The Black Dog with Eight Legs

A Prophesied Destiny

An ancient king and queen are finally blessed with a child after a long period of waiting. On the night the queen goes into labor, a traveling poor scholar arrives at the castle. He studies the stars on a nearby hillside and recognizes a disastrous astrological alignment. Though he tries to get the servants to delay the birth, the child is born exactly at the fateful moment. To protect the baby, the scholar leaves a handwritten amulet under the child's chin, warning that no one must read it until the boy turns twenty-one.

The boy is baptized as Prince John and grows into a remarkably skilled horse rider. Just before his twenty-first birthday, his mother breaks the rule and reads the note, discovering a terrifying prophecy: on his twenty-first year, John will be killed by the "Black Dog with the Eight Legs". Learning the truth after a series of supernatural warnings cuts his hunting trip short, John accepts his fate with stoic resilience and decides to face it away from home. He sets sail with a loyal servant boy, eventually landing in a deserted village where all the shops and houses are barricaded out of fear of the impending, prophesied battle on the village Green. To protect the servant boy, John orders him to go home for a year and a day.

The Three Brothers and the Magical Hounds

While seeking shelter in a nearby wood, John discovers a secluded house. He is welcomed by an old man whose massive hound initially rears to attack but is pacified. That night, the Black Dog arrives, and the old man's hound fiercely fights the creature until dawn, keeping John entirely safe. The next morning, the old man gifts the hound—who can speak and travel at supernatural speeds—to John, directing him to his brother's house. This sequence repeats over the next two days. John stays with a second and third brother, gaining a new magical hound each morning. By the end of his journey, he is accompanied by three fiercely loyal magical dogs named Fios, Luas, and Droim Dúbailte.

Treachery and Triumph

John and his three hounds arrive at a grand estate home to a young woman who welcomes him with immense hospitality. Unbeknownst to John, she is secretly betrothed to the Black Dog—originally a handsome man trapped under a curse that can only be broken if he kills Prince John. To orchestrate his death, the woman feeds the hounds and locks them behind a heavy iron door. At midnight, the Black Dog strikes, but the hounds combine their strength, smash the door down, and tear the monster to pieces. The next morning, the woman is shocked to find John perfectly healthy, whistling and singing in bed. On the second night, she locks the hounds with twice the security, but they break free again and inflict seven times more damage on the creature.

Desperate, the Black Dog instructs the woman to retrieve a tiny sliver of his claw or nail from the battlefield and hide it beneath the sheets of John's bed. The poisoned artifact instantly pierces John's heart, leaving him paralyzed and dying on the mattress. Sensing the danger, the hounds break free once more. Fios reveals that the only antidote is a rare plant (*bileóg*) growing in the Eastern World. Luas uses her supernatural speed to sprint across the world and back in minutes, retrieving the leaves. They apply the plant to John's back, instantly neutralizing the poison and restoring his health. Following the dogs' advice, John pretends nothing happened,

invites the deceitful woman to walk with him, and then strands her far from home, telling her to look for her broken Black Dog.

Breaking the Final Curse

Marching onward, John and his companions reach a stream with an axe and a chopping block. Fios halts and demands that John sever her head. Though initially horrified, John complies; the moment her head is cut off, she transforms into a beautiful woman. They repeat this process at a second stream with Luas, and a third stream with Droim Dúbailte, who transforms into a handsome, noble man.

The three explain that they were noble humans trapped under an ancient spell that could only be broken by the permanent destruction of the eight-legged Black Dog. Concurrently, the Black Dog could only escape his own monstrous curse by killing Prince John. Because John and the hounds outsmarted the beast, the tragic cycle is shattered, and the Black Dog vanishes without a trace forever. Prince John marries Fios, Luas marries Droim Dúbailte, and they all return home to live out their lives in absolute peace and prosperity.