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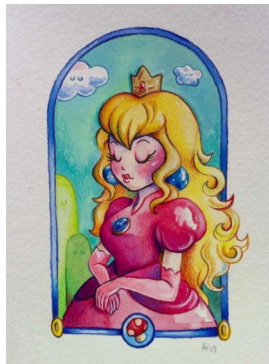
## Stories with a Twist

[249]

### The Tower in the Sea

Manuscript "ג" Quoted in the Introduction to Midrash Tanhuma by  
Solomon Buber

כתב יד ג' של מדרש תנחומא, שפרסם שלמה בובר במבוא למדרש תנחומא, וילנה תרמ"ה, עמ' 136.



## Background to Our Story

### Rapunzel

[REDACTED]

A childless couple who wanted a child lived next to a walled garden which belonged to an enchantress. The wife, at long last pregnant, notices some rapunzel planted in the garden and longs after it to the point of death. Her husband goes to gather some for her, and encounters the enchantress, Dame Gothel, who accuses him of thievery. He asks for mercy, and the enchantress gives him some rapunzel to take home on the condition that the child his wife is pregnant with be surrendered to her at birth. He agrees; the child is born; the enchantress appears, names the child Rapunzel, and takes her away. When Rapunzel reaches her twelfth year, the enchantress shuts her away into a tower in the middle of the wood. When she goes to visit each day with Rapunzel, the enchantress bids Rapunzel let down her long plaited gold hair, and then climbs up it into the tower. ("Rapunzel, Rapunzel, let down your hair, so that I may climb the golden stair" ["without a stair" in some versions].) One day a King's son hears Rapunzel singing from the tower, looks for an entrance, and leaves, finding no way in. He often returns to listen to her sing, and one day sees the enchantress visit, learning thusly how to gain access to Rapunzel. He bids Rapunzel let her hair down, and he climbs up, makes her acquaintance, and asks her to marry him. She agrees. Together they plan a way to get her out of the tower: he will come each night, avoiding the enchantress, who visits in daylight: each night he will bring silk, which Rapunzel will gradually weave into a ladder. The

enchanted learns of the King's son's visits when Rapunzel asks why it is easier for her to draw him up. Dame Gothel cuts off Rapunzel's braided hair and sets her in a desert. When the King's son calls that night, the enchantress lets the braids down, and he climbs up. She tells him he will never see Rapunzel again. He leaps in despair from the tower and is blinded by the thorns below. He wanders about for some years before he hears Rapunzel's voice, and finds her with twins to which she has given birth. Her tears restore his sight, and he leads her to his kingdom, where they lived contentedly for some years, or to use the vernacular: "they lived happily ever after".

As with other readings in folklore, a variety of interpretations are possible.

Eating otherworldly food often puts you in the otherworldly power (compare Persephone and the pomegranate seeds, the tale of Circe, and many Celtic legends), and in exchange for as much of the rapunzel as his wife demanded, the husband found himself bound to deliver up the child, when it came into the world. When the wife came to term, the witch duly appeared and took away the girl-child, whom she named Rapunzel.

Rapunzel grew into a beautiful child, the most beautiful girl in this particular tale, and was raised in luxurious but protected isolation, cloistered in the manner of aristocratic females in medieval and early modern Europe. The sorceress was not truly wicked, so much as blindly old-fashioned. She believed, as many still do, that the virtues of virginity could be combined with utterly ignorant innocence. (Compare Prospero and his daughter Miranda in Shakespeare's The Tempest.) When Rapunzel came to be twelve, (and so at the moment of puberty) she was locked at the top of a lonely tower deep in the forest, which had neither stairs nor door.

Rapunzel's reaction at seeing the prince was not unlike Miranda's: "Oh brave new world! that has such people in it!"

In cultures where women cut their hair when they marry, long hair was an emblem of virginity. In the myth of Lady Godiva, Godiva's long hair, is an emblem of her chastity. Thus the sorceress grabbed a pair of shears and cut Rapunzel's tresses.

The story of Rapunzel is an example of Aarne and Thompson's (see link) type 310 The Maiden in the Tower. It contains many fairy tale fragmentary themes: the Forbidden Fruit, the Womanly Wiles, a Hard Bargain, the Changeling Child, Enchanting Singing, the Unseen Watcher, the Princely Rescue, and Healing Tears.

## King Solomon



<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Solomon>

Solomon ([Hebrew](#): שְׁלֹמֹה, *Shlomoh*) was, according to the [Hebrew Bible](#), [Quran](#), [Hadith](#) and [Hidden Words](#), a fabulously wealthy and wise [king of Israel](#) who succeeded his father, [King David](#). The conventional dates of Solomon's reign are circa 970 to 931 BCE, normally given in alignment with the dates of David's reign. He is described as the third king of the [United Monarchy](#), which would break apart into the northern [Kingdom of Israel](#) and the southern [Kingdom of Judah](#) shortly after his death. Following the split, his [patrilineal](#) descendants ruled over Judah alone.

According to the [Talmud](#), Solomon is one of the 48 [prophets](#).

The [Hebrew Bible](#) credits him as the builder of the [First Temple](#) in Jerusalem, beginning in the fourth year of his reign, using the vast wealth he had accumulated. He dedicated the temple to [Yahweh](#), the God of Israel. He is portrayed as great in [wisdom](#), wealth and power beyond either of the previous kings of the

country, but also as a king who sinned. His sins included [idolatry](#), marrying foreign women and, ultimately, turning away from Yahweh, and they led to the kingdom's being torn in two during the reign of his son [Rehoboam](#).

## The Text: Manuscript "ג" Quoted in the Introduction to Midrash Tanhuma by Solomon Buber

כתב יד ג' של מדרש תנחומא, שפרסם שלמה בובר במבוא למדרש תנחומא, וילנה תרמ"ה, עמ' 136.

מַעֲשֵׂה בַשְּׁלֹמֹה הַמֶּלֶךְ שֶׁהִתְהַלֵּךְ לוֹ בַּת יַפִּיפִיָּה וְשָׂאִין כְּמוֹתֶיהָ בְּכָל אֶרֶץ יִשְׂרָאֵל.  
הִבִּיט בְּמַזְלוֹת מִי בֶן זֹגָה וּמִי יִשְׁאַנָּה,  
וְרָאָה שֶׁהוּא עֲנִי אֶחָד  
וְאִין בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל עֲנִי כְּמוֹתוֹ.  
מָה עֲשֵׂה?  
בְּנֵה מִגְדָּל גְּבוּהַ בַּיָּם  
וְהִיָּה מְקִיפּוֹ מִכָּל רוּחוֹתָיו מִסָּבִיב.  
נָטַל בָּתוֹ וְנָתַן אוֹתָהּ בְּאוֹתוֹ מִגְדָּל הַגְּבוּהַ,  
וְעָמָה שְׂבָעִים סָרִיסִים מְזַקְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל.  
וּבְמִגְדָּל לֹא עֲשֵׂה פֶתַח, שֶׁלֹּא יִכְנֹס אָדָם בּוֹ,  
וְנָתַן בּוֹ צִידָה הַרְבֵּה.  
אָמַר: אֲרָאָה פֶעַל הַשֵּׁם וּמַעֲשֵׂהוּ.  
לִימִים הָיָה אוֹתוֹ עֲנִי, שֶׁהוּא בֶן זֹגָה, יוֹצֵא בְּדֶרֶךְ בְּלִילָה,  
וְהָיָה עָרֶם וְיַחַף, רָעִב וְצָמָא, רָאָה נִבְלַת שׁוֹר מִשְׁלֶכֶת בַּשָּׂדֶה,  
נִכְנָס בָּהּ בֵּין צִלְעוֹתֶיהָ לְהַפִּיג צָנָתוֹ.  
וּכְשִׁישָׁן שָׁם בָּא עוֹף גָּדוֹל  
וְנָטַל אוֹתָהּ הַנִּבְלָה וּנְשָׂאָהּ עַל גַּג אוֹתוֹ מִגְדָּל עַל חֹדֶר הַבַּחֲוֶרָה.  
וְשָׁם הָיָה הָעוֹף אוֹכֵל אֶת בְּשַׂר הַנִּבְלָה;  
וַיֵּשֶׁב שָׁם עַל הַגַּג.  
כְּשֶׁהָאִיר הַשַּׁחַר יִצְאָהּ הַבַּחֲוֶרָה מִחֲדָרָהּ לְלֶכֶת הַגָּגָה, כְּמִנְהַגָּהּ בְּכָל יוֹם,  
וְרָאָתָה אוֹתוֹ בַּחֹר.  
אָמְרָה לוֹ: מִי אַתָּה וּמִי הִבִּיאָךְ לְכָאן?  
אָמַר לָהּ: יְהוּדֵי אֲנִי מִבְּנֵי עַכּוֹ, וְעוֹף הִבִּיאֵנִי לְכָאן.  
מָה עֲשֵׂתָה?  
לְקַחְתּוֹ וְהִבִּיאְתּוֹ לְחֲדָרָהּ,  
וְהִלְבִּישׁוּהוּ  
וְהִרְחִיצוּהוּ  
וְסָכוּהוּ  
וְנִתְיַפָּה מְאוֹד עַד שֶׁשָׂאִין כְּמוֹתוֹ בְּכָל גְּבוּל יִשְׂרָאֵל,  
וְאֵהְבִתּוֹ הַבַּחֲוֶרָה בְּלִבָּהּ וּבְנַפְשָׁהּ.

וְהִזָּה הַבְּחֹרֶת חָרִיף וּמְפֹלֶלֶת וּמְמֹלָח וְסוֹפֵר.  
 יוֹם אֶחָד אָמְרָה לוֹ: רוּצָה אַתָּה לְקַדְשִׁנִּי?  
 אָמַר לָהּ: הֲלוֹאִי!  
 מָה עֲשֵׂה?  
 הִקִּיז דָּם וְכָתַב לָהּ כְּתֻבָּה וּמָהָר מִדָּמוֹ,  
 וְקִדְשָׁהּ וְאָמַר: עַד ה' הַיּוֹם וְעַדִּים מִיכָאֵל וְגַבְרִיאֵל,  
 נִתְעַבְּרָה מִמֶּנּוּ. כְּשָׂרְאוֹ אוֹתָהּ הַזְּקֵנִים מְעַבְּרֹת,  
 אָמְרוּ לָהּ: כְּמַדְמָה לָנוּ שָׂאתָ מְעַבְּרֹת.  
 אָמְרָה לָהֶם: הֵן.  
 אָמְרוּ לָהּ: וּמִמִּי נִתְעַבְּרֹת?  
 אָמְרָה לָהֶם: מָה לָכֶם לְדַעַת?  
 נָפְלוּ פָנֵי הַזְּקֵנִים, שָׁהִיוּ מִתִּירָאִים מִשְׁלֹמֹה הַמֶּלֶךְ,  
 וְשָׁלְחוּ אֵלָיו לְבוֹא אֵלֵיהֶם.  
 נָכַנס שְׁלֹמֹה בְּסָפִינָה וּבָא אֵלֵיהֶם.  
 וְאָמְרוּ לוֹ: אֲדוֹנָנוּ הַמֶּלֶךְ, כִּי הַדְּבָר,  
 וְאֵל יְשִׁים אֲדוֹנָנוּ בְּעַבְדֵי עוֹוֹן.  
 כְּשִׁשְׁמַע שְׁלֹמֹה קָרָא לְבָתוֹ וְשָׂאֵל לָהּ עַל הַדְּבָר.  
 אָמְרָה לוֹ: בְּחֹרֶת אֶחָד הֵבִיא לִי הַקְּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא יָפֵה וְטוֹב, תִּלְמוּדֵי וְסוֹפֵר, וְקִדְשִׁנִּי.  
 קָרָאָה לְבְּחֹרֶת וּבָא לְפָנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ  
 וְהִרְאָה לוֹ הַכְּתֻבָּה שֶׁכָּתַב לְבָתוֹ,  
 וְשָׂאֵל לוֹ הַמֶּלֶךְ עַל אָבִיו וְאָמַר וְעַל מִשְׁפַּחְתּוֹ וּמֵאִיזוֹ עִיר הוּא.  
 וְהִבִּין מִתּוֹךְ דְּבָרָיו שֶׁהוּא אוֹתוֹ שָׂרְאָה בְּמִזְלָה,  
 וְשָׂמַח שֶׁמָּחָה גְּדוּלָּהּ  
 וְאָמַר: בְּרוּךְ הַמָּקוֹם שֶׁנּוֹתֵן אִשָּׁה לְאִישׁ.

This is a story about King Solomon, who had a beautiful daughter, unparalleled in her beauty, in all the land of Israel.

[King Solomon] looked in the to the stars to find out who her daughter's soulmate would be and who would finally marry her. He [King Solomon] saw in the stars that he, her daughter's future husband, would be one poor man, no one as poor as he in the entire land of Israel.

What did he [King Solomon] do?

He [King Solomon] built a tall tower surrounded by the sea. He placed his daughter in the tall tower with 70 eunuchs (chamberlains) from among the elders of Israel. There was no entrance to the tower, so nobody could go in, and he [King Solomon] placed plenty of food for her and her companions' needs.

Then he [King Solomon] said, "I will see what God will do now."

Sometime afterward, the poor man who was her [King Solomon's daughter] soulmate went out at night. And he was naked, barefoot, hungry, and thirsty. He [the poor man] saw an ox's carcass in the field. He crawled within the ox's ribs to warm up. As he was sleeping inside the ox, a big bird came and took the carcass and carried it to the roof of the tower, above the daughter's room.

There the bird was eating the meat of the carcass, and the young man was sitting on the roof.

At dawn, the young woman went up to the roof, as it was her custom every day, and saw the young man.

She [King Solomon's daughter] said to him "Who are you and who brought you here?"

He [the young man] said to her "I am a Jew from Akko, and a bird brought me here."

What did she [King Solomon's daughter] do?

She took him in and brought him to her room, and dressed him, and washed him, and rubbed oil on him, and the young man became very handsome, unparalleled in all the land of Israel. And the girl loved him with all her heart and soul. The young man was sharp, clever, wise, and learned.

One day, she [King Solomon's daughter] asked him "Do you desire to betroth me?"

He said, "If only!"

What did he [the young man] do?

He drew blood from himself and wrote her a ketubah and dowry with his blood, and he betrothed her and said: "God is our witness today together with the angels Michael and Gabriel."

She became pregnant from him. When the elders saw her they said: "It looks to us as though you are pregnant."

She replied to them: "I am."

They said, "And from whom?"

She said, "Why do you need to know?"

The elders of Israel were dismayed because they feared King Solomon and they sent for him. Solomon came to them on a ship.

They [the elders] said to him [to King Solomon], "Our king, this is what happened. Please, don't find fault with your servants."

When King Solomon heard he called for his daughter and asked her what happened.

She said. "God has sent me a young man. He is handsome and good, learned and a scribe. And he betrothed me."

She [King Solomon's daughter] called the young man, and he came before the king and showed him the ketubah he had written for his daughter. The King asked him about his mother, and his father, about his family and from which city he comes from. And the King understood that this was the one [the young man] he saw in the stars, and he rejoiced and said: "Blessed be the Omnipresent who gives a woman to a man."



**Explaining the Story (What is the sequence of events that take place in the story?)**

## Comprehension and Analysis Questions

**?** Why did King Solomon consult the stars to see who would be his daughter's husband?

**?** Why was King Solomon dismayed?

**Bonus ?** Why did King Solomon build a tower in the sea?

Answer 1 \_\_\_\_\_

Answer 2 \_\_\_\_\_

**?** Why did King Solomon provide his daughter with servants and plenty of food?

**Bonus ?** What is the purpose of the fantastic story within our story about the bird carrying the carcass with the poor man from Akko and landing on the tower in the sea?

**?** Why did King Solomon's daughter write a marriage document and bring Michael and Gabriel as witnesses to the wedding?

Answer 1 \_\_\_\_\_

Answer 2 \_\_\_\_\_

Answer 3 \_\_\_\_\_

**Bonus ?** What is the lesson King Solomon learned?

## "The Twist" – Or the Lessons We Can Learn from the Text

**!** There are circumstances you cannot control even with all the money and power in the world, and yet, at the end, things may still work out work better than what you expect.

# EPILOGUE