

An old man's charity

"It's already getting dark," thought the merchant, who was travelling from Pärnu to Viljandi with a cart full of wool. He was travelling along this road for the first time, because there was a myth in Pärnu that all merchants who travelled along this road were never the same on their return, and that a few days after their journey they disappeared without a trace, as if they had never existed.

The merchant hoped to find a place to stay for the night, but so far there was nothing but woods and a few abandoned houses around him. Finally, he noticed some smoke somewhere in the woods, so he drove over and found an old house with a fire burning.

The merchant knocked and the door was opened by a tall old man with a beard as long as his waist and nails the length of a birch leaf.

"Derwist, I am Plauff the gaffer. Did you let me stay at deie's?" the merchant inquired in a German accent.

The old man smiled, opened the door and said: "Come in, merchant Plauff, make yourself at home here."

The old man rushed into the kitchen, took a piece of meat just cooked out of the oven and put it on the table. The merchant thanked the old man, sat down in a chair and began to eat. The old man went back to the kitchen and got two mugs of beer and they started drinking.

A couple of hours passed, but neither the old man nor the merchant thought about going to bed, instead the merchant told the old man about himself.

"In Wiljand I am expected by the merchant Terch, I don't know him, but our friend Hans said he is willing to pay a lot of money for this wylla. Then I'll sell all this wylla and then I'll be rich!" the merchant told the old man.

The old man asked the merchant some questions and the merchant answered them cheerfully. Finally, when the meals were eaten and the drinks drunk, the men went to bed.

The next day the merchant arrived in Viljandi and sold all the wool. However, Terch was very surprised to hear that the merchant spoke Estonian without an accent and noticed that the merchant was tall.

Three weeks later, the hunter spotted human bones and the skin of an old man in front of an abandoned house in the forest. Soon the whole of Livonia knew about it, but no one still knows what really happened in the forest.

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