than before.

Myte Herløg Rishaug

Ved Holstad i Ås er det en stor rund haug. Nå er det anlagt have der, men i eldre tider var den overgrodd med bjørk og osp. Høstvinden tutet stygt i de tørre grenene og løse buskestykker. De fortalte mange underlige historier om hva de hadde sett og hørt, men menneskene forstod ikke det språk, ikke engang de lærdeste blant dem. Hver jul og St. Hans hørtes sang og musikk inne i Rishaugen. Stundom kunne ett og annet eiegodt menneske få se den glade skare komme ut av Haugen og danse hen over engen uten at trærne beveget et eneste strå. Vakre toner hørtes, renere enn noe menneskelig instrument kan frembringe dem.

I Haugen bodde den rike Lodde med sin familie. En stor gaard med vakre hester og kyr og fult opp av alt. Lodde hadde syv døtre, men ingen sønn. Alle syv hadde skjønnhet og menneskelige tanker, men ingen udødelig sjel. Halen skilte dem dog fra andre. Kunne de vinne et menneskes kjærlighet, så mistede de den prydelse og fikk også en sjel. - Den yngste av døttrene het Herløg; hun var den fagreste og mest tankefulle. I de lyse sommernetter og når nordlysene spredte sitt skinn over den hvite sne, snek hun sig ut av haugen og hen til de steder hvor menneskene moret seg. Usett stod hun og så dem, imens hun tenkte: "Kunne ikke jeg få være med i deres lek?" Når ungdom i klingende frost strøk henover bakkene på ski og kjelker, så syntes hun, det var mange ganger gildere end derinne i haugen - enda der var stas nok.

Åsulv var dengang bygdens kjekkeste gutt, forstandig og munter. Herløg så ham engang, han i følge med andre moret seg ved St. Hansbålet. Hun likte ham; for godheten lyste av hans øyne. Nær ham svevde hun den aften og ofte senere, når han i all troskyldighet moret seg med kamerater. Herløg ble mere stille, enda hennes foreldre og søsken gjorde alt for at glede hende.

Loddes beste venn bodde inne i Frognerhaugen. Dennes sønn hadde huglagt Herløg og kom ofte til Rishaug. Han gjorde hva han kunne for at live Herløg opp; men hun blev mere stille. "Mor vet vel råd," tenkte Herløg, og hun fortalte hende alt. Moderen hørte med bedrøvelse på henne og bad henne om å jage Åsulv ut av tanker; men Herløg tryglet om, at hun måtte hjelpe henne, om det var noen råd. Kan et moderhjerter motstå et barns tårer? Moderen tok til at tenke på, hvorledes hennes datter kunne få det som hun ville.

I Vardeåsen på Herum bodde en vis gammel kone, og dit rådede hun Herløg til å dra. Hennes far og 4 søstre var ute i jordshaugen for at gjeste en kjenning, og da begav Herløg seg avsted. Deres lille hund fulgte henne; den skalv, idet de gikk inn i hullet ved Grønlund, thi der var inngangen til Vardeåsen. Hun klappet hunden og skred fremad. Store steiner lå i veien, så hun ofte krøp på alle fire; så var der vandpytter med alt slags vemmelig kryp, og der kom de til en svær jernport. Heldigvis var det ved siden et lite hull, så både hun og Hunden kunde trenge seg gjennom og endelig nådde de frem til gården. Den vise kona så fæl ut: firfislekrans om hodet og lekte sig med hoggorm; Herløg hilste, men redd var hun. Konen sa henne fore: "Vis deg Åsulv i din vakreste kledning, og føler han godhet for deg, pass da på, at en nål eller knapp river deg til blods, så er du hans og får en udødelig sjel."

Herløg dro da hjem; stille ble hun; men nå var det dog et håp. St. Hans holdt Lodde fest for sine venner, både

gamle og unge. Der var glede - så selv de eldste var med i lekene ved Rishaug. Utover engene svedde skarer fulgt av de yndigste toner. Herløg skinte som en sol og hun moret seg. Åsulv kom gående og hørte tonene og så den lekende flokk. Han stod stille av forundring, Da kom Herløg hen til ham, nevnte hans navn og rakte hånden ut til ham. "Vær med og mor deg her!" sa hun. "Hva er dere så glade for da?" spurte Åsulv. Herløg sang:

"Hver St. Hans og Jul vi holder fest,
Da fryder vor flyktige ånd sig best.
Vi gledes ved sol og stjerneskin,
- Å kjære, del du bare sjelen din!"

Hele flokken stod nå rundt disse to. "Dere kan vel ikke ha stort å glede dere ved? Dere er jo nedstødte ånder!" sa Åsulv. Herløg la hånden over hans munn; tonene døde bort og et jammerskrik fylte luften - smerteligere end gråten i dødens kammer. Herløg tok de og bar inn i Haugen, og dit dro de alle; men jammeren vedvarte. Åsulv gikk bort til Haugen og sa "Menneskeord kan vel ikke gjøre dere verken godt eller ondt?" Da kom Herløgs mor ut i døren og sang med gråtende stemme:

"Vel mulig, vi får vår fele på gang;
men aldri får den sin rette klang!"

Haugen lukket seg og har aldri åpnet sig siden. Åsulv sto alene: Herløg svedde bort mellom foreldrenes hender. Hennes lengsel var dyp og ren. I hine egne, hvor skyene skinner som purpur og guld, går Herløg omkring langt skjønnere end før.