

## About Hven between Zealand and Skaane

There lived a giant by the name of Noegling; he had two sons, Hogen and Folgmar, and a daughter named Kremild. He also possessed a sizeable amount of silver and gold treasure, which was stored in the mountain called Hammersbjerg, in a way so that it was hidden from everybody's sight. But he had a magic key, with which he could unlock the mountain as often as he liked. Shortly before dying he bequeathed this key to his son Hogen, on the condition that he support his brother and sister with the treasure in the mountain. As it turned out, there was no pleasing his sister Kremild. No matter how much she received, her insatiable avarice made her coax and threaten him to let her have the key. And since she could not prevail on him in this matter, she became extremely embittered, and hid her anger for a long time, until it finally erupted, as we shall see. When the time came where she was fully grown, and Hogen decided that she needed a husband, he sought everywhere for a likely candidate that could match her in lineage, strength and war craft.

As it happened, there was in Worms a giant by the name of Sigfrid Horn, so called, because no-one was ever able to wound him, except in one single spot on his back. All his limbs were that hard, and this he had achieved by bathing in a well in a forest, shown him by the forest woman Melusina.

At this time the foremost noblemen and giants from the Northern parts travelled to Worms, as the Greeks once did to Olympus, and there, in the King's garden outside the city, they skirmished and exercised all sorts of war craft. Many of our free and noble born ladies would watch them, and received the victors with warm embraces and kisses, and gave them wreathes.

Kremild went there also, with Hogen and Folgmar; and there she was bidden, because of her body's height, grace and beauty, by the Queen to join her in the Ladies' parlour, where great honours and favours were bestowed on her, since her manners matched her appearance, as if she were a princess. Therefore, when the Queen went forth, Kremild always followed her closely, so the foreigners were led to believe that she was the King's daughter. She was also allowed to present most of the wreathes to those who held their own in the war games.

At this time, Theodoricus Veronensis also came to Worms from Italy with his gothic giants. Many were here gathered from the Nordic realms, all of whom yearned to match themselves against these Goths, who were very close to being their own familiar relatives. And finally, when the duels were about to commence, Hogen particularly preferred the above mentioned Sigfrid Horn. He had watched him closely, and wanted him, more than anyone else to marry his sister, Kremild. Therefore he mediated between Sigfrid and Kremild for so long, that before leaving Worms, they celebrated their wedding together with a very large gathering of noble warlords, ladies and damsels; this wedding was paid for by the king, whereupon Sigfrid, together with Hogen and his wife Kremild went to Denmark and set out for the island, which was later dubbed Hven, where their father Noegling had built four castles, which they distributed amongst themselves without any misgivings.

Some time later Sigfrid complained in private to his brother-in-law about the great humiliation he had to suffer at his wife's hands; her strength was so great that every night, when he was making advances, she arose, took some ropes which she always kept handy, and tied him up. So he was of a mind to give up and go back to Germany. But Hogen thought of a plan: One night he himself would go to his sister and make sure that she would never again spite her husband. So they both arose in the middle of the night and met at a prearranged place, where Hogen ordered Sigfrid to go and lie down beside his own wife, so that Kremild would not be told by her what had happened. Hogen's wife's name was Gluna. So they both exchanged wives. Hogen, posing as Sigfrid, now began to make advances, and since she did not suspect that he was anyone other than her husband, she plied her wonted craft on her brother. But he proved too strong for her, and bound

his sister's hands and feet tightly to a pillar in the middle of the house, where she stood naked, whereupon he went out, as if to fetch a bundle of twigs, and he summoned Sigfrid, told him about everything that had transpired, and what to do next, which was to belabour her lustily with the twigs, until she promised to show him the obedience and kindness she owed him. And in this way Kremild became so convinced of her husband's great strength that she never again dared to do anything that could endanger their love-life and marriage.

But Sigfrid repaid Hogen in an ill way. Because, when he that same night went to Gluna, Hogen's wife, he did not refrain from pursuing Venus' sport. Since Hogen naturally couldn't allow himself to do the same with his own sister, he took it very near to heart. However, Hogen dissembled so successfully, that he was able to bide his time and select the right moment to get even with Sigfrid. One day he met him alone, they agreed to go for a walk together, and they came to a well called Koldekilde or Koldebroend. Sigfrid, being tired, lay down to drink from the well. Hogen grabbed Sigfrids sword, berated him for his whoring, treason and infidelity, and let him suffer and pay the price for the incest. By the same well, a great stone can still be seen, which is named "Sigersten", after said Sigfrid; on it, it is told, he lay when he gave up his spirit.

When Kremild heard that her husband, in whom she had only recently taken pleasure, had been slain by her brother, she ran in and out of all the castle's buildings like a woman possessed, shrieking and shouting, and all her serving maids with her.

She ran out of the castle's gate, with her hair unfurled and her clothes torn, to see her husband's dead body; one of Hogen's messengers met her and showed her husband's severed head, which angered and shocked her so that she fell to the ground in a swoon. And after she came to, she was led to the castle Karheideborg, which had become hers by inheritance. Thither she ordered her late husband's body to be brought, and had it honourably buried, according to the customs of the time.

At the funeral, she complained loudly to the many who were summoned to the place, about the great injustice that her brother Hogen had done her, that her dear husband had been murdered without any reason, and that neither she nor her husband never had done him an injustice, neither in words nor deeds.

With this weeping speech and piteous exclamations she stirred many to such great pity, that they overtly damned the murderer Hogen. Since she felt that she had won a great many followers, she asked them to support her in words and deeds alike.

Because, she said, it was greatly to be feared that he would do the same thing to her as he had done to her husband, and that she was a poor, helpless, lonely woman, and both her brothers were conspiring against her. After she had repeated such complaints several times, those present promised her to do their utmost to help and guard her, even at the cost of their own lives, against any attempted wrongs or onslaughts on her by her brothers.

When Hogen heard this, he decided, that, even though he might have justified his act of revenge, not to do this, partly because he did not have any witnesses, and partly because, if the story came out, he was likely to hear this and that about it from his wife. Instead, he drew Folgmar, his brother, into his confidence, and together they decided that the best course of action would be to flee to Skaane, since they would never be able to live in comfort on the island, since their sister would be likely to constantly strive to take their lives, by treason and secrecy, as well as by magic.

Therefore, they quickly took ship, with all their belongings and people, and set over to the other side, where there was the smallest span. Hogen took house directly on the highest plane, and erected a building, where he didn't have to worry about his sister Kremild, and still had his beloved fatherland full in view. But Folgmar went into Sweden to fight wars.

After four years, Kremild married a new husband, and as she wanted to celebrate the wedding on Hven, she sent word to many of those of her good friends, which she, by hook or by crook, had

persuaded to harm her brothers. Among these were many good swordsmen, since, on the same occasion, a lot of distinguished fencing and other war games were planned.

In the friendliest possible terms she invited her brothers, Hogen and Folgmar, by letter. Although Hogen felt very strongly, that his sister's bad feelings still remained, he decided to accept the invitation. Accordingly, he dispatched some servants to hire a suitable ship; upon their return, however, they told him that a mermaid had appeared before them, telling them that if he ever entered Hven, he would never leave the island. When his wife Glena heard this, she took a great fright and advised her husband to stay at home, and Kremild could jolly well make do with what local guests she might be able to summon.

But he was neither persuaded by his wife's tears, nor her entreaties, and at once went down to the beach, where he saw the mermaid, and asked her about the outcome of his proposed journey. As soon as he heard the ill fortune she foretold, he became angry and took out his sword and chopped her head off. Thereupon he walked along the hilly beach, met a ferryman, and offered him for a fare the golden chain he wore around his neck in exchange for a transfer. The ferryman refused, however, whereupon they fell out, and in his anger Hogen killed the ferryman. He then seized the ferry, and rowed away alone so fiercely, that one of the oars broke close to the land. In stead he used his shield as an oar. On landing, he met his brother Folgmar, who landed at the same time, some ways away. They embraced, and weeping assured each other of brotherly love. This weeping was a bad omen of subsequent disasters.

When Kremild heard about their arrival, she went to receive them with her retinue of women, and spoke to them in the sweetest terms and with the friendliest gestures. Yet she had ordered some of the sturdiest and best armoured soldiers to go to Noerreborg Slot, where they were to attack Hogen upon arrival, in order to kill him. At Karheideborg she had detailed others to do Folgmar in. Since they were the closest of her kin, she asked them to show her the honour, on the great occasion, to receive the guests she had invited, and wine and dine them at each castle. The most practical arrangement, she said, would be for Hogen to take charge of the kitchens at Noerreborg, and Folgmar at the others. They did as their sister asked, and Hogen followed Kremild directly, while Folgmar was escorted to Karheideborg.

As soon as they arrived, the gates were closed behind them, and Folgmar was immediately attacked by the armed men. But he resisted them in a manly fashion, and at once he killed 70 of them. The others took to the walls and jumped down from them, head over heels. The same danger threatened Hogen. He made an even greater onslaught on his enemies than Folgmar. When Kremild now sensed that both her brothers were killed, she went to Karheideborg. There she glanced through a window and saw Folgmar, her brother, standing in the middle of all these dead bodies, soiled with blood. She addressed him in the following way: "Oh, you treacherous bastard! Now you shall be made to suffer for your base duplicity and treachery, when you conspired with your brother against me. You will now pay the price. Because your brother Hogen has already paid with his blood and has departed for hell. Nor shall you be spared your punishment." When he heard that his brother was killed, as she lyingly made him believe, he decided that he would not live any longer himself, and drowned himself right away in the dead men's blood.

When Kremild returned to Noerreborg, she saw that her brother Hogen was still busy killing people right and left. And she addressed him thus: "Oh, you treacherous bastard! May the gods maim and perish you! How can it be, that you, of all people, are impossible to vanquish?" At once he replied: "Oh, you base and wicked woman! Didn't you know, that the gods have given me the gift, that as long as I shall remain standing, I have to fear no enemy's shot nor sword?" This he volunteered without thinking. But the moment she heard about this, she thought out a new piece of trickery. She drew the floor of the main gate with the hides of oxen, upon which she sprinkled dried peas, and on top of these she put yet more oxen hides, so that the two smooth sides of the hides

were turned against each other, intending in this way to make Hogen slip when exiting through the gate. She then opened the gate, and told him that he was free to leave. But Hogen remained for a while and repeated some verse, to fend off his sister's magic, whereupon he went out. Then three heavily armed warriors, who had been secretly and treacherously lying in wait for him, burst forth, and ran directly towards him with their swords outstretched. Such he had not expected. Still he stood up to the three men's onslaught, and one of his feet slipped, so that he supported himself on one knee. But he soon got to his feet again, and went after one and then another, until they were all dead.

Now he decided to go down to the beach and let himself be ferried over to Skaane. But first he intended to visit his treasure in the mountain. He therefore sought out his key, and after having spoken aloud the appropriate words, he went into the Hammersbjerg and stayed there until midnight; then he went to his father's grave, and summoned the spirits with magic words and ceremonies, so that he might learn about the fate awaiting himself and his family. This was, as it turned out, that he never again would be reunited with his wife Gluna in Skaane, but would come to rest his bones in his fathers' island.

First, however, he was to lie with a woman of a giant's lineage, who would bear him a son after he had died, and he should avenge himself on his father's sister Kremild. And he was also told how this would come about. The same night, it being a Tuesday, Kremild made her own sacrifices and received the same answers, namely that Hogen was indeed not to return to his new country. Also, he was not going to die before he had taken a noble virgin to bed with him.

But, on the following day, as they heard about their master's demise, Folgmar's swains hid themselves in the forest. In the morning they espied Hogen, as he was walking on the hilly beach. They immediately ran to this place, and offered him their services.

If he wanted to go to Skaane, they would find him a ship that would secure the passage. But he was very angry that they had left their master in this way. They excused themselves by pointing out that they had been dispatched to Soenderborg under the assumption that he was still alive. While they were talking like this, an old man by the name of Bjoern joined them. He had served Hogen, and also Noegling, his father, as a servant. He gave them an accurate description of what had happened on the previous day, which was that Folgmar, as soon as he believed the false reports of his brother's death, drowned himself, out of fear and grief, in the blood of his slain enemies. Also he told them that Kremild the whole night through had been making sacrifices together with her sorceresses, in order to forge Hogen's fate to her will, which was, that if Hogen on that very day were to venture to take ship, he would surely die. Hogen replied to the old man, that since he himself appeared to be more certain of his own immediate fate than anyone else on the Earth, he most assuredly would not think of taking ship again.

He asked of Bjoern, however, that he go back to Kremild and entreat her, not to deal harshly with his brother's dead body, since he had decided to let it be buried honourably. But as Bjoern declined this, out of fear of the woman's bitter anger, he went himself, along with his people, to Noerreborg and demanded speech with Kremild. Looking out of the castle window, she addressed him, wanting to learn the reason for his visit. He asked her to deliver up the dead body of his brother. She promised to do so some other day. After which she ordered that said body be undressed, washed and put in a coffin with costly clothing, and then be carried out through the gate.

In the meantime, Hogen and his men dug his grave, close to that of his father, Noegling. And, seeing that many foreigners, as well as locals, came to follow the body to its final resting place, Hogen intoned on the grave side a solemn oration, wherein he enumerated and explained Folgmar's virtues and manly deeds; also his sister's great infidelity and treacherousness, her tyranny, and insatiable gluttony, with her falseness and untruthfulness, in which she almost took the palms before all; in the course of this speech, he also pointed out his reasons for killing Sigfrid Horn, and

swore by the gods that everything had happened just as he said. As his speech was now at an end, he ordered that great stones be tossed on top of his brother's grave, as was the custom of the time. When all this had been taken care of, he and his followers retired to his own castle, Soenderborg. But the locals of that place, remembering Hogens earlier, kind usage of them, provided all that they required.

But Kremild, since she was bent on nothing so much as Hogens death, sent one of her maids, dressed in costly array, to Hogen, in the hopes that he would sleep with her. He received her in a kindly manner, asking her to lie with him. Yet, this he did not do. He gathered, as was indeed the truth that she was not of noble birth. Because in the morning when he awakened, he put her to the test, in that he hastily woke her up. Waking up, seeing the bright sunlight, and not remembering where she was, nor who Hogen was, she said that she must hasten to her chores, having overslept herself. Since she mentioned "chores", which would never befit a noble virgin, he let her pass unmolested. The same thing happened on the next day. But the third time, since Kremild realized that she could not trick him in this respect, she sent him one of her virgins by the name of Hvenild – reluctant, though she was – from her ladies' parlour to him. Indeed, by many signs he was able to ascertain that she was not a commoner born; he asked her about her lineage, and other things. To all of it she readily answered. And finally, after a long conversation, they retired to bed together. In the morning, after the consummation, he told her all about what he had learned at his father's grave, and advised her as to how everything was to take place, and so it came to pass.

Some short time later, Hogen died, and Kremild would not allow his body to be buried in her father's land, but had it transferred to Skaane, to Gluna's house, and she had it buried in the Gluneloev Mountains. But Gluna was so frequently harassed by the spirit of Hogen that she had to flee to Norway. This is the reason why the locals dubbed the place "Glunesloev".

But after nine months, Hvenild gave birth to a son, who was named Ranke, because he had limbs greater than could be expected from an infant of his age. And it so happened, that on the same night Kremild also went into labour, and also gave birth to a son, whom she gave the name of her late husband, Sigfrid. Hvenild now kindly proposed that they should both lie in the same chamber; yet she did not disclose what she had in mind about Hvenild's baby. Hvenild obeyed her command and moved into the same chamber with Kremild.

The first night, when everybody was asleep, she remembered what Hogen had confided to her; therefore she exchanged her own baby for Kremild's. A few days later, Kremild got up in the middle of the night and choked the child sleeping beside Hvenild.

In the morning, when Hvenild woke up to find the dead child beside her, she screamed and complained in the most pathetic way, so that Kremild had to sometimes comfort, sometimes chastise her, until she eventually ceased her weeping. In this way, Hvenild fooled Kremild, this the most cunning, most treacherous woman, in that she, who willingly and knowingly had both of her brothers killed, now, unwillingly and unknowingly, had done her own son in by her own hand. Soon hereafter Hvenild was given the charge of suckling her own son.

As he grew up and entered into his fifteenth year, Hvenild thought that the time had come, which Hogen had alerted her to. Therefore she secretly summoned Ranke and told him, how Kremild had killed his father Hogen and his brother Folgmar, and also how she had striven to take his life, when he was an infant, and instead killed her own son. And to make sure that she had sufficiently impressed all these matters on him, she took him out into the field, where there was a wondrously great stone, where under lay the magic key, ever since Hogen left it there for safe keeping. She commanded him to shift the stone, which he easily did. Hvenild scraped the sand aside and showed him the key, and told him how he was to lure his false mother, who everyone supposed to be his true mother, along to the mountain, there to let her in and let her starve to death.

Ranke took the key, and with great joy he went to Kremild, and said: "Oh, my dearest mother! Now I will make you the happiest of all people on Earth!" She asked: "In what way, then?" He answered: "I shall put you in possession of all of Noegling's treasures." – "Oh, dear," she remonstrated, "this can never be possible. We must have the key, with which my father opened the mountain." Ranke answered: "I already have it," and showed it to her at once. When she saw it, she let all other matters rest, and asked him to take her at once to the treasure trove. But he hesitated and asked Kremild to take some food with her; but she, who thirsted after the gold, did not give any thought to food. At any rate, he went to the larder and brought three loaves with him.

While they were walking, he deliberately dropped the first loaf before Kremild's feet. He asked her to pick it up. She would have been well advised to do so, but she was blinded by the thirst of gold to such an extent that she struck all thoughts of bread from her mind. Then he dropped the second loaf, and again asked her to take it with her. But she retorted: "What do we care about bread, when there is so much gold at hand?" He let the last loaf fall, as if he could not help it, and again asked her to pick it up. But since her mind was totally bent on the gold, she did not care in the least. Ranke said: "Mother, I am afraid that you will come to rue this. Because, when first you have entered the mountain with all its gold, you will not want to leave it again. And then you will starve inside there. Then you would wish that you could exchange all the gold for bread." She replied: "My son, just let me in to the gold. Then we shall talk of food later."

And as they were talking together, they reached the top of the mountain, and Ranke inserted the key into the mountain, opened it, and walked in, followed by Kremild. Now that she had her way, there was no satisfying her. She picked the treasure up with her hands, held it before her eyes, made as if she was going to lie down upon it, so in the end Ranke asked her, if she wanted to come back home with him. She answered, that she had all the time in the world. She had no business at home, but would like to stay a while. But he said that he would go home to fetch some food. And as soon as he went out, the mountain closed around her.

On the second day he came back in the early evening, stood before the mountain and shouted to Kremild. She answered and began to berate him for leaving her alone in the mountain for such a long time, instead of bringing her food, as he had promised. But Ranke answered her in the following way: "If you had only heeded me on the way, when the loaves fell out of my hands! Did I not foretell your fate then? Now, you poisonous, wicked woman, now is the time for you to suffer for your evil deeds. Because you are not, as you have supposed, my mother, Hvenild is, and she stole from you your Sigfrid and put me in his place, and meaning to kill me, you killed your own son. My father and my father's brother you have killed with treason and devilry, only so that you might get hold of the gold. Now you have the gold. Satisfy yourself on that which you have hungered and thirsted for all your days! And this same gold, which has caused you to spite the laws of gods and men, will in itself plague and punish you!"

But she appealed to him, in the names of all the gods, that he should not show such inclemency towards his innocent mother, protested, that she had always held him dear, how often she carried him in his arms, and how unjust it would be for him to repay such kindness with severity. But he answered her and blamed her for the evil deeds she had done to his father and uncle, then he bade her go to hell and walked away.

On the third day after this he returned with his mother Hvenild, and they entered the mountain, and found Kremild there, starved to death. They dragged her out and left her lying in front of the mountain, and then they went home again. Those who were at home asked Ranke if he had seen his mother. Those he answered: "My mother I see with me here, right this instant, but a while ago I saw Kremild rather fast asleep at Hammersbjerg." They went there directly and found her lying there, dead. And at this they greatly wondered, and asked each other the reason that she

had died. Yet there was never a single one of them that shed the smallest tear; all of them were happy, that they were now freed from her tyranny.

On the third day after this they let her body be buried, but Ranke stepped forward with some of his armed henchmen and addressed the gathered peasants. And after he had related the whole matter to the public, he bade them be of good cheer, since they were now by the gods' grace rid of this pestilence, and promised to support and serve them. After holding this speech, he presented each member of the congregation with a large amount of gold, so that he could be assured of their good opinion of him.

Four years later, when he was 19 years old, he saw to it that his fortresses were well defended against enemy onslaught, and summoned up from Skaane 12 immensely strong and able young lads, whom he employed for a two years' period with handsome pay, and let them reside with himself, so that he was able to teach them all sorts of swordplay and fighting. He also provided beautiful horses with stately escutcheons and weapons. The third year he re-entered the mountain and took out as much gold as he needed, leaving the substantial remainder to his mother. But the magic key that opened the mountain he threw into the sea, so that no-one would ever be able to get inside. Later he bid his mother and all the servants good night, and together with his warriors he went through Germany to join the Goths, that were ruling in Italy.

But with great liberality and piety Hvenild ingratiated herself so much with the islanders that while she was still alive, the island became known as Hven.

Shortly after her death Karl Hoefde, the son of Hogen and Gluna, entered the island with an army, and because he treated the inhabitants much too harshly, they mounted an attack on him, captured him and had him sentenced to death by beating. In this way all of Noeglings lineage was extinct, and the island gave itself up to the Danes. Because after Ranke had departed for Italy, he never returned.

This account has been transcribed into Danish in Noseby, A.D. 1603 on March 26 and 27, from a stale and torn paper document, which was in Latin, and said to be written in the hand of M. Jon Jacobsen, who is now professor in Copenhagen, but born on the island of Hven. And his father was since parish parson in Landskrona for many years.

(Translation: Arne Keller 2007)