Traditional Stories

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The Four Friends

This is a beautiful day. The sun is shining. Little Black Horse is walking in the fields. He sees a big red apple in a beautiful tree.

"Oh,' says Little Black Horse, "what a beautiful red apple. I would really like to eat the beautiful red apple."

So, Little Black Horse tries to take the apple, but it is impossible. "Hmm," says Little Black Horse, "I'm going to have to look for my friend, the sheep."

The horse gallops, and gallops to the little white sheep's house.

Knock, knock, knock!

"Who is it?" says Little White Sheep.
"It's me, Little Black Horse. Please come and help me."
"Yes, I'll come now!"

So the two friends returned to the apple tree. The sheep sees the beautiful red apple. "Ahhh," says Little White Sheep, "what a beautiful red apple. I would really like to eat the beautiful red apple."
"Quick, quick," says Little Black Horse, "climb on my back."

So the sheep climbs on the horse's back. He tries to take the apple, but it is impossible. "Hmm," says Little White Sheep, "I'm going to have to look for my friend, the rabbit."

The sheep runs, runs to the little grey rabbit's house.

Knock, knock, knock.

"Who is it?" says Little Grey Rabbit.
"It's me, Little White Sheep. Please come and help me."
"Yes, I'll come now!"

So the two friends returned to the apple tree. The rabbit sees the beautiful red apple. "Ohhh," says Little Grey Rabbit, "what a beautiful red apple. I would really like to eat the beautiful red apple."
"Quick, quick," says the little sheep, "climb on my head."

So the sheep climbs on the horse's back, and the rabbit climbs on the sheep's head. He tries to take the apple, but it's impossible. "Hmm," says the Little Grey Rabbit, "I'm going to have to look for my friend, the mouse."

Rabbit hops, hops to the little brown mouse's house.

Knock, knock, knock.

"Who is it?" says Little Brown Mouse.
"It's me, Little Grey Rabbit. Please come and help me."
"Yes, I'll come now!"

So the two friends returned to the apple tree. The mouse sees the beautiful red apple. "Ohhh," says Little Brown Mouse, "what a beautiful red apple. I would really like to eat the beautiful red apple."
"Quick, quick," says Little Grey Rabbit, "climb on my nose."

So the sheep climbs on the horse's back, the rabbit climb's on the sheep's head, and the mouse climbs on the rabbit's nose. She reaches out her hand, and takes the beautiful red apple.

"Hurrah," cries the Little Brown Mouse, and she gets down.
"Hurrah," cries the Little Grey Rabbit, and he gets down.
"Hurrah," cries the Little White Sheep, and he gets down.
"Hurrah", cries the Little Black Horse.

Crunch, crunch, crunch, crunch. The four friends eat the beautiful red apple. Yum!

Then, Little Black Horse gallops home. "Goodbye!"
Then, Little White Sheep runs home. "Goodbye!"
Then, Little Grey Rabbit hops home. "Goodbye!"
And Little Brown Mouse scurries home. "Goodbye!"

Sleeping Beauty

A king and queen once upon a time reigned in a country a great way off, where there were in those days fairies. Now this king and queen had plenty of money, and plenty of fine clothes to wear, and plenty of good things to eat and drink, and a coach to ride out in every day. But, though they had been married many years, they had no children, and this grieved them very much indeed.

But one day, as the queen was walking by the side of the river at the bottom of the garden, she saw a poor little fish that had thrown itself out of the water and lay gasping and nearly dead on the bank. Then the queen took pity on the little fish, and threw it back again into the river.

And before it swam away, it lifted its head out of the water, and said, “I know what your wish is, and it shall be fulfilled. In return for your kindness to me, you will soon have a daughter.

What the little fish had foretold soon came to pass, and the queen had a little girl so very beautiful that the king could not cease looking on her for joy. He said he would hold a great feast, and make merry, and show the child to all the land.

So he asked his kinsmen and nobles, and friends and neighbours, but the queen said, “I will have the fairies also, that they might be kind and good to our little daughter.”

Now, there were thirteen fairies in the kingdom, but, as the king and queen only had twelve golden dishes for them to eat out of, they were forced to leave one of the fairies without asking her.

So, twelve fairies came, each with a high red cap on her head and red shoes with high heels on her feet and a long, white wand in her hand. After the feast was over, they gathered round in a ring, and gave all their best gifts to the little princess. One gave her goodness, another beauty, another riches, and so on ‘til she had all that was good in the world.

Just as eleven of them had done blessing her, a great noise was heard in the courtyard, and word was brought that the thirteenth fairy was come with a black cap on her head, and black shoes on her feet, and a broomstick in her hand. Presently, she came into the dining hall.

Now, as she had not been asked to the feast, she was very angry and scolded the king and queen very much, and set to work 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 of the friendly fairies, who had not yet given her gift, came forward and said that the evil wish must be fulfilled, but that she could soften its mischief. So her gift was that the king’s daughter, when the spindle wounded her, should not really die, but should only fall asleep for a hundred years.

However, the king hoped still to save his dear child altogether from the threatened evil. So he ordered that all the spindles in the kingdom should be bought up and burnt. But all the gifts of the first eleven fairies were in the meantime fulfilled. For the princess was so beautiful and well-behaved and good and wise, that everyone who knew her, loved her.

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 looked at all the rooms and chambers until, 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. 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 she nodded her head, humming a tune to the buzz of the wheel.
“How prettily that thing turns round,” said the princess, as she took the spindle and began to try to spin. But scarcely had she touched it before the fairy’s prophecy was fulfilled. The spindle wounded her, and she fell down, lifeless on the ground.

However, she was not dead, but had only fallen into a deep sleep. And the king and the queen, who had just come home, and all their court fell asleep too. And the horses slept in the stables, and the dogs in the court, the pigeons in the house top, and the very flies slept upon the walls. Even the fire on the hearth left off blazing, and went to sleep. The jack stopped, and the spit that was turning about with a goose upon it for the king’s dinner stood still. The cook, who was at that moment pulling the kitchen boy by the hair to give him a box on the ears for something he had done amiss, let him go, and both fell asleep. The butler, who was slyly tasting the ale fell asleep with the jug at his lips, and thus everything stood still and slept soundly.

A large hedge of thorns soon grew round the palace, and every year it became higher and thicker, ‘til at last the old palace 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 beauty, so that, from time to time, several kings’ sons came and tried to break through the thicket into the palace.

This, however, none of them could ever do, for the thorns and bushes laid hold of them, as if with hands, and there they stuck fast and died wretchedly. After many, many years, there came a 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 and how a wonderful princess called Sleeping Beauty lay in it asleep with all her court. He told too how he had heard from his grandfather that many princes had come and tried to break through the thicket, but that they had all stuck fast in it and died.

Then, the young prince said, "All this shall not frighten me. I will go and see this sleeping beauty." The old man tried to hinder him, but he was bent on going.

Now, that very day, the hundred years ended. As the prince came to the thicket he saw nothing but beautiful flowering shrubs, through which he went with ease. They shut in after him as thick as ever.

Then he came last to the palace, and, there in the court, lay the dogs asleep. The horses were standing 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 were sleeping on the walls. The spit was standing still, the butler had the jug of ale at his lips, going to drink a draught, and the maid sat with a fowl in her lap ready to be plucked, and the cook in the kitchen was still holding up her hand as if she was going to beat the boy.

Then he went on still farther, and all was so still that he could hear every breath he drew, 'til at last he came to the old tower, and opened the door of the little room in which Sleeping Beauty was. There she lay, fast asleep on a couch by the window.

She looked so beautiful that he could not take his eyes off her, so he stooped down and gave her a kiss. But the moment he kissed her, she

opened her eyes and awoke and she smiled upon him. They went out together, and also the king and queen awoke, and all the court, and they gazed on each other with great wonder.

And the horses shook themselves, and the dogs jumped up and barked, and the pigeons took their heads from under their wings, and looked about, and flew into the fields. The flies on the walls buzzed again, the fire in the kitchen blazed up, round went the jack, and round went the spit with the goose for the king's dinner upon it. The butler finished his draught of ale, and the maid went on plucking the fowl, and the cook gave the boy the box on his ear.

And then the prince and Sleeping Beauty were married, and the wedding feast was given. They lived happily together, all their lives long.

Cinderella

Once upon a time there lived a noble gentleman who had one dear little daughter. Poor child! her own kind mother was dead, and her father, who loved her very dearly, was afraid that his little girl was sometimes lonely. So he married a grand lady who had two daughters of her own, and who, he thought, would be kind and good to his little one. But no sooner did the step-mother enter her new home than she began to show her true character. Her stepdaughter was so much prettier and sweeter than her own children, that she was jealous of her, and gave her all the hard work of the house to do, whilst the two proud sisters spent their time at pleasant parties and entertainments.

The only pleasure the poor child had was to spend her evenings siting in the chimney-corner, resting her weary limbs, and for this reason her sisters mockingly nicknamed her “Cinderella.” The sisters’ fine clothes made Cinderella feel very shabby; but, in her little torn frock and ragged shoes, she was a thousand times more lovely than they.

Now it chanced that the King’s son gave a grand ball, to which he invited all the lords and ladies in the country, and, amongst the rest, Cinderella’s two sisters were asked. How pleased and excited they were when the invitation arrived! For days they could talk of nothing but the clothes they should wear and the grand folk they hoped to meet.

When at last the grand day arrived, Cinderella was kept running about from early till late, decking the sisters, and dressing their hair.
“Don’t you wish you were going to the ball?” said one of them.
“Indeed I do,” sighed the poor little maid. The sisters burst out laughing. “A

pretty spectacle you would be," they said rudely. "Go back to your cinders - they are fit company for rags." Then, stepping carefully into their carriage so that they might not crush their fine clothes, they drove away to the ball.

Cinderella went back to her chimney-corner, and tried not to feel envious, but the tears would gather in the pretty eyes, and trickle down the sorrowful little face.
"What are you crying for, child?" cried a silvery voice.
Cinderella started, and raised her eyes. Who could it be? Then in a moment she knew - it was her fairy godmother!
"I do so want --" began Cinderella; then her sobs stopped her.
"To go to the ball," finished the godmother. Cinderella nodded. "Well, leave off crying - be a good girl, and you shall go. Run quickly into the garden, and bring the largest pumpkin you can find."

Cinderella could not imagine how a pumpkin could help her go to the ball, but her only thought was to obey her godmother. In a few moments she was back again, with a splendid pumpkin. Her godmother scooped out the inside - one touch of the wand, and the pumpkin was a golden coach, lined with white satin.
"Now, godchild, quick - the mouse-trap from the pantry!"
"Here it is, godmother," said Cinderella breathlessly.

One by one six fat sleek mice passed through the trap door. As each appeared, a touch of the wand transformed it into a cream-coloured horse, fit for a queen.
"Now, Cinderella, can you find a coachman?"
"There is a large grey rat in the rat-trap - would he do, godmother?"
"Run and fetch him, child, and then I can judge." So Cinderella ran to fetch the rat, and her godmother said he was just made for a coachman; and I think you would have agreed with her had you seen him a moment later, with

his powdered wig and silk stockings.

Six lizards from behind the pumpkin-frame became six footmen in splendid liveries - you would have thought they had been footmen all their lives. Cinderella was so excited that she could scarcely speak.
“Oh! godmother,” she cried, “it is all so lovely!” Then suddenly she thought of her shabby frock. “There is my white muslin,” she said wistfully, “if - do you think --”

But before Cinderella could realize what was happening, her godmother’s wand tapped her lightly on the shoulder, and in place of the shabby frock, there was a gleam of satin, silver, and pearls.

Ah! who can describe a robe made by the fairies? It was white as snow, and as dazzling; round the hem hung a fringe of diamonds, sparkling like dew-drops in the sunshine. The lace about the throat and arms could only have been spun by fairy spiders. Surely it was a dream! Cinderella put her daintily-gloved hand to her throat, and softly touched the pearls that encircled her neck.

“Come, child,” said the godmother, “or you will be late.”

As Cinderella moved, the firelight shone upon her dainty shoes. “They are of diamonds,” she said.
“No,” answered her godmother, smiling; “they are better than that - they are of glass, made by the fairies. And now, child, go, and enjoy yourself to your heart’s content. Only remember, if you stay at the palace one instant after midnight your coach and servants will vanish, and you will be the grey Cinderella once more!”

A few moments later, the coach dashed into the royal courtyard, the door was flung open, and Cinderella alighted. As she walked slowly up the richly-

carpeted staircase, there was a murmur of admiration, and the King's son hastened to meet her. "Never," said he to himself, "have I seen anyone so lovely!" He led her into the ball-room, where the King, who was much taken with her sweet face and pretty, modest manner, whispered to the Queen that she must surely be a foreign Princess.

The evening passed away in a dream of delight, Cinderella dancing with no one but the handsome young Prince, and being waited on by his own hands at the supper-table. The two sisters could not recognize their ragged little sister in the beautiful and graceful lady to whom the Prince paid so much attention, and felt quite pleased and flattered when she addressed a few words to them.

Presently a clock chimed the three quarters past eleven, and, remembering her godmother's warning, Cinderella at once took leave of the Prince, and, jumping into her coach, was driven rapidly home. Here she found her god-mother waiting to hear all about the ball. "It was lovely," said Cinderella; "and oh! Godmother, there is to be another to-morrow night, and I should so much like to go to it!"

"Then you shall," replied the kind fairy, and kissing her godchild tenderly, she vanished. When the sisters returned from the ball, they found a sleepy little maiden sitting in the chimney-corner, waiting for them.

"How late you are!" cried Cinderella, yawning. "Are you not very tired?"
"Not in the least," they answered, and then they told her what a delightful ball it had been, and how the loveliest Princess in the world had been there, and had spoken to them, and admired their pretty dresses.
"Who was she?" asked Cinderella.
"That we cannot say," answered the sisters. "She would not tell her name, though the Prince begged her to do so on bended knees.
"Dear sister," said Cinderella, "I, too, should like to see the beautiful Prin-

cess. Will you not lend me your old yellow gown, that I may go to the ball to-morrow with you?"
"What!" cried her sister angrily; "lend one of my dresses to a little cinder-maid? Don't talk nonsense, child!"

The next night, the sisters were more particular than ever about their attire, but at last they were dressed, and as soon as their carriage had driven away, the godmother appeared. Once more she touched her godchild with her wand, and in a moment she was arrayed in a beautiful dress that seemed as though it had been woven of moon-beams and sunshine, so radiantly did it gleam and shimmer. She put her arms round her godmother's neck and kissed and thanked her. "Good-bye childie; enjoy yourself, but whatever you do, remember to leave the ball before the clock strikes twelve," the godmother said, and Cinderella promised.

But the hours flew by so happily and so swiftly that Cinderella forgot her promise, until she happened to look at a clock and saw that it was on the stroke of twelve. With a cry of alarm she fled from the room, dropping, in her haste, one of the little glass slippers; but, with the sound of the clock strokes in her ears, she dared not wait to pick it up. The Prince hurried after her in alarm, but when he reached the entrance hall, the beautiful Princess had vanished, and there was no one to be seen but a forlorn little beggar-maid creeping away into the darkness.

Poor little Cinderella! - she hurried home through the dark streets, weary, and overwhelmed with shame.

The fire was out when she reached her home, and there was no godmother waiting to receive her; but she sat down in the chimney-corner to wait her sister's return. When they came in they could speak of nothing but the wonderful things that had happened at the ball.

The beautiful Princess had been there again, they said, but had disappeared just as the clock struck twelve, and though the Prince had searched everywhere for her, he had been unable to find her. “He was quite beside himself with grief,” said the elder sister, “for there is no doubt he hoped to make her his bride.”
Cinderella listened in silence to all they had to say, and, slipping her hand into her pocket, felt that the one remaining glass slipper was safe, for it was the only thing of all her grand apparel that remained to her.

On the following morning there as a great noise of trumpets and drums, and a procession passed through the town, at the head of which rode the King’s son. Behind him came a herald, bearing a velvet cushion, upon which rested a little glass slipper. The herald blew a blast upon the trumpet, and then read a proclamation saying that the King’s son would wed any lady in the land who could fit the slipper upon her foot, if she could produce another to match it.

Of course, the sisters tried to squeeze their feet into the slipper, but it was of no use - they were much too large. Then Cinderella shyly begged that she might try. How the sisters laughed with scorn when the Prince knelt to fit the slipper on the cinder-maid’s foot; but what was their surprise when it slipped on with the greatest ease, and the next moment Cinderella produced the other from her pocket. Once more she stood in the slippers, and once more the sisters saw before them the lovely Princess who was to be the Prince’s bride. For at the touch of the magic shoes, the little grey frock disappeared for ever, and in place of it she wore the beautiful robe the fairy godmother had given to her.

The sisters hung their heads with sorrow and vexation; but kind little Cinderella put her arms around their necks, kissed them, and forgave them for all their unkindness, so that they could not help but love her.

The Prince could not bear to part from his little love again, so he carried her back to the palace in his grand coach, and they were married that very day. Cinderella’s step sisters were present at the feast, but in the place of honour sat the fairy godmother.

So the poor little cinder-maid married the Prince, and in time they came to be King and Queen, and lived happily ever after.

The Frog Prince

One fine evening a young princess put on her bonnet and clogs, and went out to take a walk by herself in a wood; and when she came to a cool spring of water, that rose in the midst of it, she sat herself down to rest a while. Now she had a golden ball in her hand, which was her favourite plaything; and she was always tossing it up into the air, and catching it again as it fell. After a time she threw it up so high that she missed catching it as it fell; and the ball bounded away, and rolled along upon the ground, till at last it fell down into the spring. The princess looked into the spring after her ball, but it was very deep, so deep that she could not see the bottom of it. Then she began to bewail her loss, and said, ‘Alas! if I could only get my ball again, I would give all my fine clothes and jewels, and everything that I have in the world.’

Whilst she was speaking, a frog put its head out of the water, and said, ‘Princess, why do you weep so bitterly?’ ‘Alas!’ said she, ‘what can you do for me, you nasty frog? My golden ball has fallen into the spring.’ The frog said, ‘I want not your pearls, and jewels, and fine clothes; but if you will love me, and let me live with you and eat from off your golden plate, and sleep upon your bed, I will bring you your ball again.’ ‘What nonsense,’ thought the princess, ‘this silly frog is talking! He can never even get out of the spring to visit me, though he may be able to get my ball for me, and therefore I will tell him he shall have what he asks.’ So she said to the frog, ‘Well, if you will bring me my ball, I will do all you ask.’ Then the frog put his head down, and dived deep under the water; and after a little while he came up again, with the ball in his mouth, and threw it on the edge of the spring. As soon as the young princess saw her ball, she ran to pick it up; and she was so overjoyed to have it in her hand again, that she never thought of the frog, but ran home with it as fast as she could. The frog called after her, ‘Stay, princess, and take me with you as you said,’ But she did not stop to hear a word.

The next day, just as the princess had sat down to dinner, she heard a strange noise--tap, tap--plash, plash--as if something was coming up the marble staircase: and soon afterwards there was a gentle knock at the door, and a little voice cried out and said:

‘Open the door, my princess dear,
Open the door to thy true love here!
And mind the words that thou and I said
By the fountain cool, in the greenwood shade.’

Then the princess ran to the door and opened it, and there she saw the frog, whom she had quite forgotten. At this sight she was sadly frightened, and shutting the door as fast as she could came back to her seat. The king, her father, seeing that something had frightened her, asked her what was the matter. ‘There is a nasty frog,’ said she, ‘at the door, that lifted my ball for me out of the spring this morning: I told him that he should live with me here, thinking that he could never get out of the spring; but there he is at the door, and he wants to come in.’

While she was speaking the frog knocked again at the door, and said:

‘Open the door, my princess dear,
Open the door to thy true love here!
And mind the words that thou and I said
By the fountain cool, in the greenwood shade.’

Then the king said to the young princess, ‘As you have given your word you must keep it; so go and let him in.’ She did so, and the frog hopped into the room, and then straight on--tap, tap--plash, plash--from the bottom of the room to the top, till he came up close to the table where the princess sat. ‘Pray lift me upon your chair,’ said he to the princess, ‘and let me sit next to

you.' As soon as she had done this, the frog said, 'Put your plate nearer to me, that I may eat out of it.' This she did, and when he had eaten as much as he could, he said, 'Now I am tired; carry me upstairs, and put me into your bed.' And the princess, though very unwilling, took him up in her hand, and put him upon the pillow of her own bed, where he slept all night long. As soon as it was light he jumped up, hopped downstairs, and went out of the house. 'Now, then,' thought the princess, 'at last he is gone, and I shall be troubled with him no more.'

But she was mistaken; for when night came again she heard the same tapping at the door; and the frog came once more, and said:

'Open the door, my princess dear,
Open the door to thy true love here!
And mind the words that thou and I said
By the fountain cool, in the greenwood shade.'

And when the princess opened the door the frog came in, and slept upon her pillow as before, till the morning broke. And the third night he did the same. But when the princess awoke on the following morning she was astonished to see, instead of the frog, a handsome prince, gazing on her with the most beautiful eyes she had ever seen, and standing at the head of her bed.

He told her that he had been enchanted by a spiteful fairy, who had changed him into a frog; and that he had been fated so to abide till some princess should take him out of the spring, and let him eat from her plate, and sleep upon her bed for three nights. 'You,' said the prince, 'have broken his cruel charm, and now I have nothing to wish for but that you should go with me into my father's kingdom, where I will marry you, and love you as long as you live.'

The young princess, you may be sure, was not long in saying 'Yes' to all this;

and as they spoke a gay coach drove up, with eight beautiful horses, decked with plumes of feathers and a golden harness; and behind the coach rode the prince’s servant, faithful Heinrich, who had bewailed the misfortunes of his dear master during his enchantment so long and so bitterly, that his heart had well-nigh burst.

They then took leave of the king, and got into the coach with eight horses, and all set out, full of joy and merriment, for the prince’s kingdom, which they reached safely; and there they lived happily a great many years.

Hansel and Gretel

In a great forest dwelt a poor wood-cutter with his wife and his two children. The boy was called Hansel and the girl Gretel. He had little to bite and to break, and once when great dearth fell on the land, he could no longer procure even daily bread. Now when he thought over this by night in his bed, and tossed about in his anxiety, he groaned and said to his wife: ‘What is to become of us? How are we to feed our poor children, when we no longer have anything even for ourselves?’ ‘I’ll tell you what, husband,’ answered the woman, ‘early tomorrow morning we will take the children out into the forest to where it is the thickest; there we will light a fire for them, and give each of them one more piece of bread, and then we will go to our work and leave them alone. They will not find the way home again, and we shall be rid of them.’ ‘No, wife,’ said the man, ‘I will not do that; how can I bear to leave my children alone in the forest?--the wild animals would soon come and tear them to pieces.’ ‘O, you fool!’ said she, ‘then we must all four die of hunger, you may as well plane the planks for our coffins,’ and she left him no peace until he consented. ‘But I feel very sorry for the poor children, all the same,’ said the man.

The two children had also not been able to sleep for hunger, and had heard what their stepmother had said to their father. Gretel wept bitter tears, and said to Hansel: ‘Now all is over with us.’ ‘Be quiet, Gretel,’ said Hansel, ‘do not distress yourself, I will soon find a way to help us.’ And when the old folks had fallen asleep, he got up, put on his little coat, opened the door below, and crept outside. The moon shone brightly, and the white pebbles which lay in front of the house glittered like real silver pennies. Hansel stooped and stuffed the little pocket of his coat with as many as he could get in. Then he went back and said to Gretel: ‘Be comforted, dear little sister, and sleep in peace, God will not forsake us,’ and he lay down again in

his bed. When day dawned, but before the sun had risen, the woman came and awoke the two children, saying: ‘Get up, you sluggards! we are going into the forest to fetch wood.’ She gave each a little piece of bread, and said: ‘There is something for your dinner, but do not eat it up before then, for you will get nothing else.’ Gretel took the bread under her apron, as Hansel had the pebbles in his pocket. Then they all set out together on the way to the forest. When they had walked a short time, Hansel stood still and peeped back at the house, and did so again and again. His father said: ‘Hansel, what are you looking at there and staying behind for? Pay attention, and do not forget how to use your legs.’ ‘Ah, father,’ said Hansel, ‘I am looking at my little white cat, which is sitting up on the roof, and wants to say goodbye to me.’ The wife said: ‘Fool, that is not your little cat, that is the morning sun which is shining on the chimneys.’ Hansel, however, had not been looking back at the cat, but had been constantly throwing one of the white pebble-stones out of his pocket on the road.

When they had reached the middle of the forest, the father said: ‘Now, children, pile up some wood, and I will light a fire that you may not be cold.’ Hansel and Gretel gathered brushwood together, as high as a little hill. The brushwood was lighted, and when the flames were burning very high, the woman said: ‘Now, children, lay yourselves down by the fire and rest, we will go into the forest and cut some wood. When we have done, we will come back and fetch you away.’

Hansel and Gretel sat by the fire, and when noon came, each ate a little piece of bread, and as they heard the strokes of the wood-axe they believed that their father was near. It was not the axe, however, but a branch which he had fastened to a withered tree which the wind was blowing backwards and forwards. And as they had been sitting such a long time, their eyes closed with fatigue, and they fell fast asleep. When at last they awoke, it was already dark night. Gretel began to cry and said: ‘How are we to get out of the forest now?’ But Hansel comforted her and said: ‘Just wait a little, until

the moon has risen, and then we will soon find the way.' And when the full moon had risen, Hansel took his little sister by the hand, and followed the pebbles which shone like newly-coined silver pieces, and showed them the way.

They walked the whole night long, and by break of day came once more to their father's house. They knocked at the door, and when the woman opened it and saw that it was Hansel and Gretel, she said: 'You naughty children, why have you slept so long in the forest?--we thought you were never coming back at all!' The father, however, rejoiced, for it had cut him to the heart to leave them behind alone.

Not long afterwards, there was once more great dearth throughout the land, and the children heard their mother saying at night to their father: 'Everything is eaten again, we have one half loaf left, and that is the end. The children must go, we will take them farther into the wood, so that they will not find their way out again; there is no other means of saving ourselves!' The man's heart was heavy, and he thought: 'It would be better for you to share the last mouthful with your children.' The woman, however, would listen to nothing that he had to say, but scolded and reproached him. He who says A must say B, likewise, and as he had yielded the first time, he had to do so a second time also.

The children, however, were still awake and had heard the conversation. When the old folks were asleep, Hansel again got up, and wanted to go out and pick up pebbles as he had done before, but the woman had locked the door, and Hansel could not get out. Nevertheless he comforted his little sister, and said: 'Do not cry, Gretel, go to sleep quietly, the good God will help us.'

Early in the morning came the woman, and took the children out of their beds. Their piece of bread was given to them, but it was still smaller than the

time before. On the way into the forest Hansel crumbled his in his pocket, and often stood still and threw a morsel on the ground. ‘Hansel, why do you stop and look round?’ said the father, ‘go on.’ ‘I am looking back at my little pigeon which is sitting on the roof, and wants to say goodbye to me,’ answered Hansel. ‘Fool!’ said the woman, ‘that is not your little pigeon, that is the morning sun that is shining on the chimney.’ Hansel, however little by little, threw all the crumbs on the path.

The woman led the children still deeper into the forest, where they had never in their lives been before. Then a great fire was again made, and the mother said: ‘Just sit there, you children, and when you are tired you may sleep a little; we are going into the forest to cut wood, and in the evening when we are done, we will come and fetch you away.’ When it was noon, Gretel shared her piece of bread with Hansel, who had scattered his by the way. Then they fell asleep and evening passed, but no one came to the poor children. They did not awake until it was dark night, and Hansel comforted his little sister and said: ‘Just wait, Gretel, until the moon rises, and then we shall see the crumbs of bread which I have strewn about, they will show us our way home again.’ When the moon came they set out, but they found no crumbs, for the many thousands of birds which fly about in the woods and fields had picked them all up. Hansel said to Gretel: ‘We shall soon find the way,’ but they did not find it. They walked the whole night and all the next day too from morning till evening, but they did not get out of the forest, and were very hungry, for they had nothing to eat but two or three berries, which grew on the ground. And as they were so weary that their legs would carry them no longer, they lay down beneath a tree and fell asleep.

It was now three mornings since they had left their father’s house. They began to walk again, but they always came deeper into the forest, and if help did not come soon, they must die of hunger and weariness. When it was mid-day, they saw a beautiful snow-white bird sitting on a bough, which sang so delightfully that they stood still and listened to it. And when its song was

over, it spread its wings and flew away before them, and they followed it until they reached a little house, on the roof of which it alighted; and when they approached the little house they saw that it was built of bread and covered with cakes, but that the windows were of clear sugar. ‘We will set to work on that,’ said Hansel, ‘and have a good meal. I will eat a bit of the roof, and you Gretel, can eat some of the window, it will taste sweet.’ Hansel reached up above, and broke off a little of the roof to try how it tasted, and Gretel leant against the window and nibbled at the panes. Then a soft voice cried from the parlour:

‘Nibble, nibble, gnaw,
Who is nibbling at my little house?’

The children answered:

‘The wind, the wind,
The heaven-born wind,’

and went on eating without disturbing themselves. Hansel, who liked the taste of the roof, tore down a great piece of it, and Gretel pushed out the whole of one round window-pane, sat down, and enjoyed herself with it. Suddenly the door opened, and a woman as old as the hills, who supported herself on crutches, came creeping out. Hansel and Gretel were so terribly frightened that they let fall what they had in their hands. The old woman, however, nodded her head, and said: ‘Oh, you dear children, who has brought you here? do come in, and stay with me. No harm shall happen to you.’ She took them both by the hand, and led them into her little house. Then good food was set before them, milk and pancakes, with sugar, apples, and nuts. Afterwards two pretty little beds were covered with clean white linen, and Hansel and Gretel lay down in them, and thought they were in heaven.

The old woman had only pretended to be so kind; she was in reality a wicked witch, who lay in wait for children, and had only built the little house of bread in order to entice them there. When a child fell into her power, she killed it, cooked and ate it, and that was a feast day with her. Witches have red eyes, and cannot see far, but they have a keen scent like the beasts, and are aware when human beings draw near. When Hansel and Gretel came into her neighbourhood, she laughed with malice, and said mockingly: 'I have them, they shall not escape me again!' Early in the morning before the children were awake, she was already up, and when she saw both of them sleeping and looking so pretty, with their plump and rosy cheeks she muttered to herself: 'That will be a dainty mouthful!' Then she seized Hansel with her shrivelled hand, carried him into a little stable, and locked him in behind a grated door. Scream as he might, it would not help him. Then she went to Gretel, shook her till she awoke, and cried: 'Get up, lazy thing, fetch some water, and cook something good for your brother, he is in the stable outside, and is to be made fat. When he is fat, I will eat him.' Gretel began to weep bitterly, but it was all in vain, for she was forced to do what the wicked witch commanded.

And now the best food was cooked for poor Hansel, but Gretel got nothing but crab-shells. Every morning the woman crept to the little stable, and cried: 'Hansel, stretch out your finger that I may feel if you will soon be fat.' Hansel, however, stretched out a little bone to her, and the old woman, who had dim eyes, could not see it, and thought it was Hansel's finger, and was astonished that there was no way of fattening him. When four weeks had gone by, and Hansel still remained thin, she was seized with impatience and would not wait any longer. 'Now, then, Gretel,' she cried to the girl, 'stir yourself, and bring some water. Let Hansel be fat or lean, tomorrow I will kill him, and cook him.' Ah, how the poor little sister did lament when she had to fetch the water, and how her tears did flow down her cheeks! 'Dear God, do help us,' she cried. 'If the wild beasts in the forest had but devoured us, we should at any rate have died together.' 'Just keep your noise to yourself,' said the old

woman, ‘it won’t help you at all.’

Early in the morning, Gretel had to go out and hang up the cauldron with the water, and light the fire. ‘We will bake first,’ said the old woman, ‘I have already heated the oven, and kneaded the dough.’ She pushed poor Gretel out to the oven, from which flames of fire were already darting. ‘Creep in,’ said the witch, ‘and see if it is properly heated, so that we can put the bread in.’ And once Gretel was inside, she intended to shut the oven and let her bake in it, and then she would eat her, too. But Gretel saw what she had in mind, and said: ‘I do not know how I am to do it; how do I get in?’ ‘Silly goose,’ said the old woman. ‘The door is big enough; just look, I can get in myself!’ and she crept up and thrust her head into the oven. Then Gretel gave her a push that drove her far into it, and shut the iron door, and fastened the bolt. Oh! then she began to howl quite horribly, but Gretel ran away and the godless witch was miserably burnt to death.

Gretel, however, ran like lightning to Hansel, opened his little stable, and cried: ‘Hansel, we are saved! The old witch is dead!’ Then Hansel sprang like a bird from its cage when the door is opened. How they did rejoice and embrace each other, and dance about and kiss each other! And as they had no longer any need to fear her, they went into the witch’s house, and in every corner there stood chests full of pearls and jewels. ‘These are far better than pebbles!’ said Hansel, and thrust into his pockets whatever could be got in, and Gretel said: ‘I, too, will take something home with me,’ and filled her pinafore full. ‘But now we must be off,’ said Hansel, ‘that we may get out of the witch’s forest.’

When had walked for a short time, the forest seemed to be more and more familiar to them, and at length they saw from afar their father’s house. Then they began to run, rushed into the parlour, and threw themselves round their father’s neck. The man had not known one happy hour since he had left the children in the forest; the woman, however, was dead. Gretel emptied her

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

Jack and the Beanstalk

There was once upon a time a poor widow who had an only son named Jack, and a cow named Milky-White. And all they had to live on was the milk the cow gave every morning, which they carried to the market and sold. But one morning Milky-White gave no milk, and they didn't know what to do.

"What shall we do, what shall we do?" said the widow, wringing her hands.
"Cheer up, mother, I'll go and get work somewhere," said Jack.
"We've tried that before, and nobody would take you," said his mother. "We must sell Milky-White and with the money start a shop, or something."
"All right, mother," says Jack. "It's market day today, and I'll soon sell Milky-White, and then we'll see what we can do."

So he took the cow's halter in his hand, and off he started. He hadn't gone far when he met a funny-looking old man, who said to him, "Good morning, Jack."

"Good morning to you," said Jack, and wondered how he knew his name.
"Well, Jack, and where are you off to?" said the man.
"I'm going to market to sell our cow there."
"Oh, you look the proper sort of chap to sell cows," said the man. "I wonder if you know how many beans make five."
"Two in each hand and one in your mouth," says Jack, as sharp as a needle.

"Right you are," says the man, "and here they are, the very beans themselves," he went on, pulling out of his pocket a number of strange-looking beans.

“As you are so sharp,” says he, “I don’t mind doing a swap with you – your cow for these beans.”

“Go along,” says Jack. “Wouldn’t you like it?”
“Ah! You don’t know what these beans are,” said the man. “If you plant them overnight, by morning they grow right up to the sky.”
“Really?” said Jack. “You don’t say so.”
“Yes, that is so. And if it doesn’t turn out to be true you can have your cow back.”
“Right,” says Jack, and hands him over Milky-White’s halter and pockets the beans.
Back goes Jack home, and as he hadn’t gone very far it wasn’t dusk by the time he got to his door.

“Back already, Jack?” said his mother. “I see you haven’t got Milky-White, so you’ve sold her. How much did you get for her?”
“You’ll never guess, mother,” says Jack.
“No, you don’t say so. Good boy! Five pounds? Ten? Fifteen? No, it can’t be twenty.”
“I told you you couldn’t guess. What do you say to these beans? They’re magical. Plant them overnight and – “

“What!” says Jack’s mother. “Have you been such a fool, such a dolt, such an idiot, as to give away my Milky-White, the best milker in the parish, and prime beef to boot, for a set of paltry beans? Take that! Take that! Take that! And as for your precious beans here they go out of the window. And now off with you to bed. Not a sup shall you drink, and not a bit shall you swallow this very night.”

So Jack went upstairs to his little room in the attic, and sad and sorry he was, to besure, as much for his mother’s sake as for the loss of his supper.

At last he dropped off to sleep.

When he woke up, the room looked so funny. The sun was shining into part of it, and yet all the rest was quite dark and shady. So Jack jumped up and dressed himself and went to the window. And what do you think he saw? Why, the beans his mother had thrown out of the window into the garden had sprung up into a big beanstalk which went up and up and up till it reached the sky. So the man spoke the truth after all.

The beanstalk grew up quite close past Jack's window, so all he had to do was to open it and give a jump onto the beanstalk which ran up just like a big ladder. So Jack climbed, and he climbed, and he climbed, and he climbed, and he climbed, and he climbed, and he climbed till at last he reached the sky. And when he got there he found a long broad road going as straight as a dart. So he walked along, and he walked along, and he walked along till he came to a great big tall house, and on the doorstep there was a great big tall woman.

"Good morning, mum," says Jack, quite polite-like. "Could you be so kind as to give me some breakfast?" For he hadn't had anything to eat, you know, the night before, and was as hungry as a hunter.

"It's breakfast you want, is it?" says the great big tall woman. "It's breakfast you'll be if you don't move off from here. My man is an ogre and there's nothing he likes better than boys broiled on toast. You'd better be moving on or he'll be coming."

"Oh! please, mum, do give me something to eat, mum. I've had nothing to eat since yesterday morning, really and truly, mum," says Jack. "I may as well be broiled as die of hunger."

Well, the ogre's wife was not half so bad after all. So she took Jack into the

kitchen, and gave him a hunk of bread and cheese and a jug of milk. But Jack hadn't half finished these when thump! thump! thump! the whole house began to tremble with the noise of someone coming.

"Goodness gracious me! It's my old man," said the ogre's wife. "What on earth shall I do? Come along quick and jump in here." And she bundled Jack into the oven just as the ogre came in.

He was a big one, to be sure. At his belt he had three calves strung up by the heels, and he unhooked them and threw them down on the table and said, "Here, wife, broil me a couple of these for breakfast. Ah! what's this I smell?

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

"Nonsense, dear," said his wife. "You' re dreaming. Or perhaps you smell the scraps of that little boy you liked so much for yesterday's dinner. Here, you go and have a wash and tidy up, and by the time you come back your breakfast'll be ready for you."

So off the ogre went, and Jack was just going to jump out of the oven and run away when the woman told him not. "Wait till he's asleep," says she; "he always has a doze after breakfast."

Well, the ogre had his breakfast, and after that he goes to a big chest and takes out a couple of bags of gold, and down he sits and counts till at last his head began to nod and he began to snore till the whole house shook again.

Then Jack crept out on tiptoe from his oven, and as he was passing the ogre, he took one of the bags of gold under his arm, and off he pelters till he came to the beanstalk, and then he threw down the bag of gold, which, of course, fell into his mother's garden, and then he climbed down and climbed down till at last he got home and told his mother and showed her the gold and said, "Well, mother, wasn't I right about the beans? They are really magical, you see."

So they lived on the bag of gold for some time, but at last they came to the end of it, and Jack made up his mind to try his luck once more at the top of the beanstalk. So one fine morning he rose up early, and got onto the beanstalk, and he climbed, and he climbed, and he climbed, and he climbed, and he climbed, and he climbed till at last he came out onto the road again and up to the great tall house he had been to before.

There, sure enough, was the great tall woman a-standing on the doorstep. "Good morning, mum," says Jack, as bold as brass, "could you be so good as to give me something to eat?"

"Go away, my boy," said the big tall woman, "or else my man will eat you up for breakfast. But aren't you the youngster who came here once before? Do you know, that very day my man missed one of his bags of gold."

"That's strange, mum," said Jack, "I dare say I could tell you something about that, but I'm so hungry I can't speak till I've had something to eat."

Well, the big tall woman was so curious that she took him in and gave him something to eat. But he had scarcely begun munching it as slowly as he could when thump! thump! they heard the giant's footstep, and his wife hid Jack away in the oven.

All happened as it did before. In came the ogre as he did before, said, "Fee-

fi-fo-fum," and had his breakfast off three broiled oxen. Then he said, "Wife, bring me the hen that lays the golden eggs." So she brought it, and the ogre said, "Lay," and it laid an egg all of gold. And then the ogre began to nod his head, and to snore till the house shook.

Then Jack crept out of the oven on tiptoe and caught hold of the golden hen, and was off before you could say "Jack Robinson."

But this time the hen gave a cackle which woke the ogre, and just as Jack got out of the house he heard him calling, "Wife, wife, what have you done with my golden hen?"

And the wife said, "Why, my dear?"

But that was all Jack heard, for he rushed off to the beanstalk and climbed down like a house on fire. And when he got home he showed his mother the wonderful hen, and said "Lay" to it; and it laid a golden egg every time he said "Lay."

Well, Jack was not content, and it wasn't long before he determined to have another try at his luck up there at the top of the beanstalk. So one fine morning he rose up early and got to the beanstalk, and he climbed, and he climbed, and he climbed, and he climbed till he got to the top.

But this time he knew better than to go straight to the ogre's house. And when he got near it, he waited behind a bush till he saw the ogre's wife come out with a pail to get some water, and then he crept into the house and got into the copper. He hadn't been there long when he heard thump! thump! thump! as before, and in came the ogre and his wife.

"Fee-fi-fo-fum, I smell the blood of an Englishman," cried out the ogre. "I

smell him, wife, I smell him."

"Do you, my dearie?" says the ogre's wife. "Then, if it's that little rogue that stole your gold and the hen that laid the golden eggs he's sure to have got into the oven."

And they both rushed to the oven. But Jack wasn't there, luckily, and the ogre's wife said, "There you are again with your fee-fi-fo-fum. Why, of course, it's the boy you caught last night that I've just broiled for your breakfast. How forgetful I am, and how careless you are not to know the difference between live and dead after all these years."

So the ogre sat down to the breakfast and ate it, but every now and then he would mutter, "Well, I could have sworn –" and he'd get up and search the larder and the cupboards and everything, only, luckily, he didn't think of the copper.

After breakfast was over, the ogre called out, "Wife, wife, bring me my golden harp." So she brought it and put it on the table before him. Then he said, "Sing!" and the golden harp sang most beautifully. And it went on singing till the ogre fell asleep, and commenced to snore like thunder.

Then Jack lifted up the copper lid very quietly and got down like a mouse and crept on hands and knees till he came to the table, when up he crawled, caught hold of the golden harp and dashed with it towards the door.

But the harp called out quite loud, "Master! Master!" and the ogre woke up just in time to see Jack running off with his harp. Jack ran as fast as he could, and the ogre came rushing after, and would soon have caught him, only Jack had a start and dodged him a bit and knew where he was going.

When he got to the beanstalk the ogre was not more than twenty yards away when suddenly he saw Jack disappear like, and when he came to the end of the road he saw Jack underneath climbing down for dear life.

Well, the ogre didn't like trusting himself to such a ladder, and he stood and waited, so Jack got another start.

But just then the harp cried out, "Master! Master!" and the ogre swung himself down onto the beanstalk, which shook with his weight. Down climbs Jack, and after him climbed the ogre.

By this time Jack had climbed down and climbed down and climbed down till he was very nearly home. So he called out, "Mother! Mother! bring me an axe, bring me an axe."

And his mother came rushing out with the axe in her hand, but when she came to the beanstalk she stood stock still with fright, for there she saw the ogre with his legs just through the clouds.

But Jack jumped down and got hold of the axe and gave a chop at the beanstalk which cut it half in two. The ogre felt the beanstalk shake and quiver, so he stopped to see what was the matter.

Then Jack gave another chop with the axe, and the beanstalk was cut in two and began to topple over. Then the ogre fell down and broke his crown, and the beanstalk came toppling after.

Then Jack showed his mother his golden harp, and what with showing that and selling the golden eggs, Jack and his mother became very rich, and he married a great princess, and they lived happy ever after.

The Emperor’s New Clothes

Many years ago there was an Emperor so exceedingly fond of new clothes that he spent all his money on being well dressed. He cared nothing about reviewing his soldiers, going to the theatre, or going for a ride in his carriage, except to show off his new clothes. He had a coat for every hour of the day, and instead of saying, as one might, about any other ruler, “The King’s in council,” here they always said. “The Emperor’s in his dressing room.”

In the great city where he lived, life was always gay. Every day many strangers came to town, and among them one day came two swindlers. They let it be known they were weavers, and they said they could weave the most magnificent fabrics imaginable. Not only were their colours and patterns uncommonly fine, but clothes made of this cloth had a wonderful way of becoming invisible to anyone who was unfit for his office, or who was unusually stupid.

“Those would be just the clothes for me,” thought the Emperor. “If I wore them I would be able to discover which men in my empire are unfit for their posts. And I could tell the wise men from the fools. Yes, I certainly must get some of the stuff woven for me right away.” He paid the two swindlers a large sum of money to start work at once.

They set up two looms and pretended to weave, though there was nothing on the looms. All the finest silk and the purest gold thread which they demanded went into their travelling bags, while they worked the empty looms far into the night.

“I’d like to know how those weavers are getting on with the cloth,” the Emperor thought, but he felt slightly uncomfortable when he remembered that

those who were unfit for their position would not be able to see the fabric. It couldn't have been that he doubted himself, yet he thought he'd rather send someone else to see how things were going. The whole town knew about the cloth's peculiar power, and all were impatient to find out how stupid their neighbours were.

"I'll send my honest old minister to the weavers," the Emperor decided. "He'll be the best one to tell me how the material looks, for he's a sensible man and no one does his duty better."

So the honest old minister went to the room where the two swindlers sat working away at their empty looms.

"Heaven help me," he thought as his eyes flew wide open, "I can't see anything at all". But he did not say so.

Both the swindlers begged him to be so kind as to come near to approve the excellent pattern, the beautiful colours. They pointed to the empty looms, and the poor old minister stared as hard as he dared. He couldn't see anything, because there was nothing to see. "Heaven have mercy," he thought. "Can it be that I'm a fool? I'd have never guessed it, and not a soul must know. Am I unfit to be the minister? It would never do to let on that I can't see the cloth."

"Don't hesitate to tell us what you think of it," said one of the weavers.
"Oh, it's beautiful -it's enchanting." The old minister peered through his spectacles. "Such a pattern, what colours!" I'll be sure to tell the Emperor how delighted I am with it."

"We're pleased to hear that," the swindlers said. They proceeded to name all the colours and to explain the intricate pattern. The old minister paid the closest attention, so that he could tell it all to the Emperor. And so he did.

The swindlers at once asked for more money, more silk and gold thread, to get on with the weaving. But it all went into their pockets. Not a thread went into the looms, though they worked at their weaving as hard as ever.

The Emperor presently sent another trustworthy official to see how the work progressed and how soon it would be ready. The same thing happened to him that had happened to the minister. He looked and he looked, but as there was nothing to see in the looms he couldn't see anything.

"Isn't it a beautiful piece of goods?" the swindlers asked him, as they displayed and described their imaginary pattern.

"I know I'm not stupid," the man thought, "so it must be that I'm unworthy of my good office. That's strange. I mustn't let anyone find it out, though." So he praised the material he did not see. He declared he was delighted with the beautiful colours and the exquisite pattern. To the Emperor he said, "It held me spellbound."

All the town was talking of this splendid cloth, and the Emperor wanted to see it for himself while it was still in the looms. Attended by a band of chosen men, among whom were his two old trusted officials – the ones who had been to the weavers – he set out to see the two swindlers. He found them weaving with might and main, but without a thread in their looms.

"Magnificent," said the two officials already duped. "Just look, Your Majesty, what colours! What a design!" They pointed to the empty looms, each supposing that the others could see the stuff.

"What's this?" thought the Emperor. "I can't see anything. This is terrible! Am I a fool? Am I unfit to be the Emperor? What a thing to happen to me of

all people! – Oh! It's very pretty," he said. "It has my highest approval." And he nodded approbation at the empty loom. Nothing could make him say that he couldn't see anything.

His whole retinue stared and stared. One saw no more than another, but they all joined the Emperor in exclaiming, "Oh! It's very pretty," and they advised him to wear clothes made of this wonderful cloth especially for the great procession he was soon to lead. "Magnificent! Excellent! Unsurpassed!" were bandied from mouth to mouth, and everyone did his best to seem well pleased. The Emperor gave each of the swindlers a cross to wear in his buttonhole, and the title of "Sir Weaver."

Before the procession the swindlers sat up all night and burned more than six candles, to show how busy they were finishing the Emperor's new clothes. They pretended to take the cloth off the loom. They made cuts in the air with huge scissors. And at last they said, "Now the Emperor's new clothes are ready for him."

Then the Emperor himself came with his noblest noblemen, and the swindlers each raised an arm as if they were holding something. They said, "These are the trousers, here's the coat, and this is the mantle," naming each garment. "All of them are as light as a spider web. One would almost think he had nothing on, but that's what makes them so fine."
"Exactly," all the noblemen agreed, though they could see nothing, for there was nothing to see.
"If Your Imperial Majesty will condescend to take your clothes off," said the swindlers, "we will help you on with your new ones here in front of the long mirror."

The Emperor undressed, and the swindlers pretended to put his new clothes on him, one garment after another. They took him around the waist and seemed to be fastening something – that was his train – as the Emperor

turned round and round before the looking glass.

“How well Your Majesty’s new clothes look. Aren’t they becoming!” He heard on all sides, “That pattern, so perfect! Those colours, so suitable! It is a magnificent outfit.”
Then the minister of public processions announced: “Your Majesty’s canopy is waiting outside.”
“Well, I’m supposed to be ready,” the Emperor said, and turned again for one last look in the mirror. “It is a remarkable fit, isn’t it?” He seemed to regard his costume with the greatest interest.

The noblemen who were to carry his train stooped low and reached for the floor as if they were picking up his mantle. Then they pretended to lift and hold it high. They didn’t dare admit they had nothing to hold.

So off went the Emperor in procession under his splendid canopy. Everyone in the streets and the windows said, “Oh, how fine are the Emperor’s new clothes! Don’t they fit him to perfection? And see his long train!” Nobody would confess that he couldn’t see anything, for that would prove him either unfit for his position, or a fool. No costume the Emperor had worn before was ever such a complete success.

“But he hasn’t got anything on,” a little child said.
“Did you ever hear such innocent prattle?” said its father. And one person whispered to another what the child had said, “He hasn’t anything on. A child says he hasn’t anything on.”
“But he hasn’t got anything on!” the whole town cried out at last.

The Emperor shivered, for he suspected they were right. But he thought, “This procession has got to go on.” So he walked more proudly than ever, as his noblemen held high the train that wasn’t there at all.

Little Red Riding Hood

Once upon a time there was a dear little girl who was loved by everyone who looked at her, but most of all by her grandmother, and there was nothing that she would not have given to the child. Once she gave her a little cape with a hood of red velvet, which suited her so well that she would never wear anything else; so she was always called ‘Little Red Riding Hood.’

One day her mother said to her: ‘Come, Little Red Riding Hood, here is a piece of cake and a bottle of wine; take them to your grandmother, she is ill and weak, and they will do her good. Set out before it gets hot, and when you are going, walk nicely and quietly and do not run off the path, or you may fall and break the bottle, and then your grandmother will get nothing; and when you go into her room, don’t forget to say, “Good morning”, and don’t peep into every corner before you do it.’

‘I will take great care,’ said Little Red Riding Hood to her mother, and gave her hand on it.

The grandmother lived out in the wood, half a league from the village, and just as Little Red Riding Hood entered the wood, a wolf met her. Little Red Riding Hood did not know what a wicked creature he was, and was not at all afraid of him.

‘Good day, Little Red Riding Hood,’ said he.

‘Thank you kindly, wolf.’

‘Whither away so early, Little Red Riding Hood?’

‘To my grandmother’s.’

‘What have you got in your apron?’

‘Cake and wine; yesterday was baking-day, so poor sick grandmother is to have something good, to make her stronger.’

‘Where does your grandmother live, Little Red Riding Hood?’

‘A good quarter of a league farther on in the wood; her house stands under the three large oak-trees, the nut-trees are just below; you surely must know it,’ replied Little Red Riding Hood.

The wolf thought to himself: ‘What a tender young creature! what a nice plump mouthful--she will be better to eat than the old woman. I must act craftily, so as to catch both.’ So he walked for a short time by the side of Little Red Riding Hood, and then he said: ‘See, Little Red Riding Hood, how pretty the flowers are about here--why do you not look round? I believe, too, that you do not hear how sweetly the little birds are singing; you walk gravely along as if you were going to school, while everything else out here in the wood is merry.’

Little Red Riding Hood raised her eyes, and when she saw the sunbeams dancing here and there through the trees, and pretty flowers growing everywhere, she thought: ‘Suppose I take grandmother a fresh nosegay; that would please her too. It is so early in the day that I shall still get there in good time’; and so she ran from the path into the wood to look for flowers. And whenever she had picked one, she fancied that she saw a still prettier one farther on, and ran after it, and so got deeper and deeper into the wood.

Meanwhile the wolf ran straight to the grandmother’s house and knocked at the door.

‘Who is there?’

‘Little Red Riding Hood,’ replied the wolf. ‘She is bringing cake and wine; open the door.’

‘Lift the latch,’ called out the grandmother, ‘I am too weak, and cannot get up.’

The wolf lifted the latch, the door sprang open, and without saying a word he went straight to the grandmother’s bed, and devoured her. Then he put on her clothes, dressed himself in her cap laid himself in bed and drew the curtains.

Little Red Riding Hood, however, had been running about picking flowers, and when she had gathered so many that she could carry no more, she remembered her grandmother, and set out on the way to her.

She was surprised to find the cottage-door standing open, and when she went into the room, she had such a strange feeling that she said to herself: ‘Oh dear! how uneasy I feel today, and at other times I like being with grandmother so much.’ She called out: ‘Good morning,’ but received no answer; so she went to the bed and drew back the curtains. There lay her grandmother with her cap pulled far over her face, and looking very strange.

‘Oh! grandmother,’ she said, ‘what big ears you have!’

‘The better to hear you with, my child,’ was the reply.

‘But, grandmother, what big eyes you have!’ she said.

‘The better to see you with, my dear.’

‘But, grandmother, what large hands you have!’

‘The better to hug you with.’

‘Oh! but, grandmother, what a terrible big mouth you have!’

‘The better to eat you with!’

And scarcely had the wolf said this, than with one bound he was out of bed and swallowed up Little Red Riding Hood.

When the wolf had appeased his appetite, he lay down again in the bed, fell asleep and began to snore very loud. The huntsman was just passing the house, and thought to himself: ‘How the old woman is snoring! I must just see if she wants anything.’ So he went into the room, and when he came to the bed, he saw that the wolf was lying in it. ‘Do I find you here, you old sinner!’ said he. ‘I have long sought you!’

Then just as he was going to fire at him, it occurred to him that the wolf might have devoured the grandmother, and that she might still be saved, so he did not fire, but took a pair of scissors, and began to cut open the stomach of the sleeping wolf.

When he had made two snips, he saw the Little Red Riding Hood shining, and then he made two snips more, and the little girl sprang out, crying: ‘Ah, how frightened I have been! How dark it was inside the wolf’; and after that the aged grandmother came out alive also, but scarcely able to breathe. Little Red Riding Hood, however, quickly fetched great stones with which they filled the wolf’s belly, and when he awoke, he wanted to run away, but the stones were so heavy that he collapsed at once, and fell dead.

Then all three were delighted. The huntsman drew off the wolf's skin and went home with it; the grandmother ate the cake and drank the wine which Little Red Riding Hood had brought, and revived, but Little Red Riding Hood thought to herself: 'As long as I live, I will never by myself leave the path, to run into the wood, when my mother has forbidden me to do so.'