

**VARIOUS**

GRIMM'S FAIRY  
TALES

Various  
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# Various Grimm's Fairy Tales

## THE FROG-KING; OR, IRON HENRY

In old times, when wishing was having, there lived a King whose daughters were all beautiful, but the youngest was so beautiful that the sun itself, which has seen so much, was astonished whenever it shone in her face.

Close by the King's castle lay a great dark forest, and under an old lime-tree in the forest, was a fountain. When the day was very warm, the King's Child went out into the forest and sat down by the side of the cool fountain, and when she was dull she took a golden ball, and threw it up in the air and caught it. And this ball was her favorite plaything.

Now, it so happened one day, the King's Daughter's golden ball did not fall into the little hand which she was holding up for it, but on to the ground, and rolled straight into the water. The King's Daughter followed it with her eyes; but it vanished, and the well was deep, so deep that the bottom could not be seen. On this she began to cry, and cried louder and louder, and could not be comforted.

And as she thus lamented, some one said to her, "What ails you, King's Daughter? You weep so that even a stone would show pity."

She looked round to the side from whence the voice came, and saw a Frog stretching its thick, ugly head from the water. "Ah! old water-splasher, is it you?" said she; "I am weeping for my golden ball, which has fallen into the fountain."

"Be quiet, and do not weep," answered the Frog, "I can help you. But what will you give me if I bring your plaything up again?"

"Whatever you will have, dear Frog," said she – "my clothes, my pearls and jewels, and even the golden crown which I am wearing."

The Frog answered, "I do not care for your clothes, your pearls and jewels, or your golden crown, but if you will love me and let me be your companion and playfellow, and sit by you at your little table, and eat off your little golden plate, and drink out of your little cup, and sleep in your little bed – if you will promise me this, I will go down below, and bring your golden ball up again."

"Oh, yes," said she, "I promise you all you wish, if you will but bring my ball back again." She, however, thought, "How the silly Frog does talk! He lives in the water with the other frogs and croaks, and can be no companion to any human being!"

But the Frog, when he had received this promise, put his head into the water and sank down. In a short time he came swimming up again with the ball in his mouth, and threw it on the grass. The King's Daughter was delighted to see her pretty plaything once more, and picked it up, and ran away with it.

"Wait, wait," said the Frog. "Take me with you. I can't run as you can." But what did it avail him to scream his *croak, croak*, after her, as loudly as he could? She did not listen to it, but ran home and soon forgot the poor Frog, who was forced to go back into his fountain again.

The next day, when she had seated herself at table with the King and all the courtiers, and was eating from her little golden plate, something came creeping *splish splash, splish splash*, up the marble staircase. When it got to the top, it knocked at the door, and cried:

"King's Daughter, youngest.  
Open the door!"

She ran to see who was outside, but when she opened the door, there sat the Frog in front of it. Then she slammed the door in great haste, sat down to dinner again, and was quite frightened.

The King saw plainly that her heart was beating violently, and said, "My Child, what are you so afraid of? Is there a Giant outside who wants to carry you away?"

"Ah, no," replied she, "it is no Giant, but a disgusting Frog."

"What does the Frog want with you?"

"Ah, dear Father, yesterday when I was in the forest sitting by the fountain, playing, my golden ball fell into the water. And because I cried so, the Frog brought it out again for me. And because he insisted so on it, I promised him he should be my companion; but I never thought he would be able to come out of the water! And now he is here, and wants to come in."

In the meantime, it knocked a second time, and cried:

"King's Daughter, youngest!  
Open to me!  
Don't you remember yesterday,  
And all that you to me did say,  
Beside the cooling fountain's spray?  
King's Daughter, youngest!  
Open to me!"

Then said the King, "That which you have promised you must perform. Go and let him in."

She went and opened the door, and the Frog hopped in and followed her, step by step, to her chair. There he sat still and cried, "Lift me up beside you."

She delayed, until at last the King commanded her to do it. When the Frog was once on the chair, he wanted to be on the table, and when he was on the table, he said, "Now, push your little golden plate nearer to me that we may eat together."

She did this, but it was easy to see that she did not do it willingly. The Frog enjoyed what he ate, but almost every mouthful she took, choked her.

At length he said, "I have eaten and am satisfied. Now I am tired, carry me into your little room and make your little silken bed ready; and we will both lie down and go to sleep."

The King's Daughter began to cry, for she was afraid of the cold Frog, which she did not like to touch, and which was now to sleep in her pretty, clean little bed.

But the King grew angry and said, "He who helped you when you were in trouble, ought not afterward to be despised."

So she took hold of the Frog with two fingers, carried him upstairs, and put him in a corner. But when she was in bed, he crept to her and said, "I am tired, I want to sleep as well as you; lift me up or I will tell your father."

Then she was terribly angry, and took him up and threw him with all her might against the wall.

"Now, you will be quiet, odious Frog," said she.

But when he fell down, he was no Frog but a King's Son with beautiful kind eyes!

He, by her father's will, was now her dear companion and husband. Then he told her how he had been bewitched by a wicked Witch, and how no one could have delivered him from the fountain but herself, and that to-morrow they would go together into his kingdom.

Then they went to sleep, and next morning when the sun awoke them, a coach came rolling up drawn by eight white horses, with white ostrich feathers on their heads. They were harnessed with golden chains, and behind stood the young King's servant, Faithful Henry. Faithful Henry had been so unhappy when his master was changed into a Frog, that he had three iron bands laid round his heart, lest it should burst with grief and sadness.

The coach was to conduct the young King into his kingdom. Faithful Henry helped them both in, and placed himself behind again, and was full of joy because of this deliverance. And when they had driven a part of the way, the King's Son heard a cracking behind him as if something had broken. So he turned round and cried:

“Henry, the coach does break!”  
“No, no, my lord, you do mistake!  
It is the band around my heart,  
That felt such great and bitter smart,  
When you were in the fountain strange,  
When you into a Frog were changed!”

Again and once again, while they were on their way, something cracked; and each time the King's Son thought the carriage was breaking. But it was only the bands which were springing from the heart of Faithful Henry because his master was set free and was happy.

## THE WOLF AND THE SEVEN LITTLE KIDS

There was once on a time, an old Goat who had seven little Kids, and loved them with all the love of a mother for her children.

One day, she wanted to go into the forest and fetch some food. So she called all seven to her and said, “Dear Children, I have to go into the forest. Be on your guard against the Wolf. If he come in, he will devour you all – skin, hair, and all. The wretch often disguises himself; but you will know him at once by his rough voice and his black feet.”

The Kids said, “Dear Mother, we will take good care of ourselves. You may go away without any anxiety.”

Then the old one bleated, and went on her way with an easy mind.

It was not long before some one knocked at the house-door, and cried, “Open the door, dear Children! Your mother is here, and has brought something back with her for each of you.”

But the little Kids knew that it was the Wolf, by his rough voice. “We will not open the door,” cried they; “you are not our mother. She has a soft, pleasant voice, but your voice is rough. You are the Wolf!”

Then the Wolf went away to a shopkeeper, and bought a great lump of chalk, ate this and made his voice soft with it. Then he came back, knocked at the door of the house, and cried, “Open the door, dear Children! Your mother is here and has brought something back with her for each of you.”

But the Wolf had laid his black paws against the window, and the children saw them, and cried, “We will not open the door, our mother has not black feet like you. You are the Wolf!”

Then the Wolf ran to a baker, and said, “I have hurt my feet, rub some dough over them for me.”

And when the baker had rubbed his feet over, he ran to the miller and said, “Strew some white meal over my feet for me.” The miller thought to himself, “The Wolf wants to deceive some one,” and refused. But the Wolf said, “If you will not do it, I will devour you.” Then the miller was afraid, and made his paws white for him. Yes! so are men!

Now, the wretch went for the third time to the house-door, knocked at it, and said, “Open the door for me, Children! Your dear little mother has come home, and has brought every one of you something from the forest with her.”

The little Kids cried, “First show us your paws that we may know if you are our dear little mother.”

Then he put his paws in through the window. And when the Kids saw that they were white, they believed all that he said, and opened the door. But who should come in but *the Wolf!*

They were terrified and wanted to hide themselves. One sprang under the table, the second into the bed, the third into the stove, the fourth into the kitchen, the fifth into the cupboard, the sixth under the washing-bowl, and the seventh into the clock-case. But the Wolf found them all and made no delay, but swallowed one after the other down his throat. The youngest in the clock-case was the only one he did not find.

When the Wolf had satisfied his appetite, he took himself off, laid himself down under a tree in the green meadow outside, and began to sleep.

Soon afterward, the old Goat came home again from the forest. Ah! what a sight she saw there! The house-door stood wide open. The table, chairs, and benches were thrown down, the washing-bowl lay broken to pieces, and the quilts and pillows were pulled off the bed.

She sought her children, but they were nowhere to be found. She called them one after another by name, but no one answered. At last, when she called the youngest, a soft voice cried, “Dear Mother, I am in the clock-case.”

She took the Kid out, and it told her that the Wolf had come and had eaten all the others. Then you may imagine how she wept over her poor children!

At length, in her grief she went out, and the youngest Kid ran with her. When they came to the meadow, there lay the Wolf by the tree and he was snoring so loud that the branches shook. She looked at him on every side and saw that something was moving and struggling in his stomach. “Ah!” said she, “is it possible that my poor children, whom he has swallowed down for his supper, can be still alive?”

Then the Kid had to run home and fetch scissors, and a needle and thread, and the Goat cut open the monster’s stomach. Hardly had she made one cut, than a little Kid thrust its head out, and when she had cut farther, all six sprang out one after another, and were all still alive, and had suffered no hurt whatever, for in his greediness the monster had swallowed them whole.

What rejoicing there was! They embraced their dear mother, and jumped like a tailor at his wedding. The mother, however, said, “Now go and look for some big stones. We will fill the wicked beast’s stomach with them, while he is asleep.”

Then the seven Kids dragged the stones thither with all speed, and put as many of them into his stomach as they could get in. And the mother sewed him up again in the greatest haste; so that he was not aware of anything and never once stirred.

When the Wolf had had his sleep out, he got on his legs, and as the stones in his stomach made him very thirsty, he wanted to go to a well to drink. But when he began to walk and to move about, the stones in his stomach knocked against each other and rattled. Then cried he:

“What rumbles and tumbles  
Against my poor bones?  
I thought ’twas six Kids,  
But it’s only big stones!”

And when he got to the well and stooped over the water and was just about to drink, the heavy stones made him fall in. There was no help for it, but he had to drown miserably!

When the seven Kids saw that, they came running to the spot and cried aloud, “The Wolf is dead! The Wolf is dead!” and danced for joy round about the well with their mother.

## RAPUNZEL

There was once a man and a woman, who had long in vain wished for a child. At length, the woman hoped that God was about to grant her desire.

These people had a little window at the back of their house from which a splendid garden could be seen. It was full of the most beautiful flowers and herbs. It was, however, surrounded by a high wall, and no one dared to go into it because it belonged to a Witch, who had great power and was dreaded by all the world.

One day, the woman was standing by this window and looking down into the garden, when she saw a bed which was planted with the most beautiful rampion (rapunzel), and it looked so fresh and green that she longed for it, and had the greatest desire to eat some.

This desire increased every day, and as she knew that she could not get any of it, she quite pined away, and looked pale and miserable.

Then her husband was alarmed, and asked, "What ails you, dear Wife?"

"Ah," she replied, "if I can't get some of the rampion to eat, which is in the garden behind our house, I shall die."

The man, who loved her, thought, "Sooner than let your wife die, bring her some of the rampion yourself, let it cost you what it will!"

In the twilight of evening, he clambered over the wall into the garden of the Witch, hastily clutched a handful of rampion, and took it to his wife. She at once made herself a salad of it, and ate it with much relish.

She, however, liked it so much – so very much – that the next day she longed for it three times as much as before. If he was to have any rest, her husband must once more descend into the garden. In the gloom of evening, therefore, he let himself down again. But when he had clambered down the wall he was terribly afraid, for he saw the Witch standing before him.

"How dare you," said she with angry look, "descend into my garden and steal my rampion like a thief? You shall suffer for it!"

"Ah," answered he, "let mercy take the place of justice! I had to do it out of necessity. My wife saw your rampion from the window, and felt such a longing for it that she would have died, if she had not got some to eat."

Then the Witch let her anger be softened, and said to him, "If the case be as you say, I will allow you to take away with you as much rampion as you will, only I make one condition, you must give me the child which your wife will bring into the world. It shall be well treated, and I will care for it like a mother."

The man in his terror consented to everything, and when the woman at last had a little daughter, the Witch appeared at once, gave the child the name of Rapunzel, and took it away with her.

Rapunzel grew into the most beautiful child beneath the sun. When she was twelve years old, the Witch shut her into a tower, which lay in a forest, and had neither stairs nor door. But quite at the top was a little window. When the Witch wanted to go in, she placed herself beneath this, and cried:

"Rapunzel, Rapunzel,  
Let down thy hair."

Rapunzel had magnificent long hair, fine as spun gold, and when she heard the voice of the Witch, she unfastened her braided tresses and wound them round one of the hooks of the window above. And then the hair fell twenty ells down, and the Witch climbed up by it.

After a year or two, it came to pass that the King's Son rode through the forest and went by the tower. Then he heard a song, which was so charming that he stood still and listened. This was Rapunzel, who in her solitude passed her time in letting her sweet voice resound.

The King's Son wanted to climb up to her, and looked for the door of the tower, but none was to be found. He rode home, but the singing had so deeply touched his heart, that every day he went out into the forest and listened to it.

Once when he was thus standing behind a tree, he saw that a Witch came there, and he heard how she cried:

“Rapunzel, Rapunzel,  
Let down thy hair.”

Then Rapunzel let down the braids of her hair, and the Witch climbed up to her. “If that is the ladder by which one mounts, I will for once try my fortune,” said he. The next day when it began to grow dark, he went to the tower and cried:

“Rapunzel, Rapunzel,  
Let down thy hair.”

Immediately the hair fell down, and the King's Son climbed up.

At first Rapunzel was terribly frightened when a man, such as her eyes had never yet beheld, came to her. But the King's Son began to talk to her quite like a friend, and told her that his heart had been so stirred, that it had let him have no rest, so he had been forced to see her.

Then Rapunzel lost her fear, and when he asked her if she would take him for her husband, and she saw that he was young and handsome, she thought, “He will love me more than old Dame Gothel does;” and she said yes, and laid her hand in his.

She said also, “I will willingly go away with you, but I do not know how to get down. Bring with you a skein of silk every time that you come, and I will weave a ladder with it. When that is ready I will descend, and you will take me on your horse.”

They agreed that until that time, he should come to her every evening, for the old woman came by day. The Witch remarked nothing of this, until once Rapunzel said to her, “Tell me, Dame Gothel, how it happens that you are so much heavier for me to draw up, than the young King's Son – he is with me in a moment.”

“Ah! you wicked Child!” cried the Witch. “What do I hear you say! I thought I had separated you from all the world, and yet you have deceived me!”

In her anger she clutched Rapunzel's beautiful tresses, wrapped them twice round her left hand, seized a pair of scissors with the right, and *snip, snap*, they were cut off, and the lovely braids lay on the ground. And she was so pitiless that she took poor Rapunzel into a desert, where she had to live in great grief and misery.

On the same day, however, that she cast out Rapunzel, the Witch, in the evening, fastened the braids of hair which she had cut off, to the hook of the window; and when the King's Son came and cried:

“Rapunzel, Rapunzel,  
Let down thy hair,”

she let the hair down.

The King's Son ascended. He did not find his dearest Rapunzel above, but the Witch, who gazed at him with wicked and venomous looks.

“Aha!” she cried mockingly, “you would fetch your dearest! But the beautiful bird sits no longer singing in the nest. The cat has got it, and will scratch out your eyes as well. Rapunzel is lost to you! You will never see her more!”

The King’s Son was beside himself with grief and in his despair he leapt down from the tower. He escaped with his life, but the thorns into which he fell, pierced his eyes. Then he wandered quite blind about the forest, ate nothing but roots and berries, and did nothing but lament and weep over the loss of his dearest wife.

Thus he roamed about in misery for some years, and at length came to the desert where Rapunzel lived in wretchedness. He heard a voice, and it seemed so familiar to him that he went toward it. When he approached, Rapunzel knew him, and fell on his neck and wept. Two of her tears wetted his eyes and they grew clear again, and he could see with them as before.

He led her to his Kingdom where he was joyfully received, and they lived for a long time, happy and contented.

## LITTLE BROTHER AND LITTLE SISTER

Little brother took his little sister by the hand and said, "Since our mother died, we have had no happiness; our stepmother beats us every day, and if we come near her, she kicks us away with her foot. Our meals are the hard crusts of bread that are left over. The little dog under the table is better off, for she often throws it a nice bit. May Heaven pity us! If our mother only knew! Come, we will go forth together into the wide world."

They walked the whole day over meadows, fields, and stony places; and when it rained the little sister said, "Heaven and our hearts are weeping together."

In the evening they came to a large forest, and they were so weary with sorrow and hunger and the long walk, that they lay down in a hollow tree and fell asleep.

The next day when they awoke, the sun was already high and shone down hot into the tree. Then the little brother said, "Little Sister, I am thirsty. If I knew of a little brook I would go and take a drink. I think I hear one running." The little brother got up and took the little sister by the hand, and they set off to find the brook.

But the wicked stepmother was a Witch, and had seen how the two children had gone away. She had crept after them, as Witches do creep, and had bewitched all the brooks in the forest.

Now, when they found a little brook leaping brightly over the stones, the little brother was going to drink out of it, but the little sister heard how it said as it ran:

"Who drinks of me, a Tiger be!  
Who drinks of me, a Tiger be!"

Then the little sister cried, "Pray, dear little Brother, do not drink, or you will become a wild beast, and tear me to pieces."

The little brother did not drink, although he was so thirsty, but said, "I will wait for the next spring."

When they came to the next brook, the little sister heard this say:

"Who drinks of me, a wild Wolf be!  
Who drinks of me, a wild Wolf be!"

Then the little sister cried out, "Pray, dear little Brother, do not drink, or you will become a Wolf, and devour me."

The little brother did not drink, and said, "I will wait until we come to the next spring, but then I must drink, say what you like; for my thirst is too great."

And when they came to the third brook, the little sister heard how it said as it ran:

"Who drinks of me, a Roebuck be!  
Who drinks of me, a Roebuck be!"

The little sister said, "Oh, I pray you, dear little Brother, do not drink, or you will become a Roe, and run away from me."

But the little brother had knelt by the brook, and had bent down and drunk some of the water. And as soon as the first drops touched his lips, he lay there a young Roe.

And now the little sister wept over her poor bewitched little brother, and the little Roe wept also, and sat sorrowfully near to her. But at last the girl said, "Be quiet, dear little Roe, I will never, never leave you."

Then she untied her golden garter and put it round the Roe's neck, and she plucked rushes and wove them into a soft cord. With this she tied the little animal and led it on; and she walked deeper and deeper into the forest.

And when they had gone a very long way, they came to a little house. The girl looked in; and as it was empty, she thought, "We can stay here and live."

Then she sought for leaves and moss to make a soft bed for the Roe. Every morning she went out and gathered roots and berries and nuts for herself, and brought tender grass for the Roe, who ate out of her hand, and was content and played round about her. In the evening, when the little sister was tired, and had said her prayer, she laid her head upon the Roe's back: that was her pillow, and she slept softly on it. And if only the little brother had had his human form, it would have been a delightful life.

For some time, they were alone like this in the wilderness. But it happened that the King of the country held a great hunt in the forest. Then the blasts of the horns, the barking of dogs, and the merry shouts of the huntsmen rang through the trees, and the Roe heard all, and was only too anxious to be there.

"Oh," said he to his little sister, "let me be off to the hunt, I cannot bear it any longer;" and he begged so much that at last she agreed.

"But," said she to him, "come back to me in the evening. I must shut my door for fear of the rough huntsmen, so knock and say, 'My little Sister, let me in!' that I may know you. And if you do not say that, I shall not open the door."

Then the young Roe sprang away; so happy was he and so merry in the open air.

The King and the huntsmen saw the pretty creature, and started after him. But they could not catch him, and when they thought that they surely had him, away he sprang through the bushes and was gone.

When it was dark he ran to the cottage, knocked, and said, "My little Sister, let me in." Then the door was opened for him, and he jumped in, and rested himself the whole night through upon his soft bed.

The next day, the hunt went on afresh, and when the Roe again heard the bugle-horn, and the *ho! ho!* of the huntsmen, he had no peace, but said, "Sister, let me out, I must be off."

His sister opened the door for him, and said, "But you must be here again in the evening and say your password."

When the King and his huntsmen again saw the young Roe with the golden collar, they all chased him, but he was too quick and nimble for them. This went on for the whole day, but by evening the huntsmen had surrounded him, and one of them wounded him a little in the foot, so that he limped and ran slowly. Then a hunter crept after him to the cottage and heard how he said, "My little Sister, let me in," and saw that the door was opened for him, and was shut again at once.

The huntsman took notice of it all, and went to the King and told him what he had seen and heard. Then the King said, "To-morrow we will hunt once more."

The little sister, however, was dreadfully frightened when she saw that her little Roe was hurt. She washed the blood off him, laid herbs on the wound, and said, "Go to your bed, dear Roe, that you may get well again."

But the wound was so slight that the Roe, next morning, did not feel it any more. And when he again heard the sport outside, he said, "I cannot bear it, I must be there. They shall not find it so easy to catch me!"

The little sister cried, and said, "This time they will kill you, and here am I alone in the forest, and forsaken by all the world. I will not let you out."

"Then you will have me die of grief," answered the Roe. "When I hear the bugle-horns I feel as if I must jump out of my skin."

Then the little sister could not do otherwise, but opened the door for him with a heavy heart, and the Roe, full of health and joy, bounded away into the forest.

When the King saw him, he said to his huntsman, "Now chase him all day long till nightfall, but take care that no one does him any harm."

As soon as the sun had set, the King said to the huntsmen, "Now come and show me the cottage in the wood;" and when he was at the door, he knocked and called out, "Dear little Sister, let me in."

Then the door opened, and the King walked in, and there stood a maiden more lovely than any he had ever seen. The maiden was frightened when she saw, not her little Roe, but a man with a golden crown upon his head. But the King looked kindly at her, stretched out his hand, and said:

"Will you go with me to my palace and be my dear wife?"

"Yes, indeed," answered the maiden, "but the little Roe must go with me. I cannot leave him."

The King said, "He shall stay with you as long as you live, and shall want nothing."

Just then he came running in, and the little sister again tied him with the cord of rushes, took it in her own hand, and went away with the King from the cottage.

The King took the lovely maiden upon his horse and carried her to his palace, where the wedding was held with great pomp. She was now the Queen, and they lived for a long time happily together. The Roe was tended and cherished, and ran about in the palace-garden.

But the wicked Witch, because of whom the children had gone out into the world, thought all the time that the little sister had been torn to pieces by the wild beasts in the wood, and that the little brother had been shot for a Roe by the huntsmen. Now when she heard that they were so happy, and so well off, envy and hatred rose in her heart and left her no peace, and she thought of nothing but how she could bring them again to misfortune.

Her own daughter, who was as ugly as night, and had only one eye, grumbled at her and said, "A Queen! that ought to have been my luck."

"Only be quiet," answered the old woman, and comforted her by saying, "when the time comes I shall be ready."

As time went on, the Queen had a pretty little boy. It happened that the King was out hunting; so the old Witch took the form of the chambermaid, went into the room where the Queen lay, and said to her, "Come, the bath is ready. It will do you good, and give you fresh strength. Make haste before it gets cold."

The daughter also was close by; so they carried the weak Queen into the bathroom, and put her into the bath. Then they shut the door and ran away. But in the bathroom they had made a fire of such deadly heat, that the beautiful young Queen was soon suffocated.

When this was done, the old woman took her daughter, put a nightcap on her head, and laid her in bed in place of the Queen. She gave her too the shape and the look of the Queen, only she could not make good the lost eye. But, in order that the King might not see it, she was to lie on the side on which she had no eye.

In the evening, when he came home and heard that he had a son, he was heartily glad, and was going to the bed of his dear wife to see how she was. But the old woman quickly called out, "For your life leave the curtains closed. The Queen ought not to see the light yet, and must have rest."

The King went away, and did not find out that a false Queen was lying in the bed.

But at midnight, when all slept, the nurse, who was sitting in the nursery by the cradle, and who was the only person awake, saw the door open and the true Queen walk in. She took the child out of the cradle, laid it on her arm and nursed it. Then she shook up its pillow, laid the child down again, and covered it with the little quilt. And she did not forget the Roe, but went into the corner where he lay, and stroked his back. Then she went quite silently out of the door again.

The next morning, the nurse asked the guards whether any one had come into the palace during the night, but they answered, "No, we have seen no one."

She came thus many nights and never spoke a word. The nurse always saw her, but she did not dare to tell any one about it.

When some time had passed in this manner, the Queen began to speak in the night, and said:

“How fares my child, how fares my Roe?  
Twice shall I come, then never moe!”

The nurse did not answer, but when the Queen had gone again, went to the King and told him all. The King said, “Ah, heavens! what is this? To-morrow night I will watch by the child.” In the evening he went into the nursery, and at midnight the Queen again appeared, and said:

“How fares my child, how fares my Roe?  
Once shall I come, then never moe!”

And she nursed the child as she was wont to do before she disappeared. The King dared not speak to her, but on the next night he watched again. Then she said:

“How fares my child, How fares my Roe?  
This time I come, then never moe!”

At that the King could not restrain himself. He sprang toward her, and said, “You can be none other than my dear wife.”

She answered, “Yes, I am your dear wife,” and at the same moment she received life again, and by God’s grace became fresh, rosy, and full of health.

Then she told the King the evil deed which the wicked Witch and her daughter had been guilty of toward her. The King ordered both to be led before the judge, and judgment was delivered against them. The daughter was taken into the forest where she was torn to pieces by wild beasts, but the Witch was cast into the fire and miserably burnt.

And as soon as she was burnt the Roe changed his shape, and received his human form again. So the little sister and little brother lived happily together all their lives.

## THE STAR-MONEY

There was once on a time, a little girl whose father and mother were dead. She was so poor that she no longer had any little room to live in, or bed to sleep in. At last, she had nothing else but the clothes she was wearing and a little bit of bread in her hand which some charitable soul had given her. She was, however, good and pious.

And as she was thus forsaken by all the world, she went forth into the open country, trusting in the good God.

Then a poor man met her, who said, "Ah, give me something to eat, I am so hungry!"

She reached him the whole of her piece of bread, and said, "May God bless it to your use," and went onward.

Then came a child who moaned and said, "My head is so cold, give me something to cover it with."

So she took off her hood and gave it to him.

And when she had walked a little farther, she met another child who had no jacket and was frozen with cold. Then she gave it her own.

A little farther on one begged for a frock, and she gave away that also.

At length, she got into a forest and it had already become dark, and there came yet another child, and asked for a little shirt. The good little girl thought to herself, "It is a dark night and no one sees me. I can very well give my little shirt away," and took it off, and gave away that also.

And she so stood, and had not one single thing left. Then suddenly some Stars from heaven fell down, and they were nothing else but hard smooth pieces of money! And although she had just given her little shirt away, lo! she had a new one which was of the very finest linen.

Then she gathered together the money into this, and was rich all the days of her life.

## THE FISHERMAN AND HIS WIFE

There was once on a time, a Fisherman who lived with his wife in a miserable hovel close by the sea, and every day he went out fishing. And once, as he was sitting with his rod, looking at the clear water, his line suddenly went down, far down below, and when he drew it up again, he brought out a large Flounder.

Then the Flounder said to him: "Hark, you Fisherman, I pray you, let me live. I am no Flounder really, but an enchanted Prince. What good will it do you to kill me? I should not be good to eat. Put me in the water again, and let me go."

"Come," said the Fisherman, "there is no need for so many words about it – a fish that can talk I should certainly let go, anyhow."

With that he put him back again into the clear water, and the Flounder went to the bottom, leaving a long streak of blood behind him. Then the Fisherman got up and went home to his wife in the hovel.

"Husband," said the woman, "have you caught nothing to-day?"

"No," said the man, "I did catch a Flounder, who said he was an enchanted Prince, so I let him go again."

"Did you not wish for anything first?" said the woman.

"No," said the man; "what should I wish for?"

"Ah," said the woman, "it is surely hard to have to live always in this dirty hovel. You might have wished for a small cottage for us. Go back and call him. Tell him we want to have a small cottage. He will certainly give us that."

"Ah," said the man, "why should I go there again?"

"Why," said the woman, "you did catch him, and you let him go again. He is sure to do it. Go at once."

The man still did not quite like to go, but did not want to oppose his wife, and went to the sea. When he got there the sea was all green and yellow, and no longer smooth. So he stood and said:

"Flounder, Flounder in the sea,  
Come, I pray thee, here to me;  
For my wife, Dame Ilsabil,  
Wills not as I'd have her will."

Then the Flounder came swimming to him and said, "Well, what does she want, then?"

"Ah," said the man, "I did catch you, and my wife says I really ought to have wished for something. She does not like to live in a wretched hovel any longer. She would like to have a cottage."

"Go, then," said the Flounder, "she has it already."

When the man got home, his wife was no longer in the hovel. But instead of it, there stood a small cottage, and she was sitting on a bench before the door. Then she took him by the hand and said to him, "Just come inside, look. Now isn't this a great deal better?"

So they went in, and there was a small porch, and a pretty little parlor and bedroom, and a kitchen and pantry, with the best of furniture, and fitted up with the most beautiful things made of tin and brass, whatsoever was wanted. And behind the cottage, there was a small yard, with hens and ducks, and a little garden with flowers and fruit.

"Look," said the wife, "is not that nice!"

"Yes," said the husband, "and so we must always think it, – now we will live quite contented."

"We will think about that," said the wife.

With that they ate something and went to bed.

Everything went well for a week or a fortnight, and then the woman said, "Hark you, Husband, this cottage is far too small for us, and the garden and yard are little. The Flounder might just as well have given us a larger house. I should like to live in a great stone castle. Go to the Flounder, and tell him to give us a castle."

"Ah, Wife," said the man, "the cottage is quite good enough. Why should we live in a castle?"

"What!" said the woman; "go at once, the Flounder can always do that."

"No, Wife," said the man, "the Flounder has just given us the cottage. I do not like to go back so soon, it might make him angry."

"Go," said the woman, "he can do it quite easily, and will be glad to do it. Just you go to him."

The man's heart grew heavy, and he did not wish to go. He said to himself, "It is not right," and yet he went.

And when he came to the sea, the water was quite purple and dark-blue, and gray and thick, and no longer green and yellow, but it was still quiet. And he stood there and said:

"Flounder, Flounder in the sea,  
Come, I pray thee, here to me;  
For my wife, Dame Ilsabil,  
Wills not as I'd have her will."

"Well, what does she want, now?" said the Flounder.

"Alas," said the man, half scared, "she wants to live in a great stone castle."

"Go to it, then, she is standing before the door," said the Flounder.

Then the man went home, and when he got there, he found a great stone palace, and his wife was just standing on the steps going in. She took him by the hand and said, "Come in."

So he went with her, and in the castle was a great hall paved with marble, and many servants, who flung wide the doors. The walls were all bright with beautiful hangings, and in the rooms were chairs and tables of pure gold. Crystal chandeliers hung from the ceiling, and all the rooms and bedrooms had carpets. Food and wine of the very best were standing on all the tables, so that they nearly broke down beneath it.

Behind the house, too, there was a great courtyard, with stables for horses and cows, and the very best of carriages. There was a magnificent large garden, too, with the most beautiful flowers and fruit-trees, and a park quite half a mile long, in which were stags, deer, and hares, and everything that could be desired.

"Come," said the woman, "isn't that beautiful?"

"Yes, indeed," said the man, "now let it be; and we will live in this beautiful castle and be content."

"We will consider about that," said the woman, "and sleep upon it;" thereupon they went to bed.

Next morning, the wife awoke first. It was just daybreak, and from her bed she saw the beautiful country lying before her. Her husband was still stretching himself, so she poked him in the side with her elbow, and said, "Get up, Husband, and just peep out of the window. Look you, couldn't we be the King over all that land? Go to the Flounder, we will be the King."

"Ah, Wife," said the man, "why should we be King? I do not want to be King."

"Well," said the wife, "if you won't be King, I will. Go to the Flounder, for I will be King."

"Ah, Wife," said the man, "why do you want to be King? I do not like to say that to him."

"Why not?" said the woman; "go to him at once. I must be King!"

So the man went, and was quite unhappy because his wife wished to be King. "It is not right; it is not right," thought he. He did not wish to go, but yet he went.

And when he came to the sea, it was quite dark-gray, and the water heaved up from below, and smelt putrid. Then he went and stood by it, and said:

“Flounder, Flounder in the sea,  
Come, I pray thee, here to me;  
For my wife, Dame Ilsabil,  
Wills not as I'd have her will.”

“Well, what does she want, now?” said the Flounder.

“Alas,” said the man, “she wants to be King.”

“Go to her; she is King already.”

So the man went, and when he came to the palace, the castle had become much larger, and had a great tower and magnificent ornaments. The sentinel was standing before the door, and there were numbers of soldiers with kettledrums and trumpets. And when he went inside the house, everything was of real marble and gold, with velvet covers and great golden tassels. Then the doors of the hall were opened, and there was the Court in all its splendor, and his wife was sitting on a high throne of gold and diamonds, with a great crown of gold on her head, and a sceptre of pure gold and jewels in her hand. On both sides of her, stood her maids-in-waiting in a row, each of them always one head shorter than the last.

Then he went and stood before her, and said, “Ah, Wife, and now you are King.”

“Yes,” said the woman, “now I am King.”

So he stood and looked at her, and when he had looked at her thus for some time, he said, “And now that you are King, let all else be, we will wish for nothing more.”

“Nay, Husband,” said the woman, quite anxiously, “I find time pass very heavily, I can bear it no longer. Go to the Flounder – I am King, but I must be Emperor, too.”

“Alas, Wife, why do you wish to be Emperor?”

“Husband,” said she, “go to the Flounder. I will be Emperor.”

“Alas, Wife,” said the man, “he cannot make you Emperor. I may not say that to the fish. There is only one Emperor in the land. An Emperor, the Flounder cannot make you! I assure you he cannot.”

“What!” said the woman, “I am the King, and you are nothing but my husband. Will you go this moment? go at once! If he can make a King, he can make an Emperor. I will be Emperor. Go instantly.”

So he was forced to go. As the man went, however, he was troubled in mind, and thought to himself, “It will not end well! It will not end well! Emperor is too shameless! The Flounder will at last be tired out.”

With that, he reached the sea, and the sea was quite black and thick, and began to boil up from below, so that it threw up bubbles. And such a sharp wind blew over it that it curdled, and the man was afraid. Then he went and stood by it, and said:

“Flounder, Flounder in the sea,  
Come, I pray thee, here to me;  
For my wife, Dame Ilsabil,  
Wills not as I'd have her will.”

“Well, what does she want, now?” said the Flounder.

“Alas, Flounder,” said he, “my wife wants to be Emperor.”

“Go to her,” said the Flounder; “she is Emperor already.”

So the man went, and when he got there the whole palace was made of polished marble with alabaster figures and golden ornaments. And soldiers were marching before the door blowing trumpets, and beating cymbals and drums. In the house, barons, and counts, and dukes were going about as servants. Then they opened the doors to him, which were of pure gold. And when he entered,

there sat his wife on a throne, which was made of one piece of gold, and was quite two miles high; and she wore a great golden crown that was three yards high, and set with diamonds and carbuncles. In one hand she had the sceptre, and in the other the imperial orb. And on both sides of her stood the yeomen of the guard in two rows, each being smaller than the one before him, from the biggest Giant, who was two miles high, to the very smallest Dwarf, just as big as my little finger. And before it stood a number of princes and dukes.

Then the man went and stood among them, and said, "Wife, are you Emperor now?"

"Yes," said she, "now I am Emperor."

Then he stood and looked at her well, and when he had looked at her thus for some time, he said, "Ah, Wife, be content, now that you are Emperor."

"Husband," said she, "why are you standing there? Now, I am Emperor, but I will be Pope too. Go to the Flounder."

"Alas, Wife," said the man, "what will you not wish for? You cannot be Pope. There is but one in Christendom. He cannot make you Pope."

"Husband," said she, "I will be Pope. Go immediately. I must be Pope this very day."

"No, Wife," said the man, "I do not like to say that to him; that would not do, it is too much. The Flounder can't make you Pope."

"Husband," said she, "what nonsense! if he can make an Emperor he can make a Pope. Go to him directly. I am Emperor, and you are nothing but my husband. Will you go at once?"

Then he was afraid and went. But he was quite faint, and shivered and shook, and his knees and legs trembled. And a high wind blew over the land, and the clouds flew, and toward evening all grew dark, and the leaves fell from the trees, and the water rose and roared as if it were boiling, and splashed upon the shore. In the distance he saw ships which were firing guns in their sore need, pitching and tossing on the waves. And yet in the midst of the sky, there was still a small bit of blue, though on every side it was as red as in a heavy storm. So, full of despair, he went and stood in much fear, and said:

"Flounder, Flounder in the sea,  
Come, I pray thee, here to me;  
For my wife, Dame Ilsabil,  
Wills not as I'd have her will."

"Well, what does she want, now?" said the Flounder.

"Alas," said the man, "she wants to be Pope."

"Go to her then," said the Flounder; "she is Pope already."

So he went, and when he got there, he saw what seemed to be a large church surrounded by palaces. He pushed his way through the crowd. Inside, however, everything was lighted with thousands and thousands of candles, and his wife was clad in gold, and she was sitting on a much higher throne, and had three great golden crowns on, and round about her there was much churchly splendor. And on both sides of her was a row of candles, the largest of which was as tall as the very tallest tower, down to the very smallest kitchen candle; and all the emperors and kings were on their knees before her, kissing her shoe.

"Wife," said the man, and looked attentively at her, "are you now Pope?"

"Yes," said she, "I am Pope."

So he stood and looked at her, and it was just as if he was looking at the bright sun. When he had stood looking at her thus for a short time, he said, "Ah, Wife, if you are Pope, do let well alone!"

But she looked as stiff as a post, and did not move or show any signs of life. Then said he, "Wife, now that you are Pope, be satisfied, you cannot become anything greater."

"I will consider about that," said the woman.

Thereupon they both went to bed. But she was not satisfied, and greediness let her have no sleep, for she was continually thinking what there was left for her to be.

The man slept well and soundly, for he had run about a great deal during the day. But the woman could not fall asleep at all, and flung herself from one side to the other the whole night through, thinking what more was left for her to be, but unable to call to mind anything else.

At length the sun began to rise, and when the woman saw the red of dawn, she sat up in bed and looked at it. And when, through the window, she saw the sun thus rising, she said, "Cannot I, too, order the sun and moon to rise?"

"Husband," said she, poking him in the ribs with her elbows, "wake up! go to the Flounder, for I wish to be even as God is."

The man was still half asleep, but he was so horrified that he fell out of bed. He thought he must have heard amiss, and rubbed his eyes, and said, "Alas, Wife, what are you saying?"

"Husband," said she, "if I can't order the sun and moon to rise, and have to look on and see the sun and moon rising, I can't bear it. I shall not know what it is to have another happy hour, unless I can make them rise myself." Then she looked at him so terribly that a shudder ran over him, and said, "Go at once. I wish to be like unto God."

"Alas, Wife," said the man, falling on his knees before her, "the Flounder cannot do that. He can make an Emperor and a Pope. I beseech you, go on as you are, and be Pope."

Then she fell into a rage, and her hair flew wildly about her head, and she cried, "I will not endure this, I'll not bear it any longer. Will you go?" Then he put on his trousers and ran away like a madman.

But outside a great storm was raging, and blowing so hard that he could scarcely keep his feet. Houses and trees toppled over, mountains trembled, rocks rolled into the sea, the sky was pitch black, and it thundered and lightened. And the sea came in with black waves as high as church-towers and mountains, and all with crests of white foam at the top. Then he cried, but could not hear his own words:

"Flounder, Flounder in the sea,  
Come, I pray thee, here to me;  
For my wife, Dame Ilsabil,  
Wills not as I'd have her will."

"Well; what does she want, now?" said the Flounder.

"Alas," said he, "she wants to be like unto God."

"Go to her, and you will find her back again in the dirty hovel."

And there they are living at this very time.

## THE WHITE SNAKE

A long time ago, there lived a King who was famed for his wisdom through all the land. Nothing was hidden from him, and it seemed as if news of the most secret things was brought to him through the air.

But he had a strange custom. Every day after dinner, when the table was cleared, and no one else was present, a trusty servant had to bring him one more dish. It was covered and even the servant did not know what was in it. Neither did any one know, for the King never took off the cover to eat of it, until he was quite alone.

This had gone on for a long time, when one day the servant, who took away the dish, was overcome with such curiosity that he could not help carrying the dish into his room. When he had carefully locked the door, he lifted up the cover, and saw a White Snake lying on the dish. But when he saw it, he could not deny himself the pleasure of tasting it, so he cut off a little bit and put it into his mouth.

No sooner had it touched his tongue than he heard a strange whispering of little voices outside his window. He went and listened, and then noticed that it was the sparrows who were chattering together, and telling one another of all kinds of things which they had seen in the fields and woods. Eating the Snake had given him power to understand the language of animals!

Now, it so happened, that on this very day the Queen lost her most beautiful ring, and suspicion of having stolen it fell upon this trusty servant, who was allowed to go everywhere. The King ordered the man to be brought before him, and threatened with angry words that unless he could, before the morrow, point out the thief, he himself should be looked upon as guilty and should be executed. In vain, he declared his innocence. He was dismissed with no better answer.

In his trouble and fear, he went down into the courtyard, and took thought how to help himself out of his trouble. Now some ducks were sitting together quietly by a brook and taking their rest. And, whilst they were making their feathers smooth with their bills, they were having a confidential conversation. The servant stood by and listened.

They were telling one another of all the places where they had been waddling about all the morning, and what good food they had found. And one said in a pitiful tone, "Something lies heavy on my stomach; as I was eating in haste I swallowed a ring which lay under the Queen's window."

The servant at once seized her by the neck, carried her to the kitchen, and said to the cook, "Here is a fine duck. Pray kill her."

"Yes," said the cook, and weighed her in his hand; "she has spared no trouble to fatten herself, and has been waiting long enough to be roasted."

So he cut off her head; and as she was being dressed for the spit, the Queen's ring was found inside her.

The servant could now easily prove his innocence. The King, to make amends for the wrong, allowed him to ask a favor, and promised him the best place in the Court. The servant refused everything, and asked only for a horse and some money for traveling, as he had a mind to see the world and go about a little. When his request was granted, he set out on his way.

One day he came to a pond, where he saw three fishes caught in the reeds and gasping for water. Now, though it is said that fishes are dumb, he heard them lamenting that they must perish so miserably. As he had a kind heart, he got off his horse and put the three prisoners back into the water.

They quivered with delight, put out their heads, and cried to him, "We will remember you, and repay you for saving us!"

He rode on, and after a while it seemed to him that he heard a voice in the sand at his feet. He listened, and heard an Ant-King complain, "Why cannot folk, with their clumsy beasts, keep off our bodies? That stupid horse, with his heavy hoofs, has been treading down my people without mercy!"

So he turned on to a side path and the Ant-King cried out to him, “We will remember you – one good turn deserves another!”

The path led him into a wood, and there he saw two old ravens standing by their nest, and throwing out their young ones. “Out with you, you idle, good-for-nothing creatures!” cried they; “we cannot find food for you any longer. You are big enough, and can provide for yourselves.”

But the poor young ravens lay upon the ground flapping their wings, and crying, “Oh, what helpless chicks we are! We must shift for ourselves, and yet we cannot fly! What can we do, but lie here and starve?”

So the good young fellow alighted and killed his horse with his sword, and gave it to them for food. Then they came hopping up to it, satisfied their hunger, and cried, “We will remember you – one good turn deserves another!”

And now he had to use his own legs, and when he had walked a long way, he came to a large city. There was a great noise and crowd in the streets, and a man rode up on horseback, crying aloud, “The King’s Daughter wants a husband. But whoever sues for her hand must perform a hard task. If he does not succeed he will forfeit his life.”

Many had already made the attempt, but in vain. Nevertheless, when the youth saw the King’s Daughter he was so overcome by her great beauty, that he forgot all danger, went before the King, and declared himself a suitor.

So he was led out to the sea, and a gold ring was cast into it. Then the King ordered him to fetch this ring up from the bottom of the sea, and added, “If you come up without it, you will be thrown in again and again until you perish amid the waves.”

All the people grieved for the handsome youth; then they went away; leaving him alone by the sea.

He stood on the shore and considered what he should do, when suddenly he saw three fishes come swimming toward him. They were the very fishes whose lives he had saved. The one in the middle held a mussel in its mouth, which it laid on the shore at the youth’s feet. When he had taken it up and opened it, there lay the gold ring in the shell. Full of joy he took it to the King, and expected that he would grant him the promised reward.

But when the proud Princess perceived that he was not her equal in birth, she scorned him, and required him first to perform another task. She went down into the garden and strewed with her own hands ten sacksful of millet-seed on the grass.

Then she said, “To-morrow morning before sunrise these must be picked up, and not a single grain be wanting.”

The youth sat down in the garden and considered how he might perform this task. But he could think of nothing, and there he sat sorrowfully awaiting the break of day, when he should be led to death. But as soon as the first rays of the sun shone into the garden, he saw all the ten sacks standing side by side, quite full, and not a single grain was missing. The Ant-King had come in the night with thousands and thousands of ants, and the grateful creatures had, by great industry, picked up all the millet-seeds and gathered them into the sacks.

Presently, the King’s Daughter herself came down into the garden, and was amazed to see that the young man had done the task she had given him.

But she could not yet conquer her proud heart, and said, “Although he has performed both the tasks, he shall not be my husband, until he has brought me an apple from the Tree of Life.”

The youth did not know where the Tree of Life stood, but he set out, and would have gone on forever, as long as his legs would carry him, though he had no hope of finding it. After he had wandered through three kingdoms, he came one evening to a wood, and lay down under a tree to sleep.

But he heard a rustling in the branches, and a Golden Apple fell into his hand. At the same time three ravens flew down to him, perched themselves upon his knee, and said, “We are the three young ravens whom you saved from starving. When we had grown big, and heard that you were seeking

the Golden Apple, we flew over the sea to the end of the world, where the Tree of Life stands, and have brought you the apple.”

The youth, full of joy, set out homeward, and took the Golden Apple to the King’s beautiful Daughter, who had now no more excuses left to make. They cut the Apple of Life in two and ate it together; and then her heart became full of love for him, and they lived to a great age in undisturbed happiness.

## HAENSEL AND GRETHEL

Hard by a great forest, dwelt a poor woodcutter with his wife and his two children. The boy was called Haensel and the girl, Grethel. He had little to bite and to break; and once when great scarcity fell on the land, he could no longer procure daily bread.

Now, when he thought over this by night in his bed, and tossed about in his anxiety, he groaned and said to his wife, "What is to become of us? How are we to feed our poor children, when we no longer have anything even for ourselves?"

"I'll tell you what, Husband," answered the woman, "early to-morrow morning we will take the children out into the forest to where it is the thickest; there we will light a fire for them, and give each of them one piece of bread more. Then we will go to our work and leave them alone. They will not find the way home again, and we shall be rid of them."

"No, Wife," said the man, "I will not do that. How can I bear to leave my children alone in the forest? – the wild animals would soon come and tear them to pieces."

"Oh, you fool!" said she. "Then we must all four die of hunger. You may as well plane the planks for our coffins."

And she left him no peace until he consented. "But I feel very sorry for the poor children, all the same," said the man.

The two children had also not been able to sleep for hunger, and had heard what the woman had said to their father.

Grethel wept bitter tears, and said to Haensel, "Now all is over with us."

"Be quiet, Grethel," said Haensel, "do not distress yourself, I will soon find a way to help us."

And when the old folk had fallen asleep, he got up, put on his little coat, opened the door below, and crept outside. The moon shone brightly, and the white pebbles, which lay in front of the house, glittered like real silver pennies. Haensel stooped and put as many of them in the little pocket of his coat as he could possibly get in.

Then he went back and said to Grethel, "Be comforted, dear little Sister, and sleep in peace. God will not forsake us," and he lay down again in his bed.

When day dawned, but before the sun had risen, the woman came and awoke the two children, saying, "Get up, you sluggards! we are going into the forest to fetch wood." She gave each a little piece of bread, and said, "There is something for your dinner, but do not eat it up before then, for you will get nothing else."

Grethel took the bread under her apron, as Haensel had the stones in his pocket. Then they all set out together on the way to the forest. When they had walked a short time, Haensel stood still and peeped back, and did so again and again while he was throwing the white pebble-stones one by one out of his pocket onto the road.

When they had reached the middle of the forest, the father said, "Now, Children, pile up some wood, and I will light a fire that you may not be cold."

Haensel and Grethel gathered brushwood together, as high as a little hill. The brushwood was lighted, and when the flames were burning very high, the woman said, "Now, Children, lay yourselves down by the fire and rest. We will go into the forest and cut some wood. When we have done, we will come back and fetch you away."

Haensel and Grethel sat by the fire, and when noon came, each ate a little piece of bread; and, as they heard the strokes of the wood-axe, they believed that their father was near. It was, however, not the axe, it was a branch which he had fastened to a withered tree which the wind was blowing backward and forward. And as they had been sitting such a long time, their eyes shut with fatigue, and they fell fast asleep.

When at last they awoke, it was already dark night. Grethel began to cry and said, “How are we to get out of the forest now?”

But Haensel comforted her, and said, “Just wait a little, until the moon has risen, and then we shall soon find the way.”

And when the full moon had risen, Haensel took his little sister by the hand, and followed the pebbles which shone like newly-coined silver pieces, and showed them the way.

They walked the whole night long, and, by break of day, came once more to their father’s house. They knocked at the door; and when the woman opened it and saw that it was Haensel and Grethel, she said, “You naughty children, why have you slept so long in the forest? – we thought you were never coming back at all!”

The father, however, rejoiced, for it had cut him to the heart to leave them behind alone.

Not long afterward, there was another famine in all parts, and the children heard their mother saying at night to their father, “Everything is eaten again, we have one-half loaf left, and after that there is an end. The children must go, we will take them farther into the wood, so that they will not find their way out again. There is no other means of saving ourselves!”

The man’s heart was heavy, and he thought “it would be better for you to share the last mouthful with your children!” The woman, however, would listen to nothing that he had to say, but scolded and reproached him. He who says A must say B, likewise, and as he had yielded the first time, he had to do so a second time also.

The children were, however, still awake and had heard the conversation. When the old folk were asleep, Haensel again got up to go out and pick up pebbles. But the woman had locked the door, and Haensel could not get out. Nevertheless he comforted his little sister, and said, “Do not cry, Grethel, go to sleep quietly, the good God will help us.”

Early in the morning, came the woman, and took the children out of their beds. Their bit of bread was given to them, but it was still smaller than the time before. On the way into the forest, Haensel crumbled his in his pocket, and often stood still and threw a morsel on the ground, and little by little, threw all the crumbs on the path.

The woman led the children still deeper into the forest, where they had never in their lives been before. Then a great fire was again made, and the mother said, “Just sit there, you Children, and when you are tired you may sleep a little. We are going into the forest to cut wood. In the evening, when we are done, we will come and fetch you away.”

When it was noon, Grethel shared her piece of bread with Haensel, who had scattered his by the way. Then they fell asleep, and evening passed, but no one came to the poor children.

They did not awake until it was dark night, and Haensel comforted his little sister and said, “Just wait, Grethel, until the moon rises, and then we shall see the crumbs of bread which I have strewn. They will show us our way home again.”

When the moon came, they set out, but they found no crumbs, for the many thousands of birds, which fly about in the woods and fields, had picked them all up. Haensel said to Grethel, “We shall soon find the way,” but they did not find it.

They walked the whole night and all the next day, from morning till evening, but they did not get out of the forest, and were very hungry, for they had nothing to eat but two or three berries, which grew on the ground. And as they were so weary that their legs would carry them no longer, they lay down beneath a tree and fell asleep.

It was now three mornings since they had left their father’s house. They began to walk again, but they always got deeper into the forest. If help did not come soon, they must die of hunger and weariness!

When it was midday, they saw a beautiful Snow-White Bird sitting on a bough, which sang so delightfully that they stood still and listened to it. And when it had finished its song, it spread its

wings and flew away before them. They followed it until they reached a little house, on the roof of which it alighted.

When they came quite up to the little House they saw that it was built of bread and covered with cakes, but that the windows were of clear sugar.

“We will set to work on that,” said Haensel, “and have a good meal. I will eat a bit of the roof, and you, Grethel, can eat some of the window; it will taste sweet.”

Haensel reached up and broke off a little of the roof to try how it tasted. Grethel leant against the window and nibbled at the panes. Then a soft voice cried from the room:

“Nibble, nibble, gnaw!  
Who nibbles at my door?”

but the children went on eating without disturbing themselves. Haensel, who thought the roof tasted very nice, tore down a great piece of it. Grethel pushed out the whole of one round window-pane, sat down, and enjoyed herself with it.

Suddenly the door opened, and a very, very old woman, leaning on crutches, came creeping out. Haensel and Grethel were so terribly frightened that they let fall what they had in their hands.

The Old Woman, however, nodded her head, and said, “Oh, you dear Children, who has brought you here? Do come in, and stay with me. No harm shall happen to you.”

She took them both by the hand, and led them into her little house. Then she set good food before them, milk and pancakes, with sugar, apples, and nuts. Afterward she covered two pretty little beds with clean white linen, and Haensel and Grethel lay down in them, and thought they were in Heaven.

The Old Woman had only pretended to be so kind. She was really a wicked Witch, who lay in wait for children, and who had built the little bread house in order to entice them there. When a child fell into her power, she killed it, cooked, and ate it; and that was a feast-day with her.

Witches have red eyes, and cannot see far, but they have a keen scent like the beasts’, and are aware when human beings draw near. When Haensel and Grethel came into her neighborhood, she laughed maliciously, and said mockingly, “I have them, they shall not escape me again!”

Early in the morning before the children were awake, she was up. And when she saw both of them sleeping and looking so pretty, with their plump red cheeks, she muttered to herself, “That will be a dainty mouthful!”

Then she seized Haensel with her shrivelled hand, carried him into a little stable, and shut him in with a grated door. He might scream as he liked, that was of no use!

Then she went to Grethel, shook her till she awoke, and cried, “Get up, lazy thing, fetch some water, and cook something good for your brother. He is in the stable outside, and is to be made fat. When he is fat, I will eat him.”

Grethel began to weep bitterly. But it was all in vain, she was forced to do what the wicked Witch ordered her.

And now the best food was cooked for poor Haensel, while Grethel got nothing but crab-shells. Every morning the woman crept to the little stable, and cried, “Haensel, stretch out your finger that I may feel if you will soon be fat.”

When four weeks had gone by she was seized with impatience and would not wait any longer. “Ho, there! Grethel,” she cried to the girl, “be active, and bring some water. Let Haensel be fat or lean, to-morrow I will kill him, and cook him.”

Ah! how the poor little sister did lament when she had to fetch the water, and how her tears did flow down over her cheeks! “Dear God, do help us,” she cried. “If the wild beasts in the forest had but devoured us, we should at any rate have died together!”

“Just keep your noise to yourself,” said the Old Woman, “all that won’t help you at all.”

Early in the morning, Grethel had to go out and hang up the cauldron, full of water, and light the fire.

“We will bake first,” said the Old Woman, “I have already heated the oven, and kneaded the dough.” She pushed poor Grethel out to the oven, from which flames of fire were darting.

“Creep in,” said the Witch, “and see if it is properly heated, so that we can shut the bread in.” And when once Grethel was inside, she intended to shut the oven and let her bake in it, and then eat her, too.

But Grethel saw what she had in her mind, and would not creep in. “Silly Goose,” said the Old Woman; “the door is big enough. Just look, I can get in myself!” and she crept up and thrust her head in. Then she fell over into the oven and was miserably burnt to death.

Grethel, however, ran as quick as lightning to Haensel, opened his little stable, and cried, “Haensel, we are saved! The old Witch is dead!”

Then Haensel sprang out like a bird from its cage, when the door is opened for it. How they did rejoice and embrace each other, and dance about and kiss each other! And as they had no longer any need to fear her, they went into the Witch’s house, and in every corner there stood chests full of pearls and jewels.

“These are far better than pebbles!” said Haensel, and thrust into his pockets whatever could be got in.

And Grethel said, “I, too, will take something home with me,” and filled her pinafore full.

“But now we will go away,” said Haensel, “that we may get out of the Witch’s forest.”

When they had walked for two hours, they came to a great piece of water. “We cannot get over,” said Haensel, “I see no foot-plank, and no bridge.”

“And no boat crosses either,” answered Grethel, “but a white duck is swimming there. If I ask her, she will help us over.” Then she cried:

“Little Duck, little Duck, dost thou see,  
Haensel and Grethel are waiting for thee?  
There’s never a plank, nor a bridge in sight,  
Take us across on thy back so white.”

The duck came to them, and Haensel seated himself on her back, and told his sister to sit by him. “No,” replied Grethel, “that will be too heavy for the little duck. She shall take us across, one after the other.”

The good little duck did so, and when they were once safely across and had walked for a short time, the forest seemed to be more and more familiar to them. At length, they saw from afar their father’s house. Then they began to run, rushed into the parlor, and threw themselves into their father’s arms. The man had not known one happy hour since he had left the children in the forest. The woman, however, was dead.

Grethel emptied her pinafore until pearls and precious stones ran about the room, and Haensel threw one handful after another out of his pocket to add to them. Then all trouble was at an end, and they lived together in perfect happiness.

My tale is done, there runs a mouse, whosoever catches it, may make himself a big, big fur cap out of it!

## THE SEVEN RAVENS

There was once a man who had seven sons, but never a daughter no matter how much he wished for one.

At length, his wife had a child, and it was a daughter. The joy was great. But the child was sickly and small, and so weak that it had to be baptized at once.

The father sent one of the boys in a hurry to the spring, to fetch water for the baptism. The other six boys ran along with him. And as each strove to be the first to fill the jug, it fell into the spring. There they stood, and did not know what to do. None of them dared to go home.

When they did not come back, the father grew impatient, and said, "They have forgotten all about it in a game of play, the wicked boys!"

Soon he grew afraid lest the child should die without being baptized, and he cried out in anger, "I wish the boys were all turned into Ravens!"

Hardly was the word spoken, before he heard a whirring of wings in the air above his head. He looked up, and saw seven coal-black Ravens flying high and away.

The parents could not recall the curse. And though they grieved over the loss of their seven sons, yet they comforted themselves somewhat with their dear little daughter, who soon grew strong and every day more beautiful.

For a long time, she did not know that she had had brothers. Her parents were careful not to mention them before her. But one day, she chanced to overhear some people talking about her, and saying, "that the maiden is certainly beautiful, but really to blame for the misfortune of her seven brothers."

Then she was much troubled, and went to her father and mother, and asked if it was true that she had had brothers, and what was become of them.

The parents did not dare to keep the secret longer, and said that her birth was only the innocent cause of what had happened to her brothers. But the maiden laid it daily to heart, and thought that she must deliver her brothers.

She had no peace and rest until she set out secretly, and went forth into the wide world to seek them out, and set them free, let it cost what it might. She took nothing with her but a little ring belonging to her parents as a keepsake, a loaf of bread against hunger, a little pitcher of water against thirst, and a little chair as a provision against weariness.

And now, she went continually onward, far, far, to the very end of the world. Then she came to the Sun, but it was too hot and terrible, and devoured little children. Hastily she ran away, and ran to the Moon, but it was far too cold, and also awful and malicious. And when it saw the child, it said:

"I smell, I smell  
The flesh of men!"

On this she ran swiftly away, and came to the Stars, which were kind and good to her, and each of them sat on its own little chair. But the Morning Star arose, and gave her the drumstick of a chicken, and said, "If you have not that drumstick you cannot open the Glass Mountain, and in the Glass Mountain are your brothers."

The maiden took the drumstick, wrapped it carefully in a cloth, and went onward again until she came to the Glass Mountain. The door was shut, and she thought she would take out the drumstick. But when she undid the cloth, it was empty, and she had lost the good Star's present. What was she now to do? She wished to rescue her brothers, and had no key to the Glass Mountain. The good little sister took a knife, cut off one of her little fingers, put it in the door, and succeeded in opening it.

When she had got inside, a little Dwarf came to meet her, who said, “My Child, what are you looking for?”

“I am looking for my brothers, the Seven Ravens,” she replied.

The Dwarf said, “The Lord Ravens are not at home, but if you wish to wait here until they come, step in.”

Thereupon the little Dwarf carried the Ravens’ dinner in, on seven little plates, and in seven little glasses. The little sister ate a morsel from each plate, and from each little glass she took a sip. But in the last little glass she dropped the ring which she had brought away with her.

Suddenly, she heard a whirring of wings and a rushing through the air, and then the little Dwarf said, “Now the Lord Ravens are flying home.”

Then they came, and wanted to eat and drink, and looked for their little plates and glasses. Then said one after the other, “Who has eaten something from my plate? Who has drunk out of my little glass? It was a human mouth.”

And when the seventh came to the bottom of the glass, the ring rolled against his mouth. Then he looked at it, and saw that it was a ring belonging to his father and mother, and said, “God grant that our little sister may be here, and then we shall be free.”

When the maiden, who was standing behind the door watching, heard that wish, she came forth, and on this all the Ravens were restored to their human form again. And they embraced and kissed each other, and went joyfully home.

## ASH-MAIDEN

The wife of a rich man fell sick, and as she felt that her end was drawing near, she called her only daughter to her bedside and said, “Dear Child, be good and pious, and then the dear God will always protect you, and I will look down on you from Heaven and be near you.” Thereupon she closed her eyes and departed.

Every day, the maiden went out to her mother’s grave and wept, and she remained pious and good. When winter came the snow spread a white sheet over the grave, and when the spring-sun had drawn it off again, the man had taken another wife.

The woman had brought two daughters into the house with her, who were beautiful and fair of face, but vile and black of heart. Now began a bad time for the poor child. “Is the stupid goose to sit in the parlor with us?” said they. “He who wants to eat bread, must earn it. Out with the kitchen-wench!”

They took her pretty clothes away from her, put an old gray bedgown on her and gave her wooden shoes. “Just look at the proud Princess, how decked out she is!” they cried, and laughed, and led her into the kitchen.

There she had to do hard work from morning till night, get up before daybreak, carry water, light fires, cook and wash. Besides this, the sisters did her every imaginable injury – they mocked her and emptied her peas and lentils into the ashes, so that she was forced to sit and pick them out again.

In the evening, when she had worked till she was weary, she had no bed to go to, but had to sleep by the fireside in the ashes. And as on that account she always looked dusty and dirty, they called her Ash-Maiden.

It happened once that the father was going to the Fair, and he asked the two daughters what he should bring back for them.

“Beautiful dresses,” said one. “Pearls and jewels,” said the second.

“And you, Ash-Maiden,” said he, “what will you have?”

“Father, break off for me the first branch which knocks against your hat on your way home.”

So he bought beautiful dresses, pearls and jewels for the two daughters, and on his way home, as he was riding through a green thicket, a hazel twig brushed against him and knocked off his hat. Then he broke off the branch and took it with him.

When he reached home he gave the two daughters the things which they had wished for, and to Ash-Maiden he gave the branch from the hazel-bush. Ash-Maiden thanked him, went to her mother’s grave and planted the branch on it, and wept so much that the tears fell down on it and watered it.

It grew, however, and became a handsome tree. Thrice a day Ash-Maiden went and sat beneath it, and wept and prayed, and a little White Bird always came on the tree. And if Ash-Maiden expressed a wish, the bird threw down to her what she had wished for.

It happened that the King gave a feast, which was to last three days. To it all the beautiful young girls in the country were invited, in order that his son might choose himself a Bride. When the two sisters heard that they too were to appear among the number, they were delighted.

They called Ash-Maiden and said, “Comb our hair, brush our shoes, and fasten our buckles, for we are going to the feast at the King’s palace.”

Ash-Maiden obeyed, but wept, because she too would have liked to go with them to the dance, and she begged her mother to allow her to do so.

“You go, Ash-Maiden!” said she; “you are dusty and dirty, and would go to the feast? You have no clothes and shoes, and yet would dance!”

As, however, Ash-Maiden went on asking, the mother at last said, “I have emptied a dish of lentils into the ashes for you. If you have picked them out again in two hours, you shall go with us.”

The maiden went through the back-door into the garden, and called, “You tame Pigeons, you Turtledoves, and all you birds beneath the sky, come and help me to pick

“The good into the pot,  
The bad into the crop!”

Then two white pigeons came in by the kitchen-window, and afterward the turtledoves. And at last all the birds beneath the sky came whirring and crowding in, and alighted amongst the ashes. And the pigeons nodded with their heads and began *pick, pick, pick, pick*, and the rest began also *pick, pick, pick, pick*, and gathered all the good grains into the dish. Hardly had one hour passed before they had finished, and all flew out again.

Then the girl took the dish to the mother, and was glad, and believed that now she would be allowed to go with them to the feast.

But the mother said, “No, Ash-Maiden, you have no clothes and you cannot dance. You would only be laughed at.”

And as Ash-Maiden wept at this, the mother said, “If you can pick two dishes of lentils out of the ashes for me in one hour, you shall go with us.” And she thought to herself, “That she most certainly cannot do.”

When the mother had emptied the two dishes of lentils amongst the ashes, the maiden went through the back-door into the garden and cried, “You tame Pigeons, you Turtledoves, and all you birds under heaven, come and help me to pick

“The good into the pot,  
The bad into the crop!”

Then two white pigeons came in by the kitchen-window, and afterward the turtledoves. And at last all the birds beneath the sky came whirring and crowding in, and alighted amongst the ashes. And the doves nodded with their heads and began *pick, pick, pick, pick*, and the others began also *pick, pick, pick, pick*, and gathered all the good seeds into the dishes. And before half an hour was over they had already finished, and all flew out again.

Then the maiden carried the dishes to the mother and was delighted, and believed that she might now go with them to the feast.

But the mother said, “All this will not help you. You go not with us, for you have no clothes and cannot dance. We should be ashamed of you!”

Then she turned her back on Ash-Maiden, and hurried away with her two proud daughters.

As no one was now at home, Ash-Maiden went to her mother’s grave beneath the hazel-tree, and cried:

“Shiver and quiver, Little Tree,  
Silver and gold throw over me!”

Then the bird threw a gold and silver dress down to her, and slippers embroidered with silk and silver. She put on the dress with all speed, and went to the feast.

Her sisters and the mother, however, did not know her, and thought she must be a foreign Princess, for she looked so beautiful in the golden dress. They never once thought of Ash-Maiden, and believed that she was sitting at home in the dirt, picking lentils out of the ashes.

The Prince went to meet her, took her by the hand, and he danced with her. He would dance with no other maiden, and never let go of her hand. And if any one else came to invite her, he said, “This is my partner.”

She danced till it was evening, and then she wanted to go home. But the King’s Son said, “I will go with you and bear you company,” for he wished to see to whom the beautiful maiden belonged.

She escaped from him, however, and sprang into the pigeon-house. The King's Son waited until her father came, and then he told him that the stranger maiden had leapt into the pigeon-house. The old man thought, "Can it be Ash-Maiden?" and they had to bring him an axe and a pickaxe that he might hew the pigeon-house to pieces, but no one was inside it.

And when they got home, Ash-Maiden lay in her dirty clothes among the ashes, and a dim little oil-lamp was burning on the mantelpiece. For Ash-Maiden had jumped quickly down from the back of the pigeon-house, and had run to the little hazel-tree. There she had taken off her beautiful clothes and laid them on the grave, and the bird had taken them away again. Then she had placed herself in the kitchen amongst the ashes, in her gray gown.

Next day, when the feast began afresh, and her parents and the sisters had gone once more, Ash-Maiden went to the hazel-tree, and said:

"Shiver and quiver, Little Tree,  
Silver and gold throw over me!"

Then the bird threw down a much more beautiful dress than on the preceding day. And when Ash-Maiden appeared at the feast in this dress, every one was astonished at her beauty.

The King's Son had waited until she came, and instantly took her by the hand and danced with no one but her. When others came and invited her, he said, "She is my partner."

When evening arrived, she wished to leave, and the King's Son followed her, and wanted to see into which house she went. But she sprang away from him, and into the garden behind the house. Therein stood a beautiful tall tree on which hung the most magnificent pears. She clambered, like a squirrel, so nimbly between the branches, that the King's Son did not know where she was gone.

He waited until her father came, and said to him, "The stranger-maiden has escaped from me, and I believe she has climbed up the pear-tree."

The father thought, "Can it be Ash-Maiden?" and had an axe brought and cut the tree down, but no one was on it.

And when they got into the kitchen, Ash-Maiden lay there amongst the ashes, as usual, for she had jumped down on the other side of the tree, had taken the beautiful dress to the bird on the little hazel-tree, and had put on her gray gown.

On the third day, when the parents and sisters had gone away, Ash-Maiden went once more to her mother's grave, and said to the little tree:

"Shiver and quiver, Little Tree,  
Silver and gold throw over me!"

And now the bird threw down to her a dress which was more splendid and magnificent than any she had yet had, and the slippers were golden.

And when she went to the feast in the dress, no one knew how to speak for astonishment. The King's Son danced with her only, and if any one invited her to dance, he said, "She is my partner."

When evening came, Ash-Maiden wished to leave, and the King's Son was anxious to go with her; but she escaped from him so quickly that he could not follow her. The King's Son, however, had caused the whole staircase to be smeared with pitch, and there, when she ran down, had the maiden's left slipper remained sticking. The King's Son picked it up, and it was small and dainty, and all golden.

Next morning, he went with it to the father, and said to him, "No one shall be my wife, but she whose foot this golden slipper fits."

Then were the two sisters glad, for they had pretty feet. The eldest went with the shoe into her room and wanted to try it on, and her mother stood by. But she could not get her big toe into it, for the shoe was too small for her.

Then her mother gave her a knife, and said, "Cut the toe off. When you are Queen you will have no more need to go on foot."

The maiden cut the toe off, forced the foot into the shoe, swallowed the pain, and went out to the King's Son. Then he took her on his horse as his Bride, and rode away with her. They were, however, obliged to pass the grave, and there, on the hazel-tree, sat the two pigeons and cried:

"Turn and peep, turn and peep,  
There's blood within the shoe!  
The shoe it is too small for her,  
The true Bride waits for you!"

Then he looked at her foot, and saw how the blood was streaming from it. He turned his horse round and took the false Bride home again, and said she was not the true one, and that the other sister was to put the shoe on.

Then this one went into her chamber and got her toes safely into the shoe, but her heel was too large.

So her mother gave her a knife, and said, "Cut a bit off your heel. When you are Queen you will have no more need to go on foot."

The maiden cut a bit off her heel, forced her foot into the shoe, swallowed the pain, and went out to the King's Son. He took her on his horse as his Bride, and rode away with her. But when they passed by the hazel-tree, two little pigeons sat on it, and cried:

"Turn and peep, turn and peep,  
There's blood within the shoe!  
The shoe it is too small for her,  
The true Bride waits for you!"

He looked down at her foot, and saw how the blood was running out of her shoe, and how it had stained her white stocking. Then he turned his horse and took the false Bride home again. "This also is not the right one," said he. "Have you no other daughter?"

"No," said the man; "there is only a little stunted kitchen-girl which my late wife left behind her, but she cannot possibly be the Bride."

The King's Son said he was to send her up to him; but the mother answered, "Oh, no, she is much too dirty, she cannot show herself!"

He insisted on it, and Ash-Maiden had to be called. She first washed her hands and face clean, and then went and bowed down before the King's Son, who gave her the golden shoe.

Then she seated herself on a stool, drew her foot out of the heavy wooden shoe, and put it into the slipper, which fitted like a glove.

And when she rose up and the King's Son looked at her face he recognized the beautiful maiden who had danced with him, and cried, "That is the true Bride!"

The mother and the two sisters were terrified and became pale with rage. He, however, took Ash-Maiden on his horse and rode away with her. As they passed by the hazel-tree, the two white doves cried:

"Turn and peep, turn and peep,  
No blood is in the shoe!  
The shoe is not too small for her,  
The true Bride rides with you!"

and when they had cried that, the two came flying down and placed themselves on Ash-Maiden's shoulders, one on the right, the other on the left, and remained sitting there.

When the wedding with the King's Son had to be celebrated, the two false sisters came and wanted to get into favor with Ash-Maiden and share her good fortune. When the betrothed couple went to church, the elder was at the right side and the younger at the left, and the pigeons pecked out one eye of each of them. Afterward as they came back, the elder was at the left, and the younger at the right, and then the pigeons pecked out the other eye of each. And thus, for their wickedness and falsehood, they were punished with blindness as long as they lived.

## THE ELVES AND THE SHOEMAKER

A shoemaker, by no fault of his own, had become so poor that at last he had nothing left but leather for one pair of shoes. So in the evening, he cut out the shoes which he wished to make the next morning. And as he had a good conscience, he lay down quietly in his bed, commended himself to God, and fell asleep.

In the morning, after he had said his prayers, and was just going to sit down to work, lo! both shoes stood all finished on his table. He was astounded, and did not know what to say. He took the shoes in his hands to examine them closer, and they were so neatly made that there was not one bad stitch in them, just as if they were meant for a masterpiece.

Soon after, a buyer came in, and as the shoes pleased him well, he paid more for them than was customary. And, with the money, the shoemaker was able to purchase leather for two pairs of shoes.

He cut them out at night, and next morning was about to set to work with fresh courage; but he had no need to do so, for, when he got up, they were already made. And buyers also were not wanting, who gave him money enough to buy leather for four pairs of shoes.

The following morning, too, he found the four pairs made. And so it went on constantly, what he cut out in the evening was finished by morning, so that he soon had his honest living again, and at last became a wealthy man.

Now it befell that, one evening not long before Christmas, when the man had been cutting out, he said to his wife, before going to bed, "What think you, if we were to stay up to-night to see who it is that lends us this helping hand?"

The woman liked the idea, and lighted a candle, and then they hid themselves in a corner of the room, behind some clothes which were hanging there, and watched.

When it was midnight, two pretty tiny naked Little Men came, sat down by the shoemaker's table, took all the work which was cut out before them and began to stitch, sew, and hammer so skilfully and so quickly with their little fingers, that the shoemaker could not turn away his eyes for astonishment. They did not stop until all was done, and stood finished on the table, and then they ran quickly away.

Next morning, the woman said, "The Little Men have made us rich, and we really must show that we are grateful for it. They run about so much, and have nothing on, and must be cold. I'll tell you what I'll do. I will make them little shirts, coats, vests, and trousers, and knit both of them a pair of stockings. Do you make them two little pairs of shoes."

The man said, "I shall be very glad to do it."

And one night, when everything was ready, they laid their presents, instead of the cut-out work, all together on the table, and then concealed themselves to see how the Little Men would behave.

At midnight they came bounding in, and wanted to get to work at once. But as they did not find any leather cut out, only the pretty little articles of clothing, they were at first astonished, and then they showed intense delight. They dressed themselves with the greatest rapidity, putting the pretty clothes on, and singing:

"Now we are boys so fine to see,  
Why should we longer cobblers be?"

Then they danced and skipped and leapt over chairs and benches. At last, they danced out of doors. From that time forth they came no more, but as long as the shoemaker lived all went well with him, and all his undertakings prospered.

## THE THREE BROTHERS

There was once a man who had three sons, and nothing else in the world but the house in which he lived. Now each of the sons wished to have the house after his father's death; but the father loved them all alike, and did not know what to do. He did not wish to sell the house, because it had belonged to his forefathers, else he might have divided the money amongst them.

At last a plan came into his head, and he said to his sons, "Go into the world, and try each of you to learn a trade. When you all come back, he who makes the best masterpiece shall have the house."

The sons were well content with this, and the eldest determined to be a blacksmith, the second a barber, and the third a fencing-master. They fixed a time when they should all come home again, and then each went his way.

It chanced that they all found skilful masters, who taught them their trades well. The blacksmith had to shoe the King's horses, and he thought to himself, "The house is mine, without doubt." The barber shaved only great people, and he too already looked upon the house as his own. The fencing-master got many a blow, but he only bit his lip, and let nothing vex him; "for," said he to himself, "if you are afraid of a blow, you'll never win the house."

When the appointed time had gone by, the three brothers came back home to their father. But they did not know how to find the best opportunity for showing their skill, so they sat down and consulted together.

As they were sitting thus, all at once a hare came running across the field. "Ah, ha, just in time!" said the barber. So he took his basin and soap, and lathered away until the hare came up. Then he soaped and shaved off the hare's whiskers whilst he was running at the top of his speed, and did not even cut his skin or injure a hair on his body.

"Well done!" said the old man, "your brothers will have to exert themselves wonderfully, or the house will be yours."

Soon after, up came a nobleman in his coach, dashing along at full speed. "Now you shall see what I can do, Father," said the blacksmith. So away he ran after the coach, took all four shoes off the feet of one of the horses whilst he was galloping, and put on four new shoes without stopping him.

"You are a fine fellow, and as clever as your brother," said his father. "I do not know to which I ought to give the house."

Then the third son said, "Father, let me have my turn, if you please." And, as it was beginning to rain, he drew his sword, and flourished it backward and forward above his head so fast that not a drop fell upon him. It rained still harder and harder, till at last it came down in torrents. But he only flourished his sword faster and faster, and remained as dry as if he were sitting in a house.

When his father saw this he was amazed, and said, "This is the masterpiece, the house is yours!"

His brothers were satisfied with this, as was agreed before-hand. And, as they loved one another very much, they all three stayed together in the house, followed their trades, and, as they had learnt them so well and were so clever, they earned a great deal of money.

Thus they lived together Happily, until they grew old. And at last, when one of them fell sick and died, the two others grieved so sorely about it that they also fell ill, and soon after died. And because they had been so clever, and had loved one another so much, they were all laid in the same grave.

## LITTLE TABLE SET THYSELF, GOLD-ASS, AND CUDGEL OUT OF THE SACK

There was once upon a time, a tailor, who had three sons and only one goat. But as the goat supported the whole of them with her milk, she was obliged to have good food, and to be taken every day to pasture. The sons, therefore, did this, in turn.

Once, the eldest took her to the churchyard, where the finest herbs were to be found, and let her eat and run about there. At night, when it was time to go home, he asked, "Goat, have you had enough?"

The goat answered:

"I have eaten so much,  
Not a leaf more I'll touch,  
Ma! Ma!"

"Come home, then," said the youth, and took hold of the cord round her neck, led her into the stable and tied her up securely.

"Well," said the old tailor, "has the goat had as much food as she ought?"

"Oh," answered the son, "she has eaten so much, not a leaf more she'll touch."

But the father wished to satisfy himself, and went down to the stable, stroked the dear animal and asked, "Goat, are you satisfied?"

The goat answered:

"With what should I be satisfied?  
Among the graves I leapt about,  
And found no food, so went without,  
Ma! Ma!"

"What do I hear?" cried the tailor, and ran up-stairs and said to the youth, "Hollo, you liar; you said the goat had had enough, and have let her go hungry!" and in his anger, he took the yard-measure from the wall, and drove him out with blows.

Next day, it was the turn of the second son, who looked out for a place in the fence of the garden, where nothing but good herbs grew. And the goat cleared them all off.

At night, when he wanted to go home, he asked, "Goat, are you satisfied?"

The goat answered:

"I have eaten so much,  
Not a leaf more I'll touch,  
Ma! Ma!"

"Come home, then," said the youth, and led her home and tied her up in the stable.

"Well," said the old tailor, "has the goat had as much food as she ought?"

"Oh," answered the son, "she has eaten so much, not a leaf more she'll touch."

The tailor would not rely on this, but went down to the stable and said, "Goat, have you had enough?"

The goat answered:

“With what should I be satisfied?  
Among the graves I leapt about,  
And found no food, so went without,  
Ma! Ma!”

“The godless wretch!” cried the tailor, “to let such a good animal go hungry,” and he ran up and drove the youth out of doors with the yard-measure.

Now came the turn of the third son, who wanted to do the thing well, and sought out some bushes with the finest leaves, and let the goat devour them.

In the evening when he wanted to go home, he asked, “Goat, have you had enough?”

The goat answered:

“I have eaten so much,  
Not a leaf more I’ll touch,  
Ma! Ma!”

“Come home, then,” said the youth, and led her into the stable, and tied her up.

“Well,” said the old tailor, “has the goat had a proper amount of food?”

“She has eaten so much, not a leaf more she’ll touch.”

The tailor did not trust to that, but went down and asked, “Goat, have you had enough?”

The wicked beast answered:

“With what should I be satisfied?  
Among the graves I leapt about,  
And found no leaves, so went without,  
Ma! Ma!”

“Oh, the brood of liars!” cried the tailor, “each as wicked and forgetful of his duty as the other! Ye shall no longer make a fool of me,” and, quite beside himself with anger, he ran up-stairs and belabored the poor young fellow so vigorously with the yard-measure that he sprang out of the house.

The old tailor was now alone with his goat. Next morning he went down into the stable, caressed the goat and said, “Come, my dear little animal, I myself will take you to feed.”

He took her by the rope and conducted her to green hedges, and amongst milfoil, and whatever else goats like to eat. “There you may for once eat to your heart’s content,” said he to her, and let her browse till evening.

Then he asked, “Goat, are you satisfied?” She replied:

“I have eaten so much,  
Not a leaf more I’ll touch,  
Ma! Ma!”

“Come home, then,” said the tailor, and led her into the stable, and tied her fast.

When he was going away, he turned round again and said, “Well, are you satisfied for once?”

But the goat did not behave better to him, and cried:

“With what should I be satisfied?  
Among the graves I leapt about,  
And found no leaves, so went without,  
Ma! Ma!”

When the tailor heard that, he was shocked, and saw clearly that he had driven away his three sons without cause. “Wait, you ungrateful creature,” cried he, “it is not enough to drive you forth, I will mark you so that you will no more dare to show yourself amongst honest tailors!”

In great haste, he ran up-stairs, fetched his razor, lathered the goat’s head, and shaved her as clean as the palm of his hand. And as the yard-measure would have been too good for her, he brought the horsewhip, and gave her such cuts with it that she ran away with mighty leaps.

When the tailor was thus left quite alone in his house, he fell into great grief, and would gladly have had his sons back again. But no one knew whither they were gone.

The eldest had apprenticed himself to a joiner, and learnt industriously and unweariedly, and when the time came for him to go on his travels, his master presented him with a little table which had no unusual appearance, and was made of common wood. But it had one good property; if any one put it down, and said:

“Little Table!  
Set thyself!”

the good Little Table was at once covered with a clean little cloth. And a plate was there, and a knife and fork beside it, and dishes with boiled meats and roasted meats, as many as there was room for, and a great glass of red wine shone so that it made the heart glad.

The young journeyman thought, “With this you have enough for your whole life!” and went joyously about the world, and never troubled himself whether an inn was good or bad, or if anything was to be found in it or not. When it suited him he did not enter an inn at all, but either in the plain, a wood, a meadow, or wherever he fancied, he took his Little Table off his back, set it down before him, and said:

“Little Table!  
Set thyself!”

and then everything appeared that his heart desired.

At length, he took it into his head to go back to his father, whose anger would now be appeased, and who would now willingly receive him with his Wishing-Table. It came to pass that on his way home, he arrived, one evening, at an inn which was filled with guests. They bade him welcome, and invited him to sit and eat with them, for otherwise he would have difficulty in getting anything.

“No,” answered the joiner, “I will not take the few bites out of your mouths. Rather than that, you shall be my guests.”

They laughed, and thought he was joking. He, however, placed his wooden Little Table in the middle of the room, and said:

“Little Table!  
Set thyself!”

Instantly it was covered with food, so good that the host could never have procured it, and the smell of it arose pleasantly to the noses of the guests.

“Fall to, dear Friends,” said the joiner.

And the guests, when they saw that he meant it, did not need to be asked twice, but drew near, pulled out their knives and attacked it valiantly. And what surprised them most, was that when a dish became empty, a full one instantly took its place. The innkeeper stood in one corner and watched

the doings. He did not know what to say, but thought, "I could easily find use for such a cook as that in my kitchen."

The joiner and his comrades made merry until late into the night. At length they lay down to sleep, and the young apprentice also went to bed, and set his Magic Table against the wall.

The host's thoughts, however, let him have no rest. It occurred to him that there was a little old table in his lumber-room, which looked just like the apprentice's. And he brought it out quite softly, and exchanged it for the Wishing-Table.

Next morning, the joiner paid for his bed, took up his table, never thinking that he had got a false one, and went his way.

At midday, he reached his father, who received him with great joy. "Well, my dear son, what have you learnt?" said he to him.

"Father, I have become a joiner."

"A good trade," replied the old man; "but what have you brought back with you from your apprenticeship?"

"Father, the best thing which I have brought back with me is this Little Table."

The tailor examined it on all sides and said, "You did not make a masterpiece, when you made that. It is a bad old table."

"But it is a table which furnishes itself," replied the son. "When I put it down, and tell it to set itself, the most beautiful dishes stand on it, and a wine also which gladdens the heart. Just invite all our relations and friends. They shall refresh and enjoy themselves for once, for the table will give them all they require."

When the company was assembled, he put his table in the middle of the room and said:

"Little Table!  
Set thyself!"

but the little table did not bestir itself, and remained just as bare as any other table which did not understand language. Then the poor apprentice became aware that his table had been changed, and was ashamed at having to stand there like a liar.

The relations, however, mocked him, and were forced to go home without having eaten or drunk. The father brought out his patches, and began to tailor again, but the son went to a master in the craft.

The second son had gone to a miller and had apprenticed himself to him. When his years were over, the master said, "As you have conducted yourself so well, I give you an Ass of a peculiar kind, which neither draws a cart nor carries a sack."

"To what use is he put, then?" asked the young apprentice.

"He lets gold drop from his mouth," answered the miller. "If you set him on a cloth, and say:

"Bricklebrit!"

the good animal will drop gold pieces for you."

"That is a fine thing," said the apprentice, and thanked the master, and went out into the world. When he had need of gold, he had only to say:

"Bricklebrit!"

to his Ass, and it rained gold pieces, and he had nothing to do but pick them off the ground. Wheresoever he went, the best of everything was good enough for him, and the dearer the better, for he had always a full purse.

When he had looked about the world for some time, he thought, “You must seek out your father; if you go to him with the Gold-Ass, he will forget his anger, and receive you well.”

It came to pass, that he reached the same public-house in which his brother’s table had been exchanged. He led his Ass by the bridle, and the host was about to take the animal from him to tie him up, but the young apprentice said, “Don’t trouble yourself. I will take my gray horse into the stable, and tie him up myself, for I must know where he stands.”

This struck the host as odd, and he thought that a man who was forced to look after his Ass himself, could not have much to spend. But when the stranger put his hand in his pocket and brought out two gold pieces, and said he was to provide something good for him, the host opened his eyes wide, and ran and sought out the best he could muster.

After dinner, the guest asked what he owed. The host did not see why he should not double the reckoning, and said the apprentice must give two more gold pieces.

He felt in his pocket, but his gold was just at an end. “Wait an instant, sir host,” said he, “I will go and fetch some money;” but he took the tablecloth with him.

The host could not imagine what this could mean, and being curious, stole after him, and as the guest bolted the stable-door, he peeped through a hole left by a knot in the wood.

The stranger spread out the cloth under the animal and cried:

“Bricklebrit!”

and immediately the beast began to let gold pieces fall, so that it fairly rained down money on the ground.

“Eh, my word!” said the host, “ducats are quickly coined there! A purse like that is not amiss.”

The guest paid his score, and went to bed, but in the night the host stole down into the stable, led away the master of the mint, and tied up another ass in his place. Early next morning, the apprentice went away with the ass, and thought that he had his Gold-Ass.

At midday he reached his father, who rejoiced to see him again, and gladly took him in. “What have you made of yourself, my Son?” asked the old man.

“A miller, dear Father,” he answered.

“What have you brought back with you from your travels?”

“Nothing else but an ass.”

“There are asses enough here,” said the father. “I would rather have had a good goat.”

“Yes,” replied the son, “but it is no common ass, but a Gold-Ass. When I say:

““Bricklebrit!”

the good beast opens its mouth and drops a whole sheetful of gold pieces. Just summon all our relations hither, and I will make them rich folk.”

“That suits me well,” said the tailor, “for then I shall have no need to torment myself any longer with the needle;” and he ran out and called the relations together.

As soon as they were assembled, the miller bade them make way, spread out his cloth, and brought the ass into the room. “Now watch,” said he, and cried:

“Bricklebrit!”

but no gold pieces fell, and it was clear that the animal knew nothing of the art, for every ass does not attain such perfection.

Then the poor miller pulled a long face, saw that he was betrayed, and begged pardon of the relatives, who went home as poor as they came. There was no help for it, the old man had to betake him to his needle once more, and the youth hired himself to a miller.

The third brother had apprenticed himself to a turner, and as that is skilled labor, he was the longest in learning. His brothers, however, told him in a letter how badly things had gone with them, and how the innkeeper had cheated them of their beautiful wishing-gifts on the last evening before they reached home.

When the turner had served his time, and had to set out on his travels, as he had conducted himself so well, his master presented him with a sack, and said, "There is a Cudgel in it."

"I can put on the sack," said he, "and it may be of good service to me, but why should the Cudgel be in it? It only makes it heavy."

"I will tell you why," replied the master; "if any one has done anything to injure you, do but say:

"Cudgel!  
Out of the sack!"

and the Cudgel will leap forth among the people, and play such a dance on their backs, that they will not be able to stir or move for a week, and it will not leave off until you say:

"Cudgel!  
Into the sack!"

The apprentice thanked him, put the sack on his back, and when any one came too near him, and wished to attack him, he said:

"Cudgel!  
Out of the sack!"

and instantly the Cudgel sprang out, and dusted the coat or jacket of one after the other on their backs, and never stopped until it had stripped it off them. And it was done so quickly, that before any one was aware, it was already his own turn.

In the evening, the young turner reached the inn where his brothers had been cheated. He laid his sack on the table before him, and began to talk of all the wonderful things which he had seen in the world. "Yes," said he, "people may easily find a Little Table which will cover itself, a Gold-Ass, and things of that kind – extremely good things which I by no means despise – but these are nothing in comparison with the treasure which I have won for myself, and am carrying about with me in my sack there."

The innkeeper pricked up his ears. "What in the world can that be?" thought he. "The sack must be filled with nothing but jewels. I ought to get them cheap too, for all good things go in threes."

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