

Ronja, the Robber's daughter

Ronja leaves her parents' safe castle for the first time, Mattis warns her about the dangers outside: "Beware of the wild druids, the gray gnomes and the robbers (...), then beware of getting lost in the forest (...), then beware of falling into the river."

"And you remembered everything else to beware of?"

Oh yes, she remembered. And during the following days, Ronja did nothing but beware of everything dangerous and practice not being afraid. Mattis had said that she should be careful not to fall into the river, so she jumped boldly from one smooth stone to another on the bank, where the water roared the wildest. After all, she could not beware of plunging into the river in the forest. If being careful was of any use at all, then she had to practice it at the rapids and nowhere else. But if she wanted to get to the rapids, she had to climb down Mattis Mountain, which sloped abruptly and precipitously toward the river. In this way, she could practice not being afraid of them at the same time. The first time it was difficult, she was so afraid that she had to close her eyes. But little by little she became more and more daring, and soon she knew all the crevices and cracks where her feet could find a foothold and she could cling on with her toes so that she wouldn't fall backwards into the river. What luck, she thought, to have found a place where I could keep from plopping into the river and at the same time practice not being afraid! So her days passed, Ronja guarded herself and practiced more eagerly than Mattis and Lovis suspected, and finally she became as supple and strong and fearless as a healthy little animal. She was afraid neither of the gray gnomes nor of the wild druids, neither of getting lost in the forest nor of falling into the river.