

Egle the Queen of Grass snakes

Shortened version with Reading comprehension exercises for 4 - 5 graders

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The Original Story can be found on:
<https://europeisnotdead.com/lithuania-egle-the-queen-of-grass-snakes/>

PART 1

In another time, long ago lived an old man and his wife. Both of them had twelve sons and three daughters. The youngest was named Egle (Fir). On a warm summer evening all three girls decided to go swimming. After bathing they climbed onto the riverbank to dress, but Egle found a grass snake in the sleeve of her blouse. The eldest sister grabbed Egle's blouse. She threw the blouse down and jumped on it to get rid of the grass snake. But the grass snake turned to Egle and spoke to her in a man's voice:

- Egle, promise to become my wife and I will gladly come out.

Egle began to cry. How could she marry a grass snake? Through her tears she answered:

-Please give me back my blouse.

But the grass snake would not listen:

-Promise to become my wife and I will gladly come out.

There was nothing else Egle could do; and she promised the grass snake to become his wife.

EXERCISE

Match the parts of the sentences. Write letters from column B before the numbers in column A.

A	B
1. She promised the grass snake	a. Egle's blouse.
2. The eldest sister grabbed	b. and his wife.
3. Please, give me back	c. Egle could do.
4. There was nothing else	d. to become his wife.
5. Long ago lived an old man	e. my blouse.

PART 2

After three days the family saw every grass snake in the land come to their farm. The whole family was afraid. And Egle's father decided to cheat the grass snakes. He ran to the local wise woman and told her everything. The wise woman said:

-It is easy to trick a grass snake, instead of your daughter give him a goose.

He did so. However, a cuckoo told the grass snake that the girl's father was cheating. Then the parents dressed a white sheep and a white cow up, but the bird warned the grass snakes every time.

Eventually Egle went to the seaside. There she met a handsome young man who told her that he was the grass snake in her sleeve of her blouse. They went into the sea and Egle saw a beautiful palace of amber. This was her new home and Egle was happy.

Nine years went by and Egle gave birth to three sons –Azuolas (Oak), Uosis (Ash) and Berzas (Birch) – and a daughter -Drebule (Aspen) – who was the youngest. One day Egle asked her husband to let her visit her parents.

-Fine, he said, but only when you complete my tasks.

Egle worked very hard, but all the tasks were magic and Egle wouldn't be able to complete them without help of a soceress. When she did, her husband had no choice but only to let her and their children to go to the village. He gave them nine days to stay there and said:

-When you return, come alone, just you and the children and call for me. If you see white foam on the waves, know that I am still alive, but if red foam comes, know that I have reached my end.

EXERCISE

Choose the correct answer **a** or **b**.

1. Who told the grass snakes that Egle's father was cheating?

- a/ a person
- b/ a bird

2. What animals did the parents dress as Egle?

- a/ a goat, a sheep and a cow
- b/ a goose, a sheep and a cow

3. Where did Egle see a handsome man?

- a/ in the forest
- b/ by the sea

4. How many children did Egle and Zilvinas have?

- a/ four sons
- b/ three sons and one daughter

5. How long could Egle and her children stay in the village?

- a/ nine days
- b/ ten days

PART 3

Returning to her homeland, Egle felt great joy. All her relatives gathered to meet her and her children. And her parents, brothers and sisters began to think how to keep their daughter and grandchildren with them. They decided to ask the children how they would call for the grass snake to come to the beach out of the sea waters.

They called Egle's eldest son, Azuolas, and praised him. They questioned him but he said that he did not know anything. Then they talked to Uosis and Berzas, but didn't get the secret out of them either. Finally they took Drebulė, Egle's youngest daughter, outside and frightened her, so she told everything.

Then Egle's brothers took their scythes, went to the sea, called Egle's husband and killed him. They kept this a secret from Egle.

After nine days Egle returned to the sea and called for her beloved husband. However, she only saw red foam on the waves and heard his voice:

-Your brothers cut me down. Our secret was given to them by our beloved daughter Drebulė!

With great sorrow Egle turned to her children and turned her daughter into an Aspen, whose leaves shiver day and night. As to her sons, she turned them into the strongest trees growing in Lithuania: the Oak, the Ash and the Birch and became a Fir.

EXERCISE

True or False?

- 1/ The parents didn't want let Egle return to her husband. True or False?
- 2/ The youngest son told his grandparents how to call his father. True or False?
- 3/ Egle's parents killed her husband. True or False?
- 4/ Egle saw the ghost of her husband on the beach. True or False?
- 5/ Egle turned all her children into strong trees. True or False?

