

## **The King And The Ant's Tree**

by Sir George Webbe Dasent  
from *Ananzi Tales*

There was a King who had a very beautiful daughter, and he said, whoever would cut down an Ant's tree, which he had in his kingdom, without brushing off the ants, should marry his daughter. Now a great many came and tried, but no one could do it, for the ants fell out upon them and stung them, and they were forced to brush them off. There was always someone watching to see if they brushed the ants off.

Then Ananzi went, and the King's son was set to watch him. When they showed him the tree, he said, 'Why, that's nothing, I know I can do that.' So they gave him the axe, and he began to hew, but each blow he gave the tree, he shook himself and brushed himself, saying all the while, 'Did you see me do that? I suppose you think I'm brushing myself, but I am not.' And so he went, on until he had cut down the tree. But the boy thought he was only pretending to brush himself all the time, and the King was obliged to give him his daughter.