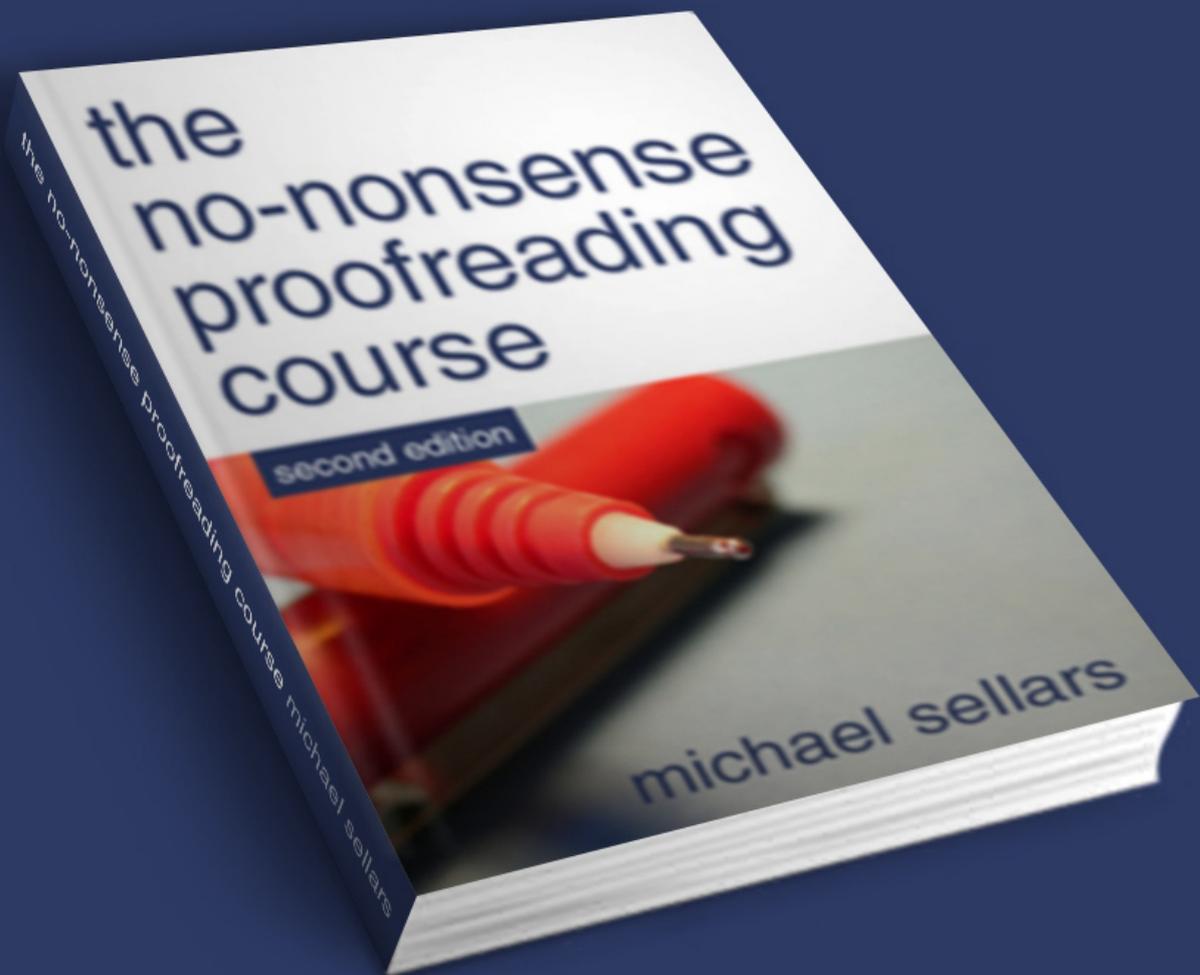


Proofreading exercise 11

From 'Tales of Folk and Fairies'
by Katharine Pyle



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PROOFREADING EXERCISE 11

From 'Tales of Folk and Fairies' by Katharine Pyle

THERE was once a lad, and what his real name was nobody remembered, unless it was the mother who bore him; but what every one called him was Ashipattle. They called him that because he sat among the ashes to warm his toes.

He had six older brothers, and they did not think much of him. All the tasks they scorned to do themselves they put upon Ashipattle. He gathered the sticks for the fire, he swept the floor, he cleaned the byre, he ran the errands, and all he got for his pains were kicks and cuffs and mocking words. Still he was a merry fellow, and as far as words went he gave his brothers as good as they sent.

Ashipattle had one sister, and she was very good and kind to him. In return for her kindness he told her long stories of trolls and giants and heros and brave deeds, and as long as he would tell she would sit and listen. But his brothers could not stand his stories, and used to throw clods at him to make him be quiet. They were angry because Ashipattle was always the hero of his own storeys, and in his tales there was nothing he dared not do.

Now while Ashipattle was still a lad, but a tall, stout one, a great misfortune fell upon the kingdom, for a Stoorworm rose up out of the sea; and of all Stoorworms it was the greatest and the worst. For this reason it was called the Meester Stoorworm. Its length stretched half around the world, its one eye was as red as fire, and its breath was so poisonous that whatever it breathed upon was withered.

There was great fear and lamentation throughout the land because of the worm, for every day it drew nearer to the shore, and every day the danger from it grew greater. When it was first discovered it was so far away that its back was no more than a low, long, black line upon the horizon, but soon it was near enough for them to see the horns upon its back, and its scales, and its one fierce eye, and its nostrils that breathed out and in.

In their fear the people cried upon the King to save them from the monster, but the King had no power to save them more than any other man. His sword, Snickersnapper, was the brightest and sharpest and most wonderful sword in all the world, but it would need a longer sword than Snickersnapper to pierce through that

great body to the monster's heart. The king summoned his councillors,—all the wisest men in the kingdom,—and they consulted and talked together, but none of them could think of any plan to beat or drive the Stoorworm off, so powerful it was.

Now there was in that country a sorcerer, and the King had no love for him. Still, when all the wisemen and councillors could think of no plan for destroying the Stormworm, the King said, "Let us send for this sorcerer, and have him brought before us, and hear what he has to say; for 'twould seem there is no help in any of us for this evil that has come upon us."

So the sorcerer was brought, and he stood up in the council and looked from one to another. Last of all he looked at the King, and there his eyes rested.

"There is one way, and only one," said he, "by which the land can be saved from destruction. Let the King's only daughter, the Princess Gemlovely, be given to the Stoorworm as a sacrifice, and he will be satisfied and quit us."

No sooner had the sorcerer said this than a great tumult arose in the council. The councillors were filled with horror, and cried aloud that the sorcerer should be torn to pieces for speaking such words.

But the King arose and bade them be silent,—and he was as white as death.

"Is this the only way to save my people?" he asked.

"It is the only way I know of," answered the sorcerer.

The King stood still and white for a time. "Then," said he, "if it is the only way, so let it be. But first let it be proclaimed, far and wide throughout my kingdom, that there is an heroic deed to be done. Whosoever will do battle with the Stoorworm and slay it, or drive it off, shall have the Princess Gemlovely for a bride, and the half of my kingdom, and my sword Snickersnapper for his own; and after my death he shall rule as king over all the realm."

Then the King dismissed the Council, and they went away in silence, with dark and heavy looks.

A proclamation was sent out as the King commanded, saying that whoever could kill the Stoorworm or drive it away should have the Princess, and the half of the kingdom as a reward, and the King's sword, and after the King's death should reign over the whole realm.

When this news went out many a man wished he might win these three prizes for himself, for what better was there to be desired than a beautiful wife, a kingdom to reign over, and the most famous sword in all the world. But fine as were the prizes, only six-and-thirty bold hearts came to offer themselves for the task, so great was the fear of the Stoorworm. Of this number the first twelve who looked at the Stoorworm fell ill at sight of him and had to be carried home. The next twelve did not stay to be carried, but ran home on their own legs and shut themselves up in strong fortresses; and the last twelve stayed at the King's palace with their hearts in their stomachs, and their wrists too weak with fear to strike a blow, even to win a kingdom.

So there was nothing left but for the Princess to be offered up to the Stoorworm, for it was better that one should be lost, even though that one were the Princess, than that the whole country should be destroyed.

PROOFREADING EXERCISE 11, ANSWERS.

THERE was once a lad, and what his real name was nobody remembered, unless it was the mother who bore him; but what every one called him was Ashipattle. They called him that because he sat among the ashes to warm his toes.

He had six older brothers, and they did not think much of him. All the tasks they scorned to do themselves they put upon Ashipattle. He gathered the sticks for the fire, he swept the floor, he cleaned the byre, he ran the errands, and all he got for his pains were kicks and cuffs and mocking words. Still he was a merry fellow, and as far as words went he gave his brothers as good as they sent.

Ashipattle had one sister, and she was very good and kind to him. In return for her kindness he told her long stories of trolls and giants and heros[1] and brave deeds, and as long as he would tell she would sit and listen. But his brothers could not stand his stories, and used to throw clods at him to make him be quiet. They were angry because Ashipattle was always the hero of his own storeys[2], and in his tales there was nothing he dared not do.

Now while Ashipattle was still a lad, but a tall, stout one, a great misfortune fell upon the kingdom, for a Stoorworm rose up out of the sea; and of all Stoorworms it was the greatest and the worst. For this reason it was called the Meester Stoorworm. Its length stretched half around the world, its one eye was as red as fire, and it's[3] breath was so poisonous that whatever it breathed upon was withered.

There was great fear and lamentation throughout the land because of the worm, for every day it drew nearer to the shore, and every day the danger from it grew greater. When it was first discovered it was so far away that its back was no more than a low, long, black line upon the horizon, but soon it was near enough for them to see the horns upon its back, and its scales, and its one fierce eye, and its nostrils that breathed out and in.

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consulted and talked together, but none of them could think of any plan to beat or drive the Stoorworm off, so powerful it was.

Now there was in that country a sorcerer, and the King had no love for him. Still, when all the wisemen and councillors could think of no plan for destroying the **Stormworm[5]**, the King said, "Let us send for this sorcerer, and have him brought before us, and hear what he has to say; for 'twould seem there is no help in any of us for this evil that has come upon us."

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Then the King dismissed the Council, and they went away in silence, with dark and heavy looks.

A proclamation was sent out as the King commanded, saying that whoever could kill the Stoorworm or drive it away should have the

Princess, and the half of the kingdom as a reward, and the King's sword, and after the King's death should reign over the whole realm.

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So there was nothing left but for the Princess to be offered up to the Stoorworm, for it was better that one should be lost, even though that one were the Princess[8], than that the whole country should be destroyed.

[1] Should be 'heroes'

[2] Should be 'stories'

[3] Should be 'its'

[4] Should be 'King'

[5] Should be 'Stoorworm'

[6] Should be 'councillors'

[7] Should be 'King's'

[8] Should be 'Princess'

Note. 'Byre' is an Old English word for 'cowshed'. A 'stoorworm' is a type of dragon or sea serpent from Celtic

mythology. 'Meester [or Master] Stoorworm' was a particularly fierce stoorworm.