2022/2023 Storytelling Selections

Resource: The Gutenberg Project (gutenberg.org)

1. The Emperor's New Clothes
2. The Sleeping Beauty
3. The Hunter and the Tortoise
4. Jack and the Bean-stalk
5. The Wolf and the Seven Little Kids
6. The Golden Mountain
7. The Monkey and the Jelly-fish
8. Rapunzel
9. The Jackal and the Alligator
10. The Tale of Punchinello
11. Riquet With the Tuft
12. The Golden Apples of Hesperides
13. The Capture of Father Time
14. The Fourth Wife is the Wisest
15. Hansel and Grethel

Notes:

1) Since these stories come from many sources with many authors and editors, it is the suggestion of the storytelling committee that, for the sake of simplicity, students should cite their story in one of the following ways:
   [*Title of story*], as found in the Gutenberg Project.
   [*Title of story*], a [*country/tribe of origin*] story as found in the Gutenberg Project.
2) All these stories are in the public domain, and minor edits have been made to certain texts at the discretion of the Storytelling Committee.
3) We recognize that many of these tales have been edited and translated from their original sources. Storytellers are encouraged to research the origins of these stories and take those origins into consideration when presenting them for a modern audience.

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2022/2023 Storytelling Theme: POWER

In life, who or what is Powerful? Who gets to have Power? To whom do we willingly (or unwillingly) bestow Power - politicians, celebrities, bosses, social media influencers, parents, friends? Who employs Power responsibly? Who abuses it? Power is control. Control over environment, other living things, self, perceptions of the past, blueprints for the future. Therefore, Power must be wielded cautiously.

Storyteller, use these chosen tales to explore self-empowerment and how it is acquired and why it is important. Invite your audience to gain insights into Power – when it uplifts, when it destroys. Centuries before Spider-Man learned it, humans have warned one another: with Power comes Responsibility.

1. THE EMPEROR'S NEW CLOTHES

Book: *The Yellow Fairy Book*
Editor: Andrew Lang
Origin: Danish

Many years ago there lived an Emperor who was so fond of new clothes that he spent all his money on them in order to be beautifully dressed. He did not care about his soldiers, he did not care about the theatre; he only liked to go out walking to show off his new clothes. He had a coat for every hour of the day; and just as they say of a king, 'He is in the council-chamber,' they always said here, 'The Emperor is in the wardrobe.'

In the great city in which he lived there was always something going on; every day many strangers came there. One day two impostors arrived who gave themselves out as weavers, and said that they knew how to manufacture the most beautiful cloth imaginable. Not only were the texture and pattern uncommonly beautiful, but the clothes which were made of the stuff possessed this wonderful property that they were invisible to anyone who was not fit for his office, or who was unpardonably stupid.

'Those must indeed be splendid clothes,' thought the Emperor. 'If I had them on I could find out which men in my kingdom are unfit for the offices they hold; I could distinguish the wise from the stupid! Yes, this cloth must be woven for me at once.' And he gave both the impostors much money, so that they might begin their work.

They placed two weaving-looms, and began to do as if they were working, but they had not the least thing on the looms. They also demanded the finest silk and the best gold, which they put in their pockets, and worked at the empty looms till late into the night.

'I should like very much to know how far they have got on with the cloth,' thought the Emperor. But he remembered when he thought about it that whoever was foolish or not fit for his office would not be able to see it. Now he certainly believed that he had nothing to fear for himself, but he wanted first to send somebody else in order to see how he stood with regard to his office. Everybody in the whole town knew what a wonderful power the cloth had, and they were all curious to see how bad or how foolish their neighbor was.

'I will send my old and honored minister to the weavers,' thought the Emperor. 'He can judge best what the cloth is like, for he has intellect, and no one understands his office better than he.'

Now the good old minister went into the hall where the two impostors sat working at the empty weaving-looms. 'Dear me!' thought the old minister, opening his eyes wide, 'I can see nothing!' But he did not say so.

Both the impostors begged him to be so kind as to step closer, and asked him if it were not a beautiful texture and lovely colours. They pointed to the empty loom, and the poor old minister went forward rubbing his eyes; but he could see nothing, for there was nothing there.

'Dear, dear!' thought he, 'can I be foolish? I have never thought that, and nobody must know it! Can I not be fit for my office? No, I must certainly not say that I cannot see the cloth!'

‘Have you nothing to say about it?’ asked one of the men who was weaving.

‘Oh, it is lovely, most lovely!’ answered the old minister, looking through his spectacles. ‘What a texture! What colors! Yes, I will tell the Emperor that it pleases me very much.’

‘Now we are delighted at that,’ said both the weavers, and thereupon they named the colors and explained the make of the texture.

The old minister paid great attention, so that he could tell the same to the Emperor when he came back to him, which he did.

The impostors now wanted more money, more silk, and more gold to use in their weaving. They put it all in their own pockets, and there came no threads on the loom, but they went on as they had done before, working at the empty loom. The Emperor soon sent another worthy statesman to see how the weaving was getting on, and whether the cloth would soon be finished. It was the same with him as the first one; he looked and looked, but because there was nothing on the empty loom he could see nothing.

‘Is it not a beautiful piece of cloth?’ asked the two impostors, and they pointed to and described the splendid material which was not there.

‘Foolish I am not!’ thought the man, ‘so it must be my good office for which I am not fitted. It is strange, certainly, but no one must be allowed to notice it.’ And so he praised the cloth which he did not see, and expressed to them his delight at the beautiful colors and the splendid texture. ‘Yes, it is quite beautiful,’ he said to the Emperor.

Everybody in the town was talking about the magnificent cloth.

Now the Emperor wanted to see it himself while it was still on the loom. With a great crowd of select followers, amongst whom were both the worthy statesmen who had already been there before, he went to the cunning impostors, who were now weaving with all their might, but without fibre or thread.

‘Is it not splendid!’ said both the old statesmen who had already been there. ‘See, your Majesty, what a texture! What colors!’ And then they pointed to the empty loom, for they believed that the others could see the cloth quite well.

‘What!’ thought the Emperor, ‘I can see nothing! This is indeed horrible! Am I foolish? Am I not fit to be Emperor? That was the most dreadful thing that could happen to me. Oh, it is very beautiful,’ he said. ‘It has my gracious approval.’ And then he nodded pleasantly, and examined the empty loom, for he would not say that he could see nothing.

His whole Court round him looked and looked, and saw no more than the others; but they said like the Emperor, ‘Oh! it is beautiful!’ And they advised him to wear these new and magnificent clothes for the first time at the great procession which was soon to take place. ‘Splendid! Lovely! Most beautiful!’ went from mouth to mouth; everyone seemed delighted over them, and the Emperor gave to the impostors the title of Court weavers to the Emperor.

Throughout the whole of the night before the morning on which the procession was to take place, the impostors were up and were working by the light of over sixteen candles. The people could see that they were very busy making the Emperor’s new clothes ready. They pretended

they were taking the cloth from the loom, cut with huge scissors in the air, sewed with needles without thread, and then said at last, ‘Now the clothes are finished!’

The Emperor came himself with his most distinguished knights, and each impostor held up his arm just as if he were holding something, and said, ‘See! Here are the breeches! Here is the coat! Here the cloak!’ and so on.

‘Spun clothes are so comfortable that one would imagine one had nothing on at all; but that is the beauty of it!’

‘Yes,’ said all the knights, but they could see nothing, for there was nothing there.

‘Will it please your Majesty graciously to take off your clothes,’ said the impostors, ‘then we will put on the new clothes, here before the mirror.’

The Emperor took off all his clothes, and the impostors placed themselves before him as if they were putting on each part of his new clothes which was ready, and the Emperor turned and bent himself in front of the mirror.

‘How beautifully they fit! How well they sit!’ said everybody. ‘What material! What colors! It is a gorgeous suit!’

‘They are waiting outside with the canopy which your Majesty is wont to have borne over you in the procession,’ announced the Master of the Ceremonies.

‘Look, I am ready,’ said the Emperor. ‘Doesn’t it sit well!’ And he turned himself again to the mirror to see if his finery was on all right.

The chamberlains who were used to carry the train put their hands near the floor as if they were lifting up the train; then they did as if they were holding something in the air. They would not have it noticed that they could see nothing.

So the Emperor went along in the procession under the splendid canopy, and all the people in the streets and at the windows said, ‘How matchless are the Emperor’s new clothes! That train fastened to his dress, how beautifully it hangs!’

No one wished it to be noticed that he could see nothing, for then he would have been unfit for his office, or else very foolish. None of the Emperor’s clothes had met with such approval as these had.

‘But he has nothing on!’ said a little child at last.

‘Just listen to the innocent child!’ said the father, and each one whispered to his neighbor what the child had said.

‘But he has nothing on!’ the whole of the people called out at last.

This struck the Emperor, for it seemed to him as if they were right; but he thought to himself, ‘I must go on with the procession now.’

And the chamberlains walked along still more uprightly, holding up the train which was not there at all.

2. THE SLEEPING BEAUTY

Book: *My Book of Favourite Fairy Tales*
Editor: Edric Vredenburg
Origin: French

Once upon a time there lived a king and queen who had no children; and this they lamented very much. But one day, as the queen was walking by the side of the river, a little fish lifted its head out of the water, and said, "Your wish shall be fulfilled, and you shall soon have a daughter."

What the little fish had foretold soon came to pass; and the Queen had a little girl who was so very beautiful that the king could not cease looking on her for joy, and was determined to hold a great feast. So he invited not only his relations, friends, and neighbors, but also all the fairies, that they might be kind and good to his little daughter. Now there were thirteen fairies in his kingdom, and he had only twelve golden dishes for them to eat out of, so that he was obliged to leave one of the fairies without an invitation. The rest came, and after the feast was over they gave all their best gifts to the little princess; one gave her virtue, another beauty, another riches, and so on till she had all that was excellent in the world. When eleven had done blessing her, the thirteenth, who had not been invited, and was very angry on that account, came in, and was determined to take her revenge. So she cried out, "The King's daughter shall in her fifteenth year be wounded by a spindle, and fall down dead." Then the twelfth, who had not yet given her gift, came forward and said that the bad wish must be fulfilled, but that she could soften it, and that the king's daughter should not die, but fall asleep for a hundred years.

But the king hoped to save his dear child from the threatened evil, and ordered that all the spindles in the kingdom should be bought up and destroyed. All the fairies' gifts were in the meantime fulfilled; for the princess was so beautiful, and well-behaved, and amiable, and wise, that everyone who knew her loved her. Now it happened that on the very day she was fifteen years old the king and queen were not at home, and she was left alone in the palace. So she roved about by herself, and poked at all the rooms and chambers, till at last she came to an old tower, to which there was a narrow staircase ending with a little door. In the door there was a golden key, and when she turned it the door sprang open, and there sat an old lady spinning away very busily.

"Why, how now, good mother," said the princess, "what are you doing there?"

"Spinning," said the old lady, and nodded her head.

"How pretty that little thing turns round!" said the princess, and took the spindle and began to spin. But scarcely had she touched it before the prophecy was fulfilled, and she fell down, as if lifeless, on the ground.

However, she was not dead, but had only fallen into a deep sleep; and the king and queen, who just then came home, and all their court, fell asleep too, and the horses slept in the stables, and the dogs in the court, the pigeons on the house-top, and the flies on the walls. Even the fire on the hearth left off blazing, and went to sleep; and the meat that was roasting stood still; and the cook, who was at that moment pulling the kitchen-boy by the hair to give him a box on the ear for something he had done amiss, let him go, and both fell asleep; and so everything stood still, and slept soundly.

A large hedge of thorns soon grew around the palace, and every year it became higher and thicker, till at last the whole place was surrounded and hidden, so that not even the roof or the chimneys could be seen. But there went a report, through all the land, of the beautiful sleeping Briar Rose (for so was the king's daughter called) so that from time to time several kings' sons came, and tried to break through the thicket into the palace. This they could never do; for the thorns and bushes laid hold of them as it were with hands, and there they stuck fast and died miserably.

After many years came yet another king's son into that land, and an old man told him the story of the thicket of thorns, and how a beautiful palace stood behind it, in which was a wondrous princess, called Briar Rose, asleep with all her court. He told, too, how he had heard from his grandfather that many, many princes had come, and had tried to break through the thicket, but had stuck fast and died.

Then the young prince said, "All this shall not frighten me; I will go and see Briar Rose." The old man tried to dissuade him, but he persisted in going.

Now that very day were the hundred years completed; and as the prince came to the thicket he saw nothing but beautiful flowering shrubs, through which he passed with ease, and they closed after him, as firm as ever. Then he came at last to the palace, and there in the court lay the dogs asleep, and the horses in the stables, and on the roof sat the pigeons fast asleep with their heads under their wings; and when he came into the palace, the flies slept on the walls, and the cook in the kitchen was still holding up her hand as if she would beat the boy, and the maid with her pail in her hand was going a-milking.

Then he went on still further, and all was so quiet that he could hear every breath he drew; till at last he came to the old tower and opened the door of the little room in which Briar Rose was, and there she lay fast asleep, and looked so beautiful that he could not turn his eyes away, and he stooped down and gave her a kiss. But the moment he kissed her she opened her eyes and awoke, and smiled upon him. For the spell was broken.

Then they went out together, and presently the king and queen also awoke, and all the court, and they gazed at each other with great wonder.

And the horses got up and shook themselves, and the dogs jumped about and barked; the pigeons took their heads from under their wings, and looked around and flew into the fields; the flies on the walls buzzed; the fire in the kitchen blazed up and cooked the dinner, and the roast meat turned round again; the cook gave the boy the box on his ear so that he cried out, and the maid went to milk the cows. And then the wedding of the prince and Briar Rose was celebrated, and they lived happily together all their lives long.

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3. THE HUNTER AND THE TORTOISE

Book: *West African Folk-Tales*
Authors: William Henry Barker and Cecilia Sinclair
Origin: West African

A village hunter had one day gone farther afield than usual. Coming to a part of the forest with which he was unacquainted, he was astonished to hear a voice singing. He listened; this was the song:

“It is man who forces himself on things,
Not things which force themselves on him.”

The singing was accompanied by sweet music—which entirely charmed the hunter’s heart.

When the little song was finished, the hunter peeped through the branches to see who the singer could be. Imagine his amazement when he found it was none other than a tortoise, with a tiny harp slung in front of her. Never had he seen such a marvelous thing.

Time after time he returned to the same place in order to listen to this wonderful creature. At last he persuaded her to let him carry her back to his hut, so that he might enjoy her singing daily in comfort.

This she permitted, only on the understanding that she sang to him alone.

The hunter did not rest long content with this arrangement, however. Soon he began to wish that he could show off this wonderful tortoise to all the world, and thereby thought he would gain great honor. He told the secret, first to one, then to another, until finally it reached the ears of the chief himself. The hunter was commanded to come and tell his tale before the Assembly. When, however, he described the tortoise who sang and played on the harp, the people shouted in scorn. They refused to believe him.

At last he said, “If I do not speak the truth, I will give you leave to kill me. To-morrow I will bring the tortoise to this place and you may all hear her. If she cannot do as I say, I am willing to die.” “Good,” replied the people, “and if the tortoise can do as you say, we give you leave to punish us in any way you choose.”

The matter being then settled, the hunter returned home, well pleased with the prospect. As soon as the morrow dawned, he carried the tortoise and harp down to the Assembly Place—where a table had been placed ready for her. Everyone gathered round to listen. But no song came. The people were very patient, and quite willing to give both tortoise and hunter a chance. Hours went by, and, to the hunter’s dismay and shame, the tortoise remained mute. He tried every means in his power to coax her to sing, but in vain. The people at first whispered, then spoke outright, in scorn of the boaster and his claims.

Night came on and brought with it the hunter’s punishment. As the last ray of the setting sun faded, he was banished forever. The instant this had happened the tortoise spoke. “He brought his punishment on himself. I led a happy life in the forest, singing my little song. He was not content to come and listen to me. He had to tell my secret (which did not at all concern him) to all the world. Had he not tried to make a show of me this would never have happened.”

“It is man who forces himself on things,
Not things which force themselves on him.”

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4. JACK AND THE BEANSTALK

Book: *Childhood's Favorites and Fairy Stories*
Editors: Hamilton Wright Mabie, Edward Everett Hale, and William Byron Forbush
Origin: English

Once upon a time there lived a poor widow who had an only son named Jack. She was very poor, for times had been hard, and Jack was too young to work. Almost all the furniture of the little cottage had been sold to buy bread, until at last there was nothing left worth selling. Only the good cow, Milky White, remained, and she gave milk every morning, which they took to market and sold. But one sad day Milky White gave no milk, and then things looked bad indeed.

"Never mind, mother," said Jack. "We must sell Milky White. Trust me to make a good bargain," and away he went to the market.

For some time he went along very sadly, but after a little he quite recovered his spirits. "I may as well ride as walk," said he; so instead of leading the cow by the halter, he jumped on her back, and so he went whistling along until he met a butcher.

"Good morning," said the butcher.

"Good morning, sir," answered Jack.

"Where are you going?" said the butcher.

"I am going to the market to sell the cow."

"It's lucky I met you," said the butcher. "You may save yourself the trouble of going so far."

With this, he put his hand in his pocket, and pulled out five curious-looking beans. "What do you call these?" he said.

"Beans," said Jack.

"Yes," said he, "beans, but they're the most wonderful beans that ever were known. If you plant them overnight, by the next morning they'll grow up and reach the sky. But to save you the trouble of going all the way to market, I don't mind exchanging them for that cow of yours."

"Done!" cried Jack, who was so delighted with the bargain that he ran all the way home to tell his mother how lucky he had been.

But oh! how disappointed the poor widow was.

"Off to bed with you!" she cried; and she was so angry that she threw the beans out of the window into the garden. So poor Jack went to bed without any supper, and cried himself to sleep.

When he woke up the next morning, the room was almost dark; and Jack jumped out of bed and ran to the window to see what was the matter. The sun was shining brightly outside, but from the ground right up beside his window there was growing a great beanstalk, which stretched up and up as far as he could see, into the sky.

"I'll just see where it leads to," thought Jack, and with that he stepped out of the window onto the beanstalk, and began to climb upwards. He climbed up and up, till after a time his mother's cottage looked a mere speck below, but at last the stalk ended, and he found himself in a new and beautiful country. A little way off there was a great castle, with a broad road leading straight

up to the front gate. But what most surprised Jack was to find a beautiful maiden suddenly standing beside him.

"Good morning, ma'am," he said, very politely.

"Good morning, Jack," said she; and Jack was more surprised than ever, for he could not imagine how she had learned his name. But he soon found that she knew a great deal more about him than his name; for she told him how, when he was quite a little baby, his father, a gallant knight, had been slain by the giant who lived in yonder castle, and how his mother, in order to save Jack, had been obliged to promise never to tell the secret.

"All that the giant has is yours," she said, and then disappeared quite as suddenly as she came.

"She must be a fairy," thought Jack.

As he drew near to the castle, he saw the giant's wife standing at the door.

"If you please, ma'am," said he, "would you kindly give me some breakfast? I have had nothing to eat since yesterday."

Now, the giant's wife, although very big and very ugly, had a kind heart, so she said: "Very well, little man, come in; but you must be quick about it, for if my husband, the giant, finds you here, he will eat you up, bones and all."

So Jack went in, and the giant's wife gave him a good breakfast, but before he had half finished it there came a terrible knock at the front door, which seemed to shake even the thick walls of the castle.

"Dear me, that is my husband!" said the giantess, in a terrible fright; "we must hide you somehow," and she lifted Jack up and popped him into the empty kettle.

No sooner had the giant's wife opened the door than her husband roared out:

"Fee, fi, fo, fum,
I smell the blood of an Englishman;
Be he alive, or be he dead,
I'll grind his bones to make my bread!"

"It's a boy, I'm sure it is," he continued. "Where is he? I'll have him for my breakfast."

"Nonsense!" said his wife; "you must be mistaken. It's the ox's hide you smell." So he sat down, and ate up the greater part of the ox. When he had finished he said: "Wife, bring me my money-bags." So his wife brought him two full bags of gold, and the giant began to count his

money. But he was so sleepy that his head soon began to nod, and then he began to snore, like the rumbling of thunder. Then Jack crept out, snatched up the two bags, and though the giant's dog barked loudly, he made his way down the beanstalk back to the cottage before the giant awoke.

Jack and his mother were now quite rich; but it occurred to him one day that he would like to see how matters were going on at the giant's castle. So while his mother was away at the market, he climbed up, and up, and up, and up, until he got to the top of the beanstalk again.

The giantess was standing at the door, just as before, but she did not know Jack, who, of course, was more finely dressed than on his first visit. "If you please, ma'am," said he, "will you give me some breakfast?"

"Run away," said she, "or my husband the giant will eat you up, bones and all. The last boy who came here stole two bags of gold—off with you!" But the giantess had a kind heart, and after a time she allowed Jack to come into the kitchen, where she set before him enough breakfast to last him a week. Scarcely had he begun to eat than there was a great rumbling like an earthquake, and the giantess had only time to bundle Jack into the oven when in came the giant. No sooner was he inside the room than he roared:

"Fee, fi, fo, fum,
I smell the blood of an Englishman;
Be he alive, or be he dead,
I'll grind his bones to make my bread!"

But his wife told him he was mistaken, and after breakfasting off a roasted bullock, just as if it were a lark, he called out: "Wife, bring the little brown hen!" The giantess went out and brought in a little brown hen, which she placed on the table.

"Lay!" said the giant; and the hen at once laid a golden egg. "Lay!" said the giant a second time; and she laid another golden egg. "Lay!" said the giant a third time; and she laid a third golden egg.

"That will do for to-day," said he, and stretched himself out to go to sleep. As soon as he began to snore, Jack crept out of the oven, went on tiptoe to the table, and, snatching up the little brown hen, made a dash for the door. Then the hen began to cackle, and the giant began to wake up; but before he was quite awake, Jack had escaped from the castle, and, climbing as fast as he could down the beanstalk, got safe home to his mother's cottage.

The little brown hen laid so many golden eggs that Jack and his mother now had more money than they could spend. But Jack was always thinking about the beanstalk; and one day he crept out of the window again, and climbed up, and up, and up, and up, until he reached the top.

This time, you may be sure, he was careful not to be seen; so he crept round to the back of the castle, and when the giant's wife went out he slipped into the kitchen and hid himself in the oven. In came the giant, roaring louder than ever:

"Fee, fi, fo, fum,
I smell the blood of an Englishman;
Be he alive; or be he dead,
I'll grind his bones to make my bread!"

But the giantess was quite sure that she had seen no little boys that morning; and after grumbling a great deal, the giant sat down to breakfast. Even then he was not quite satisfied, for every now and again he would say:

"Fee, fi, fo, fum,
I smell the blood of an Englishman;"

and once he got up and looked in the kettle. But, of course, Jack was in the oven all the time!

When the giant had finished, he called out: "Wife, bring me the golden harp!" So she brought in the golden harp, and placed it on the table. "Sing!" said the giant; and the harp at once began to sing the most beautiful songs that ever were heard. It sang so sweetly that the giant soon fell fast asleep; and then Jack crept quietly out of the oven, and going on tiptoe to the table, seized hold of the golden harp. But the harp at once called out: "Master! master!" and the giant woke up just in time to catch sight of Jack running out of the kitchen-door.

With a fearful roar, he seized his oak-tree club, and dashed after Jack, who held the harp tight, and ran faster than he had ever run before. The giant, brandishing his club, and taking terribly long strides, gained on Jack at every instant, and he would have been caught if the giant hadn't slipped over a boulder.

Before he could pick himself up, Jack began to climb down the beanstalk, and when the giant arrived at the edge he was nearly half-way to the cottage. The giant began to climb down too; but as soon as Jack saw him coming, he called out: "Mother, bring me an axe!" and the widow hurried out with a chopper. Jack had no sooner reached the ground than he cut the beanstalk right in two. Down came the giant with a terrible crash, and that, you may be sure, was the end of him.

What became of the giantess and the castle nobody knows. But Jack and his mother grew very rich, and lived happily ever after.

5. THE WOLF AND THE SEVEN LITTLE KIDS

Book: *Grimm's Fairy Tales*
Author: Jacob Grimm and Wilhelm Grimm
Origin: German

There was once upon 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 comes in, he will devour you all—skin, hair, and everything. 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 someone knocked at the house-door and called: '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 the 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 himself 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 called: '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 someone,' 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. Truly, this is the way of mankind.

So 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 back 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 that all he said was true, 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 used no great ceremony; one after the other he swallowed them down his throat. The youngest, who was 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 afterwards 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 came to 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 snored so loud that the branches shook. She looked at him on every side and saw that something was moving and struggling in his gorged belly. ‘Ah, heavens,’ she said, ‘is it possible that my poor children whom he has swallowed down for his supper, can still be 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, and hardly had she made one cut, than one 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 injury whatever, for in his greediness the monster had swallowed them down 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, and we will fill the wicked beast’s stomach with them while he is still asleep.’ Then the seven kids dragged the stones thither with all speed, and put as many of them into this 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 at length had had his fill of sleep, 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 feels like big stones.’

And when he got to the well and stooped over the water to drink, the heavy stones made him fall in, and he drowned 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 roundabout the well with their mother.

6. THE GOLDEN MOUNTAIN

Book: *Folk Tales from the Russian*
Author: Various
Origin: Russian

Once upon a time a merchant's son had too much fun spending money, and the day came when he saw himself ruined; he had nothing to eat, nothing to drink. He took a shovel and went to the market place to see if perchance somebody would hire him as a worker.

A rich, proud merchant, worth many, many thousands, came along in a gilded carriage. All the fellows at the marketplace, as soon as they perceived him, rushed away and hid themselves in the corners. Only one remained, and this one was our merchant's son.

"Dost thou look for work, good fellow? Let me hire thee," the very rich merchant said to him.

"So be it; that's what I came here for."

"And thy price?"

"A hundred rubles a day will be sufficient for me."

"Why so much?"

"If too much, go and look for someone else; plenty of people were around and when they saw thee coming, all of them rushed away."

"All right. To-morrow come to the landing place."

The next day, early in the morning, our merchant's son arrived at the landing; the very rich merchant was already there waiting.

They boarded a ship and went to sea. For quite a long time they journeyed, and finally they perceived an island. Upon that island there were high mountains, and near the shore something seemed to be in flames.

"Yonder is something like fire," said the merchant's son.

"No, it is my golden palace."

They landed, came ashore, and—look there! The rich merchant's wife is hastening to meet him, and along with her their young daughter, a lovely girl, prettier than you could think or even dream of.

The family met; they greeted one another and went to the palace. And along with them went their new workman. They sat around the oak table and ate and drank and were cheerful.

"One day does not count," the rich merchant said; "let us have a good time and leave work for to-morrow."

The young workman was a fine, brave fellow, handsome and stately, and the merchant's lovely daughter liked him well. She left the room and made him a sign to follow her. Then she gave him a touchstone and a flint.

"Take it," she said; "when thou art in need, it will be useful."

The next day the very rich merchant with his hired workman went to the high golden mountain. The young fellow saw at once that there was no use trying to climb or even to crawl up.

"Well," said the merchant, "let us have a drink for courage."

And he gave the fellow some drowsy drink. The fellow drank and fell asleep.

The rich merchant took out a sharp knife, killed a wretched horse, cut it open, put the fellow inside, pushed in the shovel, and sewed the horse's skin together, and himself sat down in the bushes.

All at once crows came flying, black crows with iron beaks. They took hold of the carcass, lifted it up to the top of the high mountain, and began to pick at it. The crows soon ate up the horse and were about to begin on the merchant's son, when he awoke, pushed away the crows, looked around and asked out loud:

"Where am I?"

The rich merchant below answered:

"On a golden mountain; take the shovel and dig for gold."

And the young man dug and dug, and all the gold he dug he threw down, and the rich merchant loaded it upon the carts.

"Enough!" finally shouted the master. "Thanks for thy help. Farewell!"

"And I—how shall I get down?"

"As thou pleasest; there have already perished nine and ninety of such fellows as thou. With thee the count will be rounded and thou wilt be the hundredth."

The proud, rich merchant was off.

"What shall I do?" thought the poor merchant's son. "Impossible to go down! But to stay here means death, a cruel death from hunger."

And our fellow stood upon the mountain, while above the crows were circling, the crows with iron beaks, as if feeling already the prey. The fellow tried to think how it all happened, and he remembered the lovely girl and what she said to him in giving him the touchstone and the flint. He remembered how she said:

"Take it. When thou art in need it will prove useful."

"I fancy she had something in mind; let us try."

The poor merchant's son took out stone and flint, struck it once and lo! Two brave fellows were standing before him.

"What is thy wish? What are thy commands?" said they.

"Take me from this mountain down to the seashore."

And at once the two took hold of him and carefully brought him down.

Our hero walks along the shore. See there! a vessel comes sailing near the island.

"Ahoy! good people! take me along!"

"No time to stop!" And they went sailing by. But the winds arose and the tempest was heavy.

"It seems as if this fellow over there is not an ordinary man; we had better go back and take him along," decided the sailors.

They turned the prow toward the island, landed, took the merchant's son along with them and brought him to his native town.

It was a long time, or perhaps only a short time after—who could tell?—that one day the merchant's son took again his shovel and went to the market place in search of work.

The same very rich merchant came along in his gilded carriage; and, as of old, all the fellows who saw him coming rushed away.

The merchant's son remained alone.

"Will you be my workman?"

"I will at two hundred rubles a day. If so, let us to work."

"A rather expensive fellow."

"If too expensive go to others; get a cheap man. There were plenty of people, but when thou didst appear—thou seest thyself—not one is left."

"Well, all right. Come to-morrow to the landing place."

They met at the landing place, boarded a ship and sailed toward the island.

The first day they spent rather happily, and on the second, master and workman went to work.

When they reached the golden mountain the rich, proud merchant treated his hired man to a tumbler.

"Before all, have a drink."

"Wait, master! thou art the head; thou must drink the first. Let me treat thee this time."

The young man had already prepared some of the drowsy stuff and he quickly mixed it with the wine and presented it to the master.

The proud merchant drank and fell sound asleep.

Our merchant's son killed a miserable old horse, cut it open, pushed his master and the shovel inside, sewed it all up and hid himself in the bushes. All at once crows came flying,—black crows with iron beaks; they promptly lifted up the horse with the sleeping merchant inside, bore it to the top of the mountain, and began to pick the bones of their prey.

When the merchant awoke he looked here and looked there and looked everywhere.

"Where am I?"

"Upon the golden mountain. Now if thou art strong after thy rest, do not lose time; take the shovel and dig. Dig quickly and I'll teach thee how to come down."

The proud, rich merchant had to obey and dug and dug. Twelve big carts were loaded.

"Enough!" shouted the merchant's son. "Thank thee, and farewell!"

"And I?"

"And thou mayst do as thou wishest! There are already ninety and nine fellows perished before thee; with thyself there will be a hundred."

The merchant's son took along with him the twelve heavy carts with gold, arrived at the golden palace and married the lovely girl; the rich merchant's daughter became mistress of all her father's wealth, and the merchant's son with his family moved to a large town to live.

And the rich merchant, the proud, rich merchant? He himself, like his many victims, became the prey of the crows, black crows with iron beaks.

Well, sometimes it happens just so.

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7. THE MONKEY AND THE JELLY-FISH

Book: *The Violet Fairy Book*
Editor: Andrew Lang
Origin: Japanese

Children must often have wondered why jelly-fishes have no shells, like so many of the creatures that are washed up every day on the beach. In old times this was not so; the jelly-fish had as hard a shell as any of them, but he lost it through his own fault, as may be seen in this story.

The sea-queen Otohime, whom you read of in the story of Uraschimatoro, suddenly grew very ill. The swiftest messengers were sent hurrying to fetch the best doctors from every country under the sea, but it was all of no use; the queen grew rapidly worse instead of better. Everyone had almost given up hope, when one day a doctor arrived who was cleverer than the rest, and said that the only thing that would cure her was the liver of a monkey. Now monkeys do not dwell under the sea, so a council of the wisest heads in the nation was called to consider the question of how a liver could be obtained. At length it was decided that the turtle, whose prudence was well known, should swim to land and contrive to catch a living monkey and bring him safely to the ocean kingdom.

It was easy enough for the council to entrust this mission to the turtle, but not at all so easy for him to fulfill it. However he swam to a part of the coast that was covered with tall trees, where he thought the monkeys were likely to be; for he was old, and had seen many things. It was some time before he caught sight of any monkeys, and he often grew tired of watching for them, so that one hot day he fell fast asleep, in spite of all his efforts to keep awake. By-and-by some monkeys, who had been peeping at him from the tops of the trees, where they had been carefully hidden from the turtle's eyes, stole noiselessly down, and stood round staring at him, for they had never seen a turtle before, and did not know what to make of it. At last one young monkey, bolder than the rest, stooped down and stroked the shining shell that the strange new creature wore on its back. The movement, gentle though it was, woke the turtle. With one sweep he seized the monkey's hand in his mouth, and held it tight, in spite of every effort to pull it away. The other monkeys, seeing that the turtle was not to be trifled with, ran off, leaving their young brother to his fate.

Then the turtle said to the monkey, 'If you will be quiet, and do what I tell you, I won't hurt you. But you must get on my back and come with me.'

The monkey, seeing there was no help for it, did as he was bid; indeed he could not have resisted, as his hand was still in the turtle's mouth.

Delighted at having secured his prize, the turtle hastened back to the shore and plunged quickly into the water. He swam faster than he had ever done before, and soon reached the royal palace. Shouts of joy broke forth from the attendants when he was seen approaching, and some of them ran to tell the queen that the monkey was there, and that before long she would be as well as ever she was. In fact, so great was their relief that they gave the monkey such a kind welcome, and were so anxious to make him happy and comfortable, that he soon forgot all the fears that had beset him as to his fate, and was generally quite at his ease, though every now and then a fit of home-sickness would come over him, and he would hide himself in some dark corner till it had passed away.

It was during one of these attacks of sadness that a jelly-fish happened to swim by. At that time jelly-fishes had shells. At the sight of the happy and lively monkey crouching under a tall rock, with his eyes closed and his head bent, the jelly-fish was filled with pity, and stopped, saying, 'Ah, poor fellow, no wonder you weep; a few days more, and they will come and kill you and give your liver to the queen to eat.'

The monkey shrank back horrified at these words and asked the jelly-fish what crime he had committed that deserved death.

'Oh, none at all,' replied the jelly-fish, 'but your liver is the only thing that will cure our queen, and how can we get at it without killing you? You had better submit to your fate, and make no noise about it, for though I pity you from my heart there is no way of helping you.' Then he went away, leaving the monkey cold with horror.

At first he felt as if his liver was already being taken from his body, but soon he began to wonder if there was no means of escaping this terrible death, and at length he invented a plan which he thought would do. For a few days he pretended to be happy as before, but when the sun went in, and rain fell in torrents, he wept and howled from dawn to dark, till the turtle, who

was his head keeper, heard him, and came to see what was the matter. Then the monkey told him that before he left home he had hung his liver out on a bush to dry, and if it was always going to rain like this it would become quite useless. And the rogue made such a fuss and moaning that he would have melted a heart of stone, and nothing would content him but that somebody should carry him back to land and let him fetch his liver again.

The queen's councilors were not the wisest of people, and they decided between them that the turtle should take the monkey back to his native land and allow him to get his liver off the bush, but desired the turtle not to lose sight of his charge for a single moment. The monkey knew this, but trusted his power of beguiling the turtle when the time came, and mounted on his back with feelings of joy, which he was, however, careful to conceal.

They set out, and in a few hours were wandering about the forest where the monkey had first been caught, and when the monkey saw his family peering out from the tree tops, he swung himself up by the nearest branch, just managing to save his hind leg from being seized by the turtle. He told them all the dreadful things that had happened to him, and gave a war cry which brought the rest of the tribe from the neighboring hills. At a word from him they rushed in a body to the unfortunate turtle, threw him on his back, and tore off the shield that covered his body. Then with mocking words they hunted him to the shore, and into the sea, which he was only too thankful to reach alive.

Faint and exhausted he entered the queen's palace because the cold of the water struck upon his naked body, and made him feel ill and miserable. But wretched though he was, he had to appear before the queen's advisers and tell them all that had befallen him, and how he had suffered the monkey to escape. But, as sometimes happens, the turtle was allowed to go scot-free, and had his shell given back to him, and all the punishment fell on the poor jelly-fish, who was condemned by the queen to go shieldless forever after.

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8. RAPUNZEL

Book: *Grimm's Fairy Stories*
Author: Jacob Grimm and Wilhelm Grimm
Origin: German

There was once a man and a woman who had long 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, which 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 an enchantress, 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 which is in the garden behind our house, to eat, 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 down over the wall into the garden of the enchantress, 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 enchantress standing before him. "How can you dare," said she with an angry look, "to 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 only made up my mind 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 enchantress allowed her anger to 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 little one came to them, the enchantress 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 enchantress 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 enchantress wanted to go in, she placed herself beneath this, and cried,

"Rapunzel, Rapunzel,
Let down your hair to me."

Rapunzel had magnificent long hair, fine as spun gold, and when she heard the voice of the enchantress she unfastened her braided tresses, wound them round one of the hooks of the window above, and then the hair fell twenty yards down, and the enchantress 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 an enchantress came there, and he heard how she cried,

"Rapunzel, Rapunzel,
Let down your hair.

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

"Rapunzel, Rapunzel,
Let down your 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, and he had been forced to see her. Then Rapunzel lost her fear, and when he asked her if she would take him for a 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, "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, and 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 enchantress 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 enchantress, "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, snip, 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 enchantress 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 your hair,"

she let her hair down. The King's son ascended, but he did not find his dearest Rapunzel above, but the enchantress, 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 again." The King's son was beside himself with pain, 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 towards it, and 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 afterwards, happy and content.

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9. THE JACKAL AND THE ALLIGATOR

Book: *Wonder Tales from Many Lands*
Author: Katharine Pyle
Origin: Hindi

There was once a little jackal who lived near the banks of a great river. Every day he went down to the water to catch the little crabs that were there.

Now in that same river there lived a cruel alligator. He saw the little jackal come down to the river every day, and he thought to himself, “What a nice, tender morsel this little jackal would be if I could only catch him.” So one day the alligator hid himself in the mud of the river so that just the tip of his nose stuck out, and it looked almost exactly like the back of a crab.

Very soon the little jackal came running along the bank of the river, looking for crabs. When he saw the end of the alligator’s nose, he thought, “That looks like the back of a fine big crab,” and he put in his paw to scoop it out of the mud.

As soon as he did that, snap!—the teeth of the alligator came together, and there he had the jackal by the paw.

The little jackal was terribly frightened, for he was sure the alligator would pull him into the river and eat him. However, he began to laugh, though the alligator’s teeth hurt him terribly. “Oh, you foolish old alligator,” he cried. “You thought you would catch my paw, and you didn’t catch anything but a bulrush root that I stuck down there in the water to tickle your nose. Ah, silly, silly alligator!”

When the alligator heard that, he was much disappointed. “I certainly thought I had caught that little jackal,” he said to himself, “and it seems I have caught nothing but a bulrush root. There is no use in holding on to that.” So he opened his mouth.

Then the little jackal snatched his paw out. “Oh, foolish one!” he cried. “You did have me, and you let me go again. You’ll never catch me again.” So saying, away he ran up into the jungle.

The alligator was furiously angry. “Well, he tricked me that time,” he said, “but the next time I catch him he will not get away so easily.” So he hid himself again in the mud and waited and watched. But the little jackal came no more to the river. He was afraid. He stayed up in the country and lived on figs that he gathered under a wild fig-tree.

But the alligator was determined to have the jackal, so when he found the jackal came no more to the river he crawled out one morning very early, and dragged himself to the wild fig-tree and gathered together a great heap of figs, and hid himself under them.

In a little while the jackal came running toward the fig-tree, licking his lips, for he was very hungry. When he saw the great heap of figs he was delighted. “How nice!” he said. “Now I will not have the trouble of gathering the figs together; they are there all ready for me.”

He went nearer and nearer to the heap of figs, and then he stopped. “It really looks almost as though something might be hidden under those figs,” he thought. Then he cried out loud, “When I come to the fig-tree all the figs that are any good roll about in the wind, but those figs lie so still that I do not think they can be fit to eat. I will have to go to some other place if I want to get good figs!”

When the alligator heard this, he thought, “This little jackal is very particular. I will just shake myself and make the figs roll about a little, or he will not come near enough for me to catch him.” So he shook himself, and away the figs rolled this way and that.

“Oh, you foolish old alligator!” cried the jackal. “If you had stayed quite still, you might have caught me. Thank you for shaking yourself and letting me know you were there!” And then he ran away as fast as his legs would carry him.

The alligator gnashed his teeth with rage. “Never mind! I will have this little jackal yet,” he cried, and he hid himself in the tall grass beside the path that led to the fig-tree. He waited there for several days, but he saw nothing of the jackal. The jackal was afraid to come to the fig-tree any more. He stayed in the jungle and fed on such roots and berries as he could find there, but as he could find but little, he grew very thin and miserable.

Then one morning the alligator made his way to the jackal’s house while the jackal was away. He squeezed himself in through the doorway (for it was very narrow), and hid under the heap of dead leaves that was the jackal’s bed.

Toward evening the little jackal came running home, and he was very hungry, for he had found little to eat all day, and he was very tired too. He was just about to go in and throw himself down on his bed when he noticed that the sides of the doorway were scraped and broken as though some big animal had forced its way in.

The little jackal was terribly frightened. “Is it possible,” he thought, “that the wicked alligator has come to hunt for me here in my own house and is waiting inside to catch me?” Then he

cried out aloud, “What is the matter, little house? Every day when I come home you say ‘All is well, little jackal,’ but to-day you say nothing, and I am afraid to come in.”

This was not true; the little house did not really speak to him, but he wanted to find out whether the alligator was there. But the foolish alligator believed him. He thought to himself, “I will have to speak in place of the little house, or this tiresome little jackal will not come in.” He made his voice as small and soft as he could, and said, “All is well, little jackal.”

When the jackal heard the alligator speak, and knew he was really inside the house, he was more frightened than ever. However, he answered quite cheerfully, “Very well, little house! I will come in as soon as I have been to the brook for a drink of water.”

When the alligator heard that he was filled with joy, he lay quite still under the leaves without moving. “Now I will have that little jackal at last,” he thought. “This time he shall not escape me.”

But while he waited the little jackal gathered together a great heap of dead-wood and underbrush and piled it up against the door of the house. When it was big enough he set fire to it, and it blazed up with a great noise and burned the wicked alligator to death, and that was the end of him.

And always after that the little jackal could go wherever he pleased in safety, and he ate so many ripe figs and so many crabs that he grew as fat as fat could be.

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10. THE TALE OF PUNCHINELLO

Book: *The Green Forest Fairy Book*
Author: Loretta Ellen Brady
Origin: Italian

There lived once long ago, in days of jesters and court fools and harlequins, a certain clown called Punchinello. This Punchinello, like all others of his trade, whitened his face and painted it in grotesque fashion. He wore vibrant satin robes of many colors all hung with silver bells that jingled when he danced, and pom-pom slippers turned up at the toes. This Punchinello was a clown of clowns, and his droll dances and his merry tricks and songs had made thousands laugh.

Punchinello traveled around the world in company with a circus. Whenever this circus reached a city, it formed a great parade before it entered. Then would the people throng the streets and highways, eager for the show. They clapped their hands when lions roared in their cages and elephants led by their keepers passed along; but when this famous Punchinello, prancing and twirling, came into view, the crowds cheered wildly with applause.

"Oh, welcome! Welcome, Punchinello!" they would shout.

The ladies threw him flowers and children blew him kisses. Kings and queens had often hailed him thus, for Punchinello pleased all folk. Those who were sad and those who sorrowed often sent for Punchinello when the circus show was done, and he would dance and sing to cheer them. But for this service he would take no gold or present. So though he grew to fame, this Punchinello grew not rich.

"It is enough that I can make sad faces glad," said Punchinello, and wrapping his great cloak about him, he would steal away, leaving happiness behind him.

"My store of wealth lies in the golden smiles my antics bring," he often said, "and when my merry songs and dances please the world no more, I shall be poor indeed." But with his light, fantastic dancing, and his songs and jests, with his twirlings and his leapings,—was it likely that the world would ever cease to smile on Punchinello? The world is always fond of fun and laughter.

"Punchinello is the greatest man in all the world," some folk said when they had seen him dance and heard him sing.

"That is not right," said others. "He would be emperor if that were true; but Punchinello is the greatest man in all the circus."

"But neither is that right," still others said. "For if he were, he would be owner of the circus. But Punchinello is the greatest clown in all the world." And on this all folk agreed.

Now on its way about the world, the circus chanced to journey to a city where a king and queen held court. These royal folk and all their court watched the procession from their balconies and were delighted. The king and queen sent heralds, saying on a certain night that they would grace the show and to be sure that Master Punchinello played before the royal box. Then as the pageant wound upon its way, with banners flying and with music of the fife and drum, they passed a building where the sick were tended. It was a hospital. No eager faces gave them welcome here, and lest they should disturb the sick, the fife and drum ceased playing. Punchinello fell to walking soberly along. Suddenly he chanced to spy a tiny, wistful face pressed to the window pane. Then Punchinello bounded lightly up the ladder, and leaping into the room, began to dance and twirl about to please this little child.

"And does my dancing please you, little one?" asked Punchinello when he paused.

"Oh, yes, sir!" cried the child. His name was Beppo. "Please dance again for me. It makes my pain grow better."

"Alas! I cannot, little one," said Punchinello, pointing to the circus that was passing. "I must make haste to join my friends again."

"Then would you come to-night when it is dark and dance for me?" begged little Beppo. "The pain is always worse when it is dark, you know."

"Indeed, I'll come, my little one," said kindly Punchinello, and his painted face grew sad. "Just leave your window open, little one, and I'll steal in and dance for you and sing you to the land of happy dreams."

And that night, when the circus show was done and all the lights were out, while other tired players slept, this kindly Punchinello wrapped his cloak about him and stole out underneath the stars to visit little Beppo. The little lame child was delighted with his songs and dances, so kindly Punchinello vowed that he would come each night and do the same, while the circus remained in the city. Each night the child lay waiting for him eagerly, and how he hugged and kissed this Punchinello when at last he came!

"Last night I dreamed of running through the woods," cried little Beppo to him one night. "I saw tall trees that seemed to touch the sky and heard the birds sing in their nests. I never had a dream like this before, and your sweet songs did give it to me, Punchinello. Come, dance and sing for me."

Then Punchinello danced his best. His slippered feet like lightning flew; the bells upon his robes rang out, and he would twirl upon his toes until his many-colored baggy robes stood out and he seemed like a brilliant human top. He jumped, he twirled, he leaped high in the air and bowed before the little cot as though it were a royal throne. When he at last grew weary, he would stop, but then the child would beg for more.

"Oh, please, dear Punchinello," he would say, "just once again. It makes my pain grow less to see you whirl." Then Punchinello could not refuse, and he would whirl and twirl again until he was too weary to do more. Folding little Beppo in his arms, he sang him lullabies until the child fell fast asleep. And so the nights went on.

The nurses noticed that little Beppo's cheeks grew plump and that his eyes grew bright. He said his pain was better, and they thought it was the medicine. They knew nothing of this Punchinello. He entered each night through the window and departed the same way. The circus folk said Punchinello was not well and told him he must rest.

"Our show would be nothing if it were not for you, Punchinello," they declared. "To-morrow the king and queen will come to see us play, so rest you well to-night that you may dance your very best for them." Though Punchinello promised, late that night, when all the world lay sleeping, he stole away to dance for little Beppo.

"Oh, Punchinello!" cried the little lame child. "I'll tell you of my dream. I dreamed I wore a spotted satin robe like yours and pom-pom slippers turned up at the toes. I dreamed I danced and twirled as lightly as you do yourself. Now is that not a pleasant dream for one who cannot even walk?"

"It is, my little one," said Punchinello. "Come sit upon my knee and wind your arms about my neck. Now tell me, has your pain been less to-day?"

"Much less, much less, good Punchinello," said the child. "Indeed, I think your dances and your songs have charmed it all away. I think about my lovely dreams by day, and lie and wait for you by night, and have no time for pain, it seems. Come dance for me, my Punchinello."

"To-night I'll sing instead, my little Beppo," answered Punchinello. He was weary, and when he whirled his head grew dizzy. "I'll sing you a song of ships that sail through seas of clouds; and trees as sing the world to slow sleep when winds do blow."

But little Beppo wished to see him dance. "See, Punchinello," said he softly, "around your neck I tie my locket. It is my only treasure. They say my mother placed it on me when she died. It has a bluebird painted on it which is the only bird I've ever seen. Now wilt thou dance for me, dear Punchinello?" He kissed the clown's painted face, and Punchinello danced.

And never had he danced so well before. As though he heard afar the music that the fairies make at midnight, he waltzed and twirled faster and yet faster, pausing not at all. He pranced, he leaped and spun upon his toe as though he were a dancing doll wound up to dance so long. The little lame child watched him eagerly, and as he watched, as though he too heard magic strains from fairyland, he sprung up from his cot and straightway danced and whirled about in Punchinello's footsteps.

"Look, look, dear Punchinello!" little Beppo cried. "I am no longer lame but dance as well as you yourself."

But Punchinello, whirling like a leaf, made no reply. He sang his songs and leaped so lightly in the air, there seemed to be a thousand harlequins, and little Beppo followed lightly after. Suddenly the child stopped, for Punchinello was no longer dancing.

"Oh, my good Punchinello!" he exclaimed. "Why did you run away? I'll follow after you," and down the ladder he swiftly sped. He saw the white tents shining in the moonlight. "Indeed, I'll join the circus with my Punchinello," said he to himself, "and travel around the world with him."

But alas! Poor Punchinello had not stolen off, as little Beppo thought. For while in his wild dance that charmed the lame child's pain away, poor Punchinello felt himself grow ill. His head grew giddy, and at last he fell upon the floor, and there the nurses found him in the morning. They placed poor Punchinello on the bed where little Beppo had lain for so many years, and wondered whence the clown had come.

And so it was the king and queen who went next day to see the show were displeased because the famous Punchinello was not there to dance and jest for them. No other clowns or harlequins would please their royal majesties, and so they left in anger. They bade the circus owner strip his tents and in that very hour depart, and when another morning came, our little Beppo found himself in a strange city with the circus folk. At first these circus folk were puzzled what to do

with him, but as the child could dance and cut droll capers, they made for him a spotted satin suit and gave him pom-pom slippers turned up at the toes. They would have called him Little Punchinello, but this the child would not allow.

"Good Punchinello was my friend," said little Beppo. "And 'twas from him I learned to dance before I ever walked. I will not take his name, but I will seek him everywhere until I find him."

Some circus folk thought Punchinello had run off to join a show of traveling jugglers, and others thought perhaps he had grown tired of dancing and grimacing. Then by and by they ceased to talk of him, and all forgot him, save little Beppo.

Meanwhile poor Punchinello lay in a raging fever. The nurses thought that he would die, for he was very ill. But after a long time the fever left him, and then they knew he would grow better. He asked one day for little Beppo, but they could tell him nothing of the child.

"We came to waken him one morning, but the child was gone and you were lying ill," said they. "We could not see how this could be, for little Beppo was too lame to walk; but though we searched the city, he could not be found."

Another day poor Punchinello asked about the circus, and again the nurses shook their heads.

"The circus folk have gone long since," said they. "The king was angry with them and bade them go in haste, 'tis said. We cannot say which way they went."

When Punchinello was all well at last; he rose and donned his many-colored robes that jingled when he walked. He had grown thin and pale, and they became him poorly, but he had not money to buy others. He wrapped his great cloak all about him and started out to earn his bread. Poor Punchinello was too weak to dance; he could not plow or dig; he had not been so trained. And so at last this famous Punchinello stood upon the highways and sang for pennies that good-natured people threw to him.

"I am the famous Punchinello," he would sometimes say. "Have you not heard of the famous Punchinello of the circus?"

But those who heard him laughed in scorn. "If you were the famous Punchinello of the circus," they would say, "why sing you then for coppers like a beggar, and where is the circus? You are not Punchinello, but a fraud."

Thus poor and friendless, Punchinello started out to seek the circus. His wanderings led him into many lands, and often he met folk who told him that the circus had passed there. But Punchinello, journeying afoot, could never travel fast enough to overtake the circus. His pom-pom slippers soon were torn by stones along the highway, and he went barefoot. His satin robe of many colors faded and grew worn. Punchinello patched here with yarn and there with bits of leather cloth or sacking, until the colors had all fled, and it was naught but rags sewn all

together. Poor Punchinello danced no more, for ragged robes and dancing do not fit; but even so, his voice was sweet and clear as ever.

"So I am not yet poor, despite my rags," he would say bravely to himself. "For yesterday I caught a golden smile from one who flung a copper; and who knows? Perhaps to-day I may again be favored."

Then one day in his wanderings Punchinello awakened to the music of the fife and drum. He saw bright banners flying and hurried to the highway with the crowds. It was the circus he had sought so long, and as he saw his old friends marching by, poor Punchinello's eyes filled with tears of joy. The lion tamers with their roaring beasts strode by, the elephants in scarlet blankets decked, the jugglers next, and then a little dancing clown who stepped and pranced in drollest fashion.

"Oh, welcome, Beppo! Welcome!" cried the crowds, and Punchinello saw it was the lame child he had known.

He darted from the crowd and cried, "Oh, little Beppo, dost remember me? I am good Punchinello."

But here the circus folk protested. "Be off! Be off! You bunch of rags!" cried they. "Our Punchinello was no beggar, and you are not he."

"I swear I am!" cried Punchinello. "Do you not know me, little Beppo?"

"When I was ill and could not walk," the child replied, "a clown called Punchinello cured me of my lameness by his merry songs and ways; but his face I know not. He came always in the night. When he danced, he danced so swiftly that a million harlequins there seemed to be about me: and when he held me in his arms, I hid my head against his shoulder, because I loved him dearly."

"Do you remember this, then, little one?" asked poor Punchinello, and showed the bluebird locket, "the only treasure you did own, and which you gave to me?"

"I do, and you are my good Punchinello!" little Beppo cried, and flung his arms about him. He kissed the shabby creature and wrapped him in his own fine scarlet cloak to hide the rags. "How I have sought the world for you, dear Punchinello, to tell you of my gratitude; but I could never find you."

The circus folk went running and crowded round the pair. "Oh, welcome! Welcome, Punchinello!" they exclaimed and shook his hand. "A thousand welcomes. We have missed you sadly and now you will be our clown again."

"But little Beppo is your clown. What of him?" asked Punchinello.

"Oh, we shall both be clowns!" declared the child, "like father and like son. Together we shall dance those dances that you taught me and sing those songs with which you charmed the world."

And so this Punchinello found himself once more in satin robes of many colors, all jingling merrily with bells, and pom-pom slippers turned up at the toes. His face he whitened and then painted it in grotesque fashion, and with his little Beppo he danced that night and made his old-time capers and grimaces.

"Well done! Well done! Good Punchinello!" cried the people. "We have missed you sorely, but enjoy you all the more for missing you." They laughed and cheered him wildly until the show was done.

"And now," said Punchinello, as he laid him down to rest that night, "I am the richest man in all the world. A thousand golden smiles were mine to-night, and better still I have the love and gratitude of little Beppo whom I dearly love. What more than that could Punchinello ask? And so good night!"

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11. RIQUET WITH THE TUFT

Book: *Four and Twenty Fairy Tales*
Translator: J. R. Planche
Origin: French

Once upon a time there was a Queen, who gave birth to a son so ugly and so ill-shaped that it was for a long time doubtful if he possessed a human form. A Fairy, who was present at his birth, affirmed that he would not fail to be amiable, as he would have much good-sense. She added, even, that he would be able, in consequence of the gift she had endowed him with, to impart equal intelligence to the person he should love best. All this consoled the poor Queen a little, who was much distressed at having brought into the world such a hideous little child. It is true that the child was no sooner able to speak than he said a thousand pretty things, and that there was in all his actions an indescribable air of intelligence which charmed one. I had forgotten to say that he was born with a little tuft of hair on his head, which occasioned him to be named Riquet with the Tuft; for Riquet was the family name.

At the end of seven or eight years, the Queen of a neighboring kingdom gave birth to two daughters. The first that came into the world was fairer than day. The Queen was so delighted, that it was feared her great joy would prove hurtful to her. The same Fairy who had assisted at the birth of little Riquet with the Tuft was present upon this occasion, and to moderate the joy of the Queen, she declared to her that this little Princess would have no mental capacity, and that she would be as silly as she was beautiful. This mortified the Queen exceedingly; but a few minutes afterwards she experienced a very much greater annoyance, for the second girl she gave birth to, proved to be extremely ugly. "Do not distress yourself so much, Madam," said the

Fairy to her. "Your daughter will find compensation; she will have so much sense that her lack of beauty will scarcely be perceived." "Heaven send it may be so," replied the Queen; "but are there no means of giving a little sense to the eldest, who is so lovely?" "I can do nothing for her, Madam, in the way of wit," said the Fairy, "but everything in that of beauty; and as there is nothing in my power that I would not do to gratify you, I will endow her with the ability to render beautiful the person who shall please her."

As these two Princesses grew up, their endowments increased in the same proportion, and nothing was talked of anywhere but the beauty of the eldest and the intelligence of the youngest. It is true that their defects also greatly increased with their years. The youngest became uglier every instant, and the eldest more foolish every day. She either made no answer when she was spoken to, or she said something foolish. With this she was so awkward, that she could not place four pieces of china on a mantel-shelf without breaking one of them, nor drink a glass of water without spilling half of it on her dress.

Notwithstanding the great advantage of beauty to a girl, the youngest drew her attention away from her sister nearly always, in every society. At first they gathered round the handsomest, to gaze at and admire her; but they soon left her for the wittiest, to listen to a thousand agreeable things; and people were astonished to find that, in less than a quarter of an hour, the eldest had not a soul near her, and that all the company had formed a circle round the youngest. The eldest sister noticed this, and would have given, without regret, all her beauty for half the sense of her sister. The Queen, discreet as she was, could not help reproaching her frequently with her folly, which made the poor Princess ready to die of grief.

One day that she had withdrawn into a wood to bewail her misfortune, she saw a little man approach her, of most disagreeable appearance, but dressed very magnificently. It was the young Prince Riquet with the Tuft, who, having fallen in love with her from seeing her portraits, which were sent all round the world, had quitted his father's kingdom to have the pleasure of beholding and speaking to her. Enchanted to meet her thus alone, he accosted her with all the respect and politeness imaginable. Having remarked, after paying the usual compliments, that she was very melancholy, he said to her, "I cannot comprehend, Madam, how a person so beautiful as you are can be so sad as you appear; for though I may boast of having seen an infinity of lovely women, I can avouch that I have never beheld one whose beauty could be compared to yours." "You are pleased to say so, Sir," replied the Princess; and there she stopped. "Beauty," continued Riquet, "is so great an advantage, that it ought to surpass all others; and when one possesses it, I do not see anything that could very much distress you." "I had rather," said the Princess, "be as ugly as you, and have good sense, than possess the beauty I do, and be as foolish as I am." "There is no greater proof of good sense, Madam, than the belief that we have it not; it is the nature of that gift, that the more we have, the more we believe we are deficient of it." "I do not know how that may be," said the Princess, "but I know well enough that I am very foolish, and that is the cause of the grief which is killing me." "If that is all that afflicts you, Madam, I can easily put an end to your sorrow." "And how would you do that?" said the Princess. "I have the power, Madam," said Riquet with the Tuft, "to give as much wit as any one can possess to the person I love the most; and as you, Madam, are that person,

it will depend entirely upon yourself whether or not you will have so much wit, provided that you are willing to marry me." The Princess was thunderstruck, and replied not a word. "I see," said Riquet with the Tuft, "that this proposal pains you; and I am not surprised at it; but I give you a full year to consider of it." The Princess had so little sense, and at the same time was so anxious to have a great deal, that she thought the end of that year would never come; so she accepted at once the offer that was made her.

She had no sooner promised Riquet with the Tuft that she would marry him that day twelve months, than she felt herself to be quite another person to what she was previously. She found she possessed an incredible facility of saying anything she wished, and of saying it in a shrewd, yet easy and natural manner. She commenced on the instant, and kept up a sprightly conversation with Riquet with the Tuft, during which she chatted away at such a rate, that Riquet with the Tuft began to believe he had given her more wit than he had kept for himself. When she returned to the Palace, the whole Court was puzzled to account for a change so sudden and extraordinary, for in proportion to the number of foolish things they had heard her say formerly, were the sensible and exceedingly clever observations she now gave utterance to. All the Court was in a state of joy which is not to be conceived. The younger sister alone was not very much pleased, as no longer possessing over her elder sister the advantage of wit, she now only appeared, by her side, as a very disagreeable-looking person. The King was now led by his eldest daughter's advice, and sometimes even held his Council in her apartment. The news of this alteration having spread abroad, all the young Princes of the neighboring kingdoms exerted themselves to obtain her affection, and nearly all of them asked her hand in marriage; but she found none of them sufficiently intelligent, and she listened to all of them without engaging herself to any one.

At length arrived a Prince so rich, so witty, and so handsome, that she could not help feeling an inclination for him. Her father, having perceived it, told her that he left her at perfect liberty to choose a husband for herself, and that she had only to make known her decision. As the more sense we possess, the more difficulty we find in making up one's mind positively on such a matter, she requested, after having thanked her father, that he would allow her some time to think of it. She went, by chance, to walk in the same wood where she had met with Riquet with the Tuft, in order to ponder with greater freedom on what she had to do.

While she was walking, deep in thought, she heard a dull sound beneath her feet, as of many persons running to and fro, and busily occupied. Having listened more attentively, she heard one say, "Bring me that saucepan;" another, "Give me that kettle;" another, "Put some wood on the fire." At the same moment the ground opened, and she saw beneath her what appeared to be a large kitchen, full of cooks, scullions, and all sorts of servants necessary for the preparation of a magnificent banquet. There came forth a band of from twenty to thirty cooks, who went and established themselves in an avenue of the wood at a very long table, and who, each with larding-pin in hand and *the queue de renard* behind the ear, set to work, keeping time to a melodious song.

The Princess, astonished at this sight, inquired for whom they were working. "Madam," replied the most prominent of the troop, "for Prince Riquet with the Tuft, whose marriage will take place to-morrow." The Princess, still more surprised than she was before, and suddenly recollecting that it was just a twelvemonth from the day on which she had promised to marry Prince Riquet with the Tuft, was lost in amazement. The cause of her not having remembered her promise was, that when she made it she was a fool, and on receiving her new mind, she forgot all her follies. She had not taken thirty steps in continuation of her walk, when Riquet with the Tuft presented himself before her, gaily and magnificently attired, like a Prince about to be married. "You see, Madam," said he, "I keep my word punctually, and I doubt not but that you have come hither to keep yours, and to make me, by the gift of your hand, the happiest of men." "I confess to you, frankly," replied the Princess, "that I have not yet made up my mind on that matter, and that I do not think I shall ever be able to do so to your satisfaction." "You astonish me, Madam," said Riquet with the Tuft. "I have no doubt I do," said the Princess; "and assuredly, had I to deal with—a man without mind,—I should feel greatly embarrassed. 'A Princess is bound by her word,' he would say to me, 'and you must marry me, as you have promised to do so.' But as the person to whom I speak is the most sensible man in all the world, I am certain he will listen to reason. You know that, when I was no better than a fool, I nevertheless could not resolve to marry you—how can you expect, now that I have the sense which you have given me, and which renders me much more difficult to please than before, that I should take a resolution to-day which I could not do then? If you seriously thought of marrying me, you did very wrong to take away my stupidity, and enable me to see clearer than I saw then." "If a man without sense," replied Riquet with the Tuft, "should meet with some indulgence, as you have just intimated, had he to reproach you with your breach of promise, why would you, Madam, that I should not be equally so in a matter which affects the entire happiness of my life? Is it reasonable that persons of intellect should be in a worse condition than those that have none? Can you assert this—you who have so much and have so earnestly desired to possess it? But let us come to the point, if you please. With the exception of my ugliness, is there anything in me that displeases you? Are you dissatisfied with my birth, my understanding, my temper, or my manners?"

"Not in the least," replied the Princess; "I admire in you everything you have mentioned." "If so," rejoined Riquet with the Tuft, "I shall be happy, as you have it in your power to make me the most agreeable of men." "How can that be done?" said the Princess. "It can be done," said Riquet with the Tuft, "if you love me sufficiently to wish that it should be. And in order, Madam, that you should have no doubt about it, know that the same fairy, who, on the day I was born, endowed me with the power to give understanding to the person I chose, gave you also the power to render handsome the man you should love, and on whom you were desirous to bestow that favor." "If such be the fact," said the Princess, "I wish, with all my heart, that you should become the handsomest Prince in the world, and I bestow the gift on you to the fullest extent in my power."

The Princess had no sooner pronounced these words, than Riquet with the Tuft appeared to her eyes, of all men in the world, the handsomest, the best made, and most amiable she had ever seen. There are some who assert that it was not the spell of the Fairy, but love alone that

caused this metamorphosis. They say that the Princess, having reflected on the perseverance of her lover—on his prudence, and all the good qualities of his heart and mind, no longer saw the deformity of his body nor the ugliness of his features—that his hunch appeared to her nothing more than the effect of a man shrugging his shoulders, and that instead of observing, as she had done, that he limped horribly, she saw in him no more than a certain lounging air, which charmed her. They say also that his eyes, which squinted, seemed to her only more brilliant from that defect, which passed in her mind for a proof of the intensity of his love, and, in fine, that his great red nose had in it something martial and heroic. However this may be, the Princess promised on the spot to marry him, provided he obtained the consent of the King, her Father.

The King, having learned that his daughter entertained a great regard for Riquet with the Tuft, whom he knew also to be a very clever and wise prince, accepted him with pleasure for a son-in-law. The wedding took place the next morning, as Riquet with the Tuft had foreseen, and, according to the instructions which he had given a long time before.

> No beauty, no talent, has power above
> Some indefinite charm discern'd only by love.

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12. THE GOLDEN APPLES OF HESPERIDES

Book: *Herakles, the Hero of Thebes, and Other Heroes of the Myth*
Authors: Mary E. Burt & Zenaïde A. Ragozin
Origin: Greek

When the wedding between Zeus and Hera was celebrated all the gods brought presents. Mother Earth brought some apple-trees as her gift. These trees bore precious golden apples, and Zeus and Hera were so pleased with their wonderful wedding-present that they appointed four maidens, called the Daughters of the West, to guard the apples, and also they placed a dragon there with a hundred heads, who never slept.

The fruit was so inviting that even the maidens would have been tempted to eat it if the terrible dragon had not kept close to the tree. A roar like thunder came out of each of his hundred mouths and frightened everything away that dared approach the trees, and lightning darted from his eyes to strike down intruders.

The trees grew more and more beautiful from year to year, and the apples were so heavy that the boughs bent beneath the golden load. They grew in the Garden of the Hesperides, in islands way off to the west, and were watered by springs of nectar which had their rise near the throne of Zeus.

Eurystheus had heard of the apples and he ordered Herakles to bring them to him. For a long time Herakles wandered about in various lands until he came to the river Rhone, where the water-goddesses or nymphs advised him to ask counsel from the ancient lord of the deep sea, who knew all the secrets of the ocean depths and whose wisdom was beyond that of the gods. He is called by many names, but his gentlest name is Nereus, and he does not like to be questioned unless he can take any shape he pleases.

He usually escapes intruders, but to those who are not afraid and who manage to grasp and to hold him, he freely opens the store of his wisdom. This was what Herakles did. Nereus took on the form of a lion, a serpent, a fish, a stream of water, and at last, of an old man, but Herakles held him close and learned from him the road to the Garden of the Hesperides.

Then he hurried away toward the east, going through many countries until he came to India, and finding himself traveling in the wrong direction, turned to the north and west and came to the Caucasus Mountains. Here he found Prometheus chained to the rocks of a high mountain-peak. Prometheus had taught mankind the use of fire and how to build houses and had otherwise interfered with the work of the gods, thereby bringing this punishment upon himself. Herakles took pity on him and set him free. In return for this kindly act Prometheus told him the most direct way to the Garden of the Hesperides, which was through Scythia and the region of the Hyperboreans at the back of the North Wind.

On his way Herakles stopped to visit Atlas, who as a punishment for once having rebelled against the gods was obliged to carry the heavens on his shoulders. “Let me relieve thee for awhile, friend Atlas,” said Herakles, after greeting him in a most cordial manner.

“Let me take the heavens on my shoulders and I will let thee do me a great service in return. I must have the Golden Apples that grow in the Garden of the Hesperides to take to Eurystheus, and thou canst bring them to me.”

Atlas gladly placed the heavy firmament on Herakles’ shoulders and took his way to the Garden. There he contrived to put the many-headed dragon to sleep and then slay him. Taking possession of the Golden Apples, he returned with them to Herakles.

“I thank thee very much, friend Atlas,” said Herakles. “Take thy place again and give me the apples.”

“Nay, I have borne the weight of the heavens for a long time,” answered Atlas. “Thou hadst better keep my place and I will carry the Golden Apples to Eurystheus.”

Herakles was taken aback at this reply and began to consider how he might escape from this unexpected dilemma. At last he spoke. “Very well, I will willingly remain in thy place, friend Atlas,” he said. “One thing only I must first ask of thee. Take the heavens back just for a moment

while I get a pad to put on my head so that the weight may not hurt it. Otherwise the heavens will fall and crush us both."

Poor, simple old Atlas agreed to this, and putting the Golden Apples on the ground he again took the firmament on his shoulders. Herakles picked up the apples and went off saying, "We must not bear malice toward each other, friend Atlas. Good-bye."

With this he departed and hastened back to Mykenæ.

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13. THE CAPTURE OF FATHER TIME

Book: *American Fairy Tales*
Author: L. Frank Baum
Origin: American

Jim was the son of a cowboy, and lived on the broad plains of Arizona. His father had trained him to lasso a bronco or a young bull with perfect accuracy, and had Jim possessed the strength to back up his skill he would have been as good a cowboy as any in all Arizona.

When he was twelve years old he made his first visit to the east, where Uncle Charles, his father's brother, lived. Of course Jim took his lasso with him, for he was proud of his skill in casting it, and wanted to show his cousins what a cowboy could do.

At first the city boys and girls were much interested in watching Jim lasso posts and fence pickets, but they soon tired of it, and even Jim decided it was not the right sort of sport for cities.

But one day the butcher asked Jim to ride one of his horses into the country, to a pasture that had been engaged, and Jim eagerly consented. He had been longing for a horseback ride, and to make it seem like old times he took his lasso with him.

He rode through the streets demurely enough, but on reaching the open country roads his spirits broke forth into wild jubilation, and, urging the butcher's horse to full gallop, he dashed away in true cowboy fashion.

Then he wanted still more liberty, and letting down the bars that led into a big field he began riding over the meadow and throwing his lasso at imaginary cattle, while he yelled and whooped to his heart's content.

Suddenly, on making a long cast with his lasso, the loop caught upon something and rested about three feet from the ground, while the rope drew taut and nearly pulled Jim from his horse.

This was unexpected. More than that, it was wonderful; for the field seemed bare of even a stump. Jim's eyes grew big with amazement, but he knew he had caught something when a voice cried out:

"Here, let go! Let go, I say! Can't you see what you've done?"

No, Jim couldn't see, nor did he intend to let go until he found out what was holding the loop of the lasso. So he resorted to an old trick his father had taught him and, putting the butcher's horse to a run, began riding in a circle around the spot where his lasso had caught.

As he thus drew nearer and nearer his quarry he saw the rope coil up, yet it looked to be coiling over nothing but air. One end of the lasso was made fast to a ring in the saddle, and when the rope was almost wound up and the horse began to pull away and snort with fear, Jim dismounted. Holding the reins of the bridle in one hand, he followed the rope, and an instant later saw an old man caught fast in the coils of the lasso.

His head was bald and uncovered, but long white whiskers grew down to his waist. About his body was thrown a loose robe of fine white linen. In one hand he bore a great scythe, and beneath the other arm he carried an hourglass.

While Jim gazed wonderingly upon him, this venerable old man spoke in an angry voice:

"Now, then—get that rope off as fast as you can! You've brought everything on earth to a standstill by your foolishness! Well—what are you staring at? Don't you know who I am?"

"No," said Jim, stupidly.

"Well, I'm Time—Father Time! Now, make haste and set me free—if you want the world to run properly."

"How did I happen to catch you?" asked Jim, without making a move to release his captive.

"I don't know. I've never been caught before," growled Father Time. "But I suppose it was because you were foolishly throwing your lasso at nothing."

"I didn't see you," said Jim.

"Of course you didn't. I'm invisible to the eyes of human beings unless they get within three feet of me, and I take care to keep more than that distance away from them. That's why I was crossing this field, where I supposed no one would be. And I should have been perfectly safe had it not been for your beastly lasso. Now, then," he added, crossly, "are you going to get that rope off?"

"Why should I?" asked Jim.

"Because everything in the world stopped moving the moment you caught me. I don't suppose you want to make an end to all business and pleasure, and war and love, and misery and ambition and everything else, do you? Not a watch has ticked since you tied me up here like a mummy!"

Jim laughed. It really was funny to see the old man wound round and round with coils of rope from his knees up to his chin.

"It'll do you good to rest," said the boy. "From all I've heard you lead a rather busy life."

"Indeed I do," replied Father Time, with a sigh. "I'm due in Kamchatka this very minute. And to think one small boy is upsetting all my regular habits!"

"Too bad!" said Jim, with a grin. "But since the world has stopped anyhow, it won't matter if it takes a little longer recess. As soon as I let you go Time will fly again. Where are your wings?"

“I haven’t any,” answered the old man. “That is a story cooked up by someone who never saw me. As a matter of fact, I move rather slowly.”

“I see, you take your time,” remarked the boy. “What do you use that scythe for?”

“To mow down the people,” said the ancient one. “Every time I swing my scythe someone dies.”

“Then I ought to win a life-saving medal by keeping you tied up,” said Jim. “Some folks will live this much longer.”

“But they won’t know it,” said Father Time, with a sad smile; “so it will do them no good. You may as well untie me at once.”

“No,” said Jim, with a determined air. “I may never capture you again; so I’ll hold you for awhile and see how the world wags without you.”

Then he swung the old man, bound as he was, upon the back of the butcher’s horse, and, getting into the saddle himself, started back toward town, one hand holding his prisoner and the other guiding the reins.

When he reached the road his eye fell on a strange tableau. A horse and buggy stood in the middle of the road, the horse in the act of trotting, with his head held high and two legs in the air, but perfectly motionless. In the buggy a man and a woman were seated; but had they been turned into stone they could not have been more still and stiff.

“There’s no Time for them!” sighed the old man. “Won’t you let me go now?”

“Not yet,” replied the boy.

He rode on until he reached the city, where all the people stood in exactly the same positions they were in when Jim lassoed Father Time. Stopping in front of a big dry goods store, the boy hitched his horse and went in. The clerks were measuring out goods and showing patterns to the rows of customers in front of them, but everyone suddenly seemed to have become a statue.

There was something very unpleasant in this scene, and a cold shiver began to run up and down Jim’s back; so he hurried out again.

On the edge of the sidewalk sat a poor, crippled beggar, holding out his hat, and beside him stood a prosperous-looking gentleman who was about to drop a penny into the beggar’s hat. Jim knew this gentleman to be very rich but rather stingy, so he ventured to run his hand into the man’s pocket and take out his purse, in which was a $20 gold piece. This glittering coin he put in the gentleman’s fingers instead of the penny and then restored the purse to the rich man’s pocket.

“That donation will surprise him when he comes to life,” thought the boy.

He mounted the horse again and rode up the street. As he passed the shop of his friend, the butcher, he noticed several pieces of meat hanging outside.

“I’m afraid that meat’ll spoil,” he remarked.

“It takes Time to spoil meat,” answered the old man.

This struck Jim as being odd, but true.

“It seems Time meddles with everything,” said he.

“Yes; you’ve made a prisoner of the most important personage in the world,” groaned the old man; “and you haven’t enough sense to let him go again.”

Jim did not reply, and soon they came to his uncle’s house, where he again dismounted. The street was filled with teams and people, but all were motionless. His two little cousins were just coming out the gate on their way to school, with their books and slates underneath their arms; so Jim had to jump over the fence to avoid knocking them down.

In the front room sat his aunt, reading her book. She was just turning a page when Time stopped. In the dining-room was his uncle, finishing his luncheon. His mouth was open and his fork poised just before it, while his eyes were fixed upon the newspaper folded beside him. Jim helped himself to his uncle’s pie, and while he ate it he walked out to his prisoner.

“There’s one thing I don’t understand,” said he.

“What’s that?” asked Father Time.

“Why is it that I’m able to move around while everyone else is—is—froze up?”

“That is because I’m your prisoner,” answered the other. “You can do anything you wish with Time now. But unless you are careful you’ll do something you will be sorry for.”

Jim threw the crust of his pie at a bird that was suspended in the air, where it had been flying when Time stopped.

“Anyway,” he laughed, “I’m living longer than anyone else. No one will ever be able to catch up with me again.”

“Each life has its allotted span,” said the old man. “When you have lived your proper time my scythe will mow you down.”

“I forgot your scythe,” said Jim, thoughtfully.

Then a spirit of mischief came into the boy’s head, for he happened to think that the present opportunity to have fun would never occur again. He tied Father Time to his uncle’s hitching post, that he might not escape, and then crossed the road to the corner grocery.

The grocer had scolded Jim that very morning for stepping into a basket of turnips by accident. So the boy went to the back end of the grocery and turned on the faucet of the molasses barrel.

“That’ll make a nice mess when Time starts the molasses running all over the floor,” said Jim, with a laugh.

A little further down the street was a barber shop, and sitting in the barber’s chair Jim saw the man that all the boys declared was the “meanest man in town.” He certainly did not like the boys and the boys knew it. The barber was in the act of shampooing this person when Time was captured. Jim ran to the drug store, and, getting a bottle of mucilage, he returned and poured it over the ruffled hair of the unpopular citizen.

“That’ll probably surprise him when he wakes up,” thought Jim.

Nearby was the schoolhouse. Jim entered it and found that only a few of the pupils were assembled. But the teacher sat at his desk, stern and frowning as usual.

Taking a piece of chalk, Jim marked upon the blackboard in big letters the following words:

“Every scholar is requested to yell the minute he enters the room. He will also please throw his books at the teacher’s head. Signed, Prof. Sharpe.”

“That ought to raise a nice rumpus,” murmured the mischiefmaker, as he walked away.

On the corner stood Policeman Mulligan, talking with old Miss Scrapple, the worst gossip in town, who always delighted in saying something disagreeable about her neighbors. Jim thought this opportunity was too good to lose. So he took off the policeman’s cap and brass-buttoned coat and put them on Miss Scrapple, while the lady’s feathered and ribboned hat he placed jauntily upon the policeman’s head.

The effect was so comical that the boy laughed aloud, and as a good many people were standing near the corner Jim decided that Miss Scrapple and Officer Mulligan would create a sensation when Time started upon his travels.

Then the young cowboy remembered his prisoner, and, walking back to the hitching post, he came within three feet of it and saw Father Time still standing patiently within the toils of the lasso. He looked angry and annoyed, however, and growled out:

“Well, when do you intend to release me?”

“I’ve been thinking about that ugly scythe of yours,” said Jim.

“What about it?” asked Father Time.

“Perhaps if I let you go you’ll swing it at me the first thing, to be revenged,” replied the boy.

Father Time gave him a severe look, but said:

“I’ve known boys for thousands of years, and of course I know they’re mischievous and reckless. But I like boys, because they grow up to be men and people in my world. Now, if a man had caught me by accident, as you did, I could have scared him into letting me go instantly; but boys are harder to scare. I don’t know as I blame you. I was a boy myself, long ago, when the world was new. But surely you’ve had enough fun with me by this time, and now I hope you’ll show the respect that is due to old age. Let me go, and in return I will promise to forget all about my capture. The incident won’t do much harm, anyway, for no one will ever know that Time has halted the last three hours or so.”

“All right,” said Jim, cheerfully, “since you’ve promised not to mow me down, I’ll let you go.” But he had a notion some people in the town would suspect Time had stopped when they returned to life.

He carefully unwound the rope from the old man, who, when he was free, at once shouldered his scythe, rearranged his white robe and nodded farewell.

The next moment he had disappeared, and with a rustle and rumble and roar of activity the world came to life again and jogged along as it always had before.

Jim wound up his lasso, mounted the butcher's horse and rode slowly down the street.

Loud screams came from the corner, where a great crowd of people quickly assembled. From his seat on the horse Jim saw Miss Scrapple, attired in the policeman's uniform, angrily shaking her fists in Mulligan's face, while the officer was furiously stamping upon the lady's hat, which he had torn from his own head amidst the jeers of the crowd.

As he rode past the schoolhouse he heard a tremendous chorus of yells, and knew Prof. Sharpe was having a hard time quelling the riot caused by the sign on the blackboard.

Through the window of the barber shop he saw the "mean man" frantically belaboring the barber with a hair brush, while his hair stood up stiff as bayonets in all directions. And the grocer ran out of his door and yelled "Fire!" while his shoes left a track of molasses wherever he stepped.

Jim's heart was filled with joy. He was fairly reveling in the excitement he had caused when some one caught his leg and pulled him from the horse.

"What're ye doin' hear, ye rascal?" cried the butcher, angrily; "didn't ye promise to put that beast inter Plympton's pasture? An' now I find ye ridin' the poor nag around like a gentleman o' leisure!"

"That's a fact," said Jim, with surprise; "I clean forgot about the horse!"

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14. THE FOURTH WIFE IS THE WISEST

Book: *Folk Tales from the Himalayas*
Author: Alice Elizabeth Dracott
Origin: Nepali

There was a Bunniah who had an only son, who had married four wives; of these, three were fools, and only one was wise.

For some reason the Rajah of that country got angry with the Bunniah, and said that he and all his family were to go away, for he would not permit them to remain in his kingdom any longer; also, they were not to take away any of their jewels or possessions with them, except such things as they were wearing at the time.

Hearing this, the youngest of the four wives asked if she might be allowed to bake some bread, to take for them to eat on the journey.

This was permitted, and, in kneading the flour, she dropped four very valuable and beautiful rubies into it, and then having cooked the bread, showed it to the people as she left, and said: "See, I take nothing with me except this bread."

They journeyed far away into another country, and were very poor. Then the Bunniah said to his youngest daughter-in-law: “Daughter, what are we to do to live? We have no money and no clothes.”

She was silent for a long time, and then said: “We must sell our jewels, but in the meantime take this”—giving him one of the rubies—“and sell it.”

Now this ruby was worth a very great deal of money, and the Bunniah took it gratefully, thinking all the time what a wise girl his daughter-in-law was, to think of bringing it as she had done.

He then went to a rich merchant, who in reality was not a merchant at all, but a clever thief, and who, as soon as he set eyes on the ruby, knew it to be a valuable one, and determined to have it.

“Go,” said he to one of his servants, “and bring me a basket full of money that I may pay for this valuable stone;” and as the servant left, he turned to the Bunniah, offering him a chair, and said: “Sit down, friend.”

Now this chair was a specially prepared one, being kept by the thief as a trap for the unwary. The seat was of raw cotton, under which was a great hole into which anybody who sat on the chair would fall. It was carefully covered over with a piece of clean white cloth, so that nothing was noticed.

On it the poor Bunniah sat, and as the soft cotton gave way under him, he found himself in the hole, over which the thief carefully placed a great stone and left him, while he quietly pocketed the ruby.

As the Bunniah did not return to his home for many days, his daughter-in-law called her husband, and gave him the second ruby. “Go, seek thy father,” said she; “and if you find him, bring me back this ruby, and buy food and clothes with one you will find with him.”

The young man searched high and low for his father, but, not finding him, he decided to sell his ruby, and by chance went to the same merchant who had robbed the Bunniah.

The thief treated him in exactly the same way, and, after having stolen the ruby, trapped him into the same hole as his father.

Finding that neither husband nor father returned, the woman sold her jewels, and bought clothes and food for the rest of the family; but for herself she secretly bought the outfit of a palace guard and resolved to work in that capacity. So she presented herself at the King’s Court, and he, taking a fancy to the handsome face of the young man (for she was disguised as such), gave her employment.

Living in the jungles near that place was a terrible “Rakhas,” or evil spirit, and that night, while on duty, the new guard was startled by a roar like that of a tiger; but as soon as the “Rakhas” perceived him, it assumed the form of a woman, and coming up, said weeping: “The Rajah has hanged my husband, and I wish to see him once more, but cannot reach because the gallows are high.”

“Climb upon my back,” said the guard.

The woman did so, but as soon as she got near enough she tried to attack her supposed husband.

On this the young guard drew her sword and knocked the woman to the ground, and as she fell, being enchanted, she disappeared, but a silver anklet from one of her feet was left behind.

Next morning the guard carried the anklet to the King, and told him what had happened, and how the strange woman had disappeared as he struck her with his sword.

The King was much pleased at the youth’s bravery, and also with the silver anklet, which was full of precious stones of great value, and, turning to the guard, he said: “Ask what you will, and I will give it to you, even if you ask my daughter in marriage.”

The man replied: “O King, I ask nothing; but grant me, I pray you, control over the entire bazaar, that I may kill, banish, punish, or release, and do as I like with the people who dwell there.”

The King granted this request, and having discovered the thief in the supposed merchant, the guard went to him and boldly demanded the release of his father and son.

But the thief denied all knowledge of the affair.

Then the young guard entered the shop, and, lifting up the great stone, beheld the two unfortunate men, who were nearly starved to death.

Having released them, he took the thief to the King, and told him what had happened. After they had banished the wicked thief from the kingdom, the young guard changed his clothes and appeared as a woman.

The King was greatly surprised, but so pleased at all she had done, that he called her his “daughter,” and gave her husband, father, and other relations money and goods, so that they lived in contentment for the rest of their lives.

15. HANSEL AND GRETHEL

Book: *Fairy Tales Every Child Should Know*
Editor: Hamilton Wright Mabie
Origin: German

Near the borders of a large forest dwelt in olden times a poor wood-cutter, who had two children—a boy named Hansel, and his sister, Grethel. They had very little to live upon, and once when there was a dreadful season of scarcity in the land, the poor wood-cutter could not earn sufficient to supply their daily food.

One evening, after the children were gone to bed, the parents sat talking together over their sorrow, and the poor husband sighed, and said to his wife, who was not the mother of his children, but their stepmother, "What will become of us, for I cannot earn enough to support myself and you, much less the children? what shall we do with them, for they must not starve?"

"I know what to do, husband," she replied; "early to-morrow morning we will take the children for a walk across the forest and leave them in the thickest part; they will never find the way home again, you may depend, and then we shall only have to work for ourselves."

"No, wife," said the man, "that I will never do. How could I have the heart to leave my children all alone in the wood, where the wild beasts would come quickly and devour them?"

"Oh, you fool," replied the stepmother, "if you refuse to do this, you know we must all four perish with hunger; you may as well go and cut the wood for our coffins." And after this she let him have no peace till he became quite worn out, and could not sleep for hours, but lay thinking in sorrow about his children.

The two children, who also were too hungry to sleep, heard all that their stepmother had said to their father. Poor little Grethel wept bitter tears as she listened, and said to her brother, "What is going to happen to us, Hansel?"

"Hush, Grethel," he whispered, "don't be so unhappy; I know what to do."

Then they lay quite still till their parents were asleep.

As soon as it was quiet, Hansel got up, put on his little coat, unfastened the door, and slipped out. The moon shone brightly, and the white pebble stones which lay before the cottage door glistened like new silver money. Hansel stooped and picked up as many of the pebbles as he could stuff in his little coat pockets. He then went back to Grethel and said, "Be comforted, dear little sister, and sleep in peace; heaven will take care of us." Then he laid himself down again in bed, and slept till the day broke.

As soon as the sun rose, the stepmother came and woke the two children, and said, "Get up, you lazy bones, and come into the woods with me to gather wood for the fire." Then she gave each of them a piece of bread, and said, "You must keep that to eat for your dinner, and don't quarrel over it, for you will get nothing more."

Grethel took the bread under her charge, for Hansel's pockets were full of pebbles. Then the stepmother led them a long way into the forest. They had gone but a very short distance when Hansel looked back at the house, and this he did again and again.

At last his stepmother said, "Why do you keep staying behind and looking back so?"

"Oh, mother," said the boy, "I can see my little white cat sitting on the roof of the house, and I am sure she is crying for me."

"Nonsense," she replied; "that is not your cat; it is the morning sun shining on the chimney-pot."

Hansel had seen no cat, but he stayed behind every time to drop a white pebble from his pocket on the ground as they walked.

As soon as they reached a thick part of the wood, their stepmother said:

"Come, children, gather some wood, and I will make a fire, for it is very cold here."

Then Hansel and Grethel raised quite a high heap of brushwood which soon blazed up into a bright fire, and the woman said to them:

"Sit down here, children, and rest, while I go and find your father, who is cutting wood in the forest; when we have finished our work, we will come again and fetch you."

Hansel and Grethel seated themselves by the fire, and when noon arrived they each ate the piece of bread which their stepmother had given them for their dinner; and as long as they heard the strokes of the axe they felt safe, for they believed that their father was working near them. But it was not an axe they heard—only a branch which still hung on a withered tree, and was moved up and down by the wind. At last, when they had been sitting there a long time, the children's eyes became heavy with fatigue, and they fell fast asleep. When they awoke it was dark night, and poor Grethel began to cry, and said, "Oh, how shall we get out of the wood?"

But Hansel comforted her. "Don't fear," he said; "let us wait a little while till the moon rises, and then we shall easily find our way home."

Very soon the full moon rose, and then Hansel took his little sister by the hand, and the white pebble stones, which glittered like newly-coined money in the moonlight, and which Hansel had dropped as he walked, pointed out the way. They walked all the night through, and did not reach their father's house till break of day.

They knocked at the door, and when their stepmother opened it, she exclaimed: "You naughty children, why have you been staying so long in the forest? We thought you were never coming back," But their father was overjoyed to see them, for it grieved him to the heart to think that they had been left alone in the woods.

Not long after this there came another time of scarcity and want in every house, and the children heard their stepmother talking after they were in bed. "The times are as bad as ever," she said; "we have just half a loaf left, and when that is gone all love will be at an end. The children must go away; we will take them deeper into the forest this time, and they will not be able to find their way home as they did before; it is the only plan to save ourselves from starvation." But the husband felt heavy at heart, for he thought it was better to share the last morsel with his children.

His wife would listen to nothing he said, but continued to reproach him, and as he had given way to her the first time, he could not refuse to do so now. The children were awake, and heard all the conversation; so, as soon as their parents slept, Hansel got up, intending to go out and gather some more of the bright pebbles to let fall as he walked, that they might point out the way home; but his stepmother had locked the door, and he could not open it. When he went back to his bed he told his little sister not to fret, but to go to sleep in peace, for he was sure they would be taken care of.

Early the next morning the stepmother came and pulled the children out of bed, and, when they were dressed, gave them each a piece of bread for their dinners, smaller than they had had before, and then they started on their way to the wood.

As they walked, Hansel, who had the bread in his pocket, broke off little crumbs, and stopped every now and then to drop one, turning round as if he was looking back at his home.

"Hansel," said the woman, "what are you stopping for in that way? Come along directly."

"I saw my pigeon sitting on the roof, and he wants to say good-bye to me," replied the boy.

"Nonsense," she said; "that is not your pigeon; it is only the morning sun shining on the chimney-top."

But Hansel did not look back any more; he only dropped pieces of bread behind him, as they walked through the wood. This time they went on till they reached the thickest and densest part of the forest, where they had never been before in all their lives. Again they gathered brushwood, of which the stepmother made up a large fire. Then she said, "Remain here, children, and rest, while I go to help your father, who is cutting wood in the forest; when you feel tired, you can lie down and sleep for a little while, and we will come and fetch you in the evening, when your father has finished his work."

So the children remained alone till mid-day, and then Grethel shared her piece of bread with Hansel, for he had scattered his own all along the road as they walked. After this they slept for

awhile, and the evening drew on; but no one came to fetch the poor children. When they awoke it was quite dark, and poor little Grethel was afraid; but Hansel comforted her, as he had done before, by telling her they need only wait till the moon rose. "You know, little sister," he said, "that I have thrown breadcrumbs all along the road we came, and they will easily point out the way home."

But when they went out of the thicket into the moonlight they found no breadcrumbs, for the numerous birds which inhabited the trees of the forest had picked them all up.

Hansel tried to hide his fear when he made this sad discovery, and said to his sister, "Cheer up, Grethel; I dare say we shall find our way home without the crumbs. Let us try." But this they found impossible. They wandered about the whole night, and the next day from morning till evening; but they could not get out of the wood, and were so hungry that had it not been for a few berries which they picked they must have starved.

At last they were so tired that their poor little legs could carry them no farther; so they laid themselves down under a tree and went to sleep. When they awoke it was the third morning since they had left their father's house, and they were determined to try once more to find their way home; but it was no use, they only went still deeper into the wood, and knew that if no help came they must starve.

About noon, they saw a beautiful snow-white bird sitting on the branch of a tree, and singing so beautifully that they stood still to listen. When he had finished his song, he spread out his wings and flew on before them. The children followed him, till at last they saw at a distance a small house; and the bird flew and perched on the roof.

But how surprised were the boy and girl, when they came nearer, to find that the house was built of gingerbread, and ornamented with sweet cakes and tarts, while the window was formed of barley-sugar. "Oh!" exclaimed Hansel, "let us stop here and have a splendid feast. I will have a piece from the roof first, Grethel; and you can eat some of the barley-sugar window, it tastes so nice." Hansel reached up on tiptoe, and breaking off a piece of the gingerbread, he began to eat with all his might, for he was very hungry. Grethel seated herself on the doorstep, and began munching away at the cakes of which it was made. Presently a voice came out of the cottage:

"Munching, crunching, munching,
Who's eating up my house?"

Then answered the children:

"The wind, the wind,
Only the wind,"

and went on eating as if they never meant to leave off, without a suspicion of wrong. Hansel, who found the cake on the roof taste very good, broke off another large piece, and Grethel had

just taken out a whole pane of barley-sugar from the window, and seated herself to eat it, when the door opened, and a strange-looking old woman came out leaning on a stick.

Hansel and Grethel were so frightened that they let fall what they held in their hands. The old woman shook her head at them, and said, "Ah, you dear children, who has brought you here? Come in, and stay with me for a little while, and there shall be no harm happening to you." She seized them both by the hands as she spoke, and led them into the house. She gave them for supper plenty to eat and drink—milk and pancakes and sugar, apples and nuts; and when evening came, Hansel and Grethel were shown two beautiful little beds with white curtains, and they lay down in them and thought they were in heaven.

But although the old woman pretended to be friendly, she was a wicked witch, who had her house built of gingerbread on purpose to entrap children. When once they were in her power, she would feed them well till they got fat, and then kill them and cook them for her dinner; and this she called her feast-day. Fortunately the witch had weak eyes, and could not see very well; but she had a very keen scent, as wild animals have, and could easily discover when human beings were near. As Hansel and Grethel had approached her cottage, she laughed to herself maliciously, and said, with a sneer: "I have them now; they shall not escape from me again!"

Early in the morning, before the children were awake, she was up, standing by their beds; and when she saw how beautiful they looked in their sleep, with their round rosy cheeks, she muttered to herself, "What nice tit-bits they will be!" Then she laid hold of Hansel with her rough hand, dragged him out of bed, and led him to a little cage which had a lattice-door, and shut him in; he might scream as much as he would, but it was all useless.

After this she went back to Grethel, and, shaking her roughly till she woke, cried: "Get up and draw some water, that I may boil something good for your brother, who is shut up in a cage outside till he gets fat; and then I shall cook him and eat him!" When Grethel heard this she began to cry bitterly; but it was all useless, she was obliged to do as the wicked witch told her.

For poor Hansel's breakfast the best of everything was cooked; but Grethel had nothing for herself but a crab's claw. Every morning the old woman would go out to the little cage, and say: "Hansel, stick out your finger, that I may feel if you are fat enough for eating." But Hansel, who knew how dim her old eyes were, always stuck a bone through the bars of his cage, which she thought was his finger, for she could not see; and when she felt how thin it was, she wondered very much why he did not get fat.

However, as the weeks went on, and Hansel seemed not to get any fatter, she became impatient, and said she could not wait any longer. "Go, Grethel," she cried to the maiden, "be quick and draw water; Hansel may be fat or lean, I don't care, to-morrow morning I mean to kill him, and cook him!"

Oh! how the poor little sister grieved when she was forced to draw the water; and, as the tears rolled down her cheeks, she exclaimed: "It would have been better to be eaten by wild beasts, or to have been starved to death in the woods; then we should have died together!"

"Stop your crying!" cried the old woman; "it is not of the least use, no one will come to help you."

Early in the morning Grethel was obliged to go out and fill the great pot with water, and hang it over the fire to boil. As soon as this was done, the old woman said, "We will bake some bread first; I have made the oven hot, and the dough is already kneaded." Then she dragged poor little Grethel up to the oven door, under which the flames were burning fiercely, and said: "Creep in there, and see if it is hot enough yet to bake the bread." But if Grethel had obeyed her, she would have shut the poor child in and baked her for dinner, instead of boiling Hansel.

Grethel, however, guessed what she wanted to do, and said, "I don't know how to get in through that narrow door."

"Stupid goose," said the old woman, "why, the oven door is quite large enough for me; just look, I could get in myself." As she spoke she stepped forward and pretended to put her head in the oven.

A sudden thought gave Grethel unusual strength; she started forward, gave the old woman a push which sent her right into the oven, then she shut the iron door and fastened the bolt.

Oh! how the old witch did howl, it was quite horrible to hear her. But Grethel ran away, and therefore she was left to burn, just as she had left many poor little children to burn. And how quickly Grethel ran to Hansel, opened the door of his cage, and cried, "Hansel, Hansel, we are free; the old witch is dead." He flew like a bird out of his cage at these words as soon as the door was opened, and the children were so overjoyed that they ran into each other's arms, and kissed each other with the greatest love.

And now that there was nothing to be afraid of, they went back into the house, and while looking round the old witch's room, they saw an old oak chest, which they opened, and found it full of pearls and precious stones. "These are better than pebbles," said Hansel; and he filled his pockets as full as they would hold.

"I will carry some home too," said Grethel, and she held out her apron, which held quite as much as Hansel's pockets.

"We will go now," he said, "and get away as soon as we can from this enchanted forest."

They had been walking for nearly two hours when they came to a large sheet of water.

"What shall we do now?" said the boy. "We cannot get across, and there is no bridge of any sort."

"Oh! here comes a boat," cried Grethel, but she was mistaken; it was only a white duck which came swimming towards the children. "Perhaps she will help us across if we ask her," said the child; and she sung, "Little duck, do help poor Hansel and Grethel; there is not a bridge, nor a boat—will you let us sail across on your white back?"

The good-natured duck came near the bank as Grethel spoke, so close indeed that Hansel could seat himself and wanted to take his little sister on his lap, but she said, "No, we shall be too heavy for the kind duck; let her take us over one at a time."

The good creature did as the children wished; she carried Grethel over first, and then came back for Hansel. And then how happy the children were to find themselves in a part of the wood which they remembered quite well, and as they walked on, the more familiar it became, till at last they caught sight of their father's house. Then they began to run, and, bursting into the room, threw themselves into their father's arms.

Poor man, he had not had a moment's peace since the children had been left alone in the forest; he was full of joy at finding them safe and well again, and now they had nothing to fear, for their wicked stepmother was dead.

But how surprised the poor wood-cutter was when Grethel opened and shook her little apron to see the glittering pearls and precious stones scattered about the room, while Hansel drew handful after handful from his pockets. From this moment all his care and sorrow was at an end, and the father lived in happiness with his children till his death.