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## **Tattercoats (Cinderella)**

In a great palace by the sea, there once dwelt a very rich old lord, who had neither wife nor children living, only one little granddaughter, whose face he had never seen in all her life. He hated her bitterly, because at her birth his favorite daughter died. When the old nurse brought him the baby, he swore that it might live or die as it liked, but he would never look on its face as long as it lived.

So he turned his back and sat by his window looking out over the sea and weeping great tears for his lost daughter, 'til his white hair and beard grew down over his shoulders and twined round his chair and crept into the chinks of the floor, and his tears, dropping on to the window-ledge, wore a channel through the stone, and ran away in a little river to the great sea. Meanwhile, his granddaughter grew up with no one to care for her or clothe her; only the old nurse, when no one was by, would sometimes give her a dish of scraps from the kitchen, or a torn petticoat from the rag-bag. The other servants of the palace would drive her from the house with blows and mocking words, calling her "Tattercoats" and pointing at her bare feet and shoulders, 'til she ran away crying, to hide among the bushes.

And so she grew up with little to eat or wear, spending her days in the fields and lanes with only the gooseherd for a companion. He would play to her so merrily on his little pipe when she was hungry, cold or tired that she forgot all her troubles and fell to dancing, with his flock of noisy geese for partners.

But one day, people told each other that the king was traveling through the land, and in the town nearby was to give a great ball to all the lords and ladies of the country. There, the prince, his only son, was to choose a wife.

One of the royal invitations was brought to the palace by the sea, and the servants carried it up to the old lord, who still sat by his window, wrapped in his long white hair and weeping into the little river that was fed by his tears.

But when he heard the king's command, he dried his eyes and bade them bring shears to cut him loose, for his hair had bound him a fast prisoner and he could not move. And then he sent them for rich clothes and jewels, which he put on; and he ordered them to saddle the white horse, with gold and silk, that he might ride to meet the king.

Meanwhile, Tattercoats had heard of the great doings in the town, and she sat by the kitchen door weeping because she could not go to see them. And when

the old nurse heard her crying she went to the lord of the palace, and begged him to take his granddaughter with him to the king's ball.

But he only frowned and told her to be silent, while the servants laughed and said:

“Tattercoats is happy in her rags, playing with the gooseherd. Let her be—it is all she is fit for.”

A second and then a third time, the old nurse begged him to let the girl go with him, but she was answered only by black looks and fierce words, 'til she was driven from the room by the jeering servants with blows and mocking words.

Weeping over her ill success, the old nurse went to look for Tattercoats; but the girl had been turned from the door by the cook, and had run away to tell her friend the gooseherd how unhappy she was because she could not go to the king's ball.

When the gooseherd had listened to her story, he bade her cheer up, and proposed that they should go together into the town to see the king and all the fine things. When she looked sorrowfully down at her rags and bare feet, he played a note or two upon his pipe, so gay and merry that she forgot all about her tears and her troubles, and before she well knew, the herdboyc had taken her by the hand, and she, and he, and the geese before them, were dancing down the road towards the town.

Before they had gone very far, a handsome young man, splendidly dressed, rode up and stopped to ask the way to the castle where the king was staying; and when he found that they, too, were going thither, he got off his horse and walked beside them along the road.

The herdboyc pulled out his pipe and played a low sweet tune, and the stranger looked again and again at Tattercoats' lovely face till he fell deeply in love with her, and begged her to marry him.

But she only laughed, and shook her golden head.

“You would be finely put to shame if you had a goosegirl for your wife!” said she. “Go and ask one of the great ladies you will see tonight at the king's ball, and do not flout poor Tattercoats.”

But the more she refused him, the sweeter the pipe played, and the deeper the young man fell in love, 'til at last he begged her, as a proof of his sincerity, to come that night at twelve to the king's ball, just as she was, with the herdboyc and his geese, and in her torn petticoat and bare feet, and he would dance with her before the king and the lords and ladies, and present her to them all, as his dear and honored bride.

So when night came, and the hall in the castle was full of light and music, and the lords and ladies were dancing before the king, just as the clock struck twelve, Tattercoats and the herdboy, followed by his flock of noisy geese, entered at the great doors, and walked straight up the ballroom, while on either side the ladies whispered, the lords laughed, and the king seated at the far end stared in amazement.

But as they came in front of the throne, Tattercoats' suitor rose from beside the king and came to meet her. Taking her by the hand, he kissed her thrice before them all, and turned to the king.

"Father," he said, for it was the Prince himself, "I have made my choice, and here is my bride, the loveliest girl in all the land, and the sweetest as well!"

Before he had finished speaking, the herdboy put his pipe to his lips and played a few low notes that sounded like a bird singing far off in the woods. As he played, Tattercoats' rags were changed to shining robes sewn with glittering jewels, a golden crown lay upon her golden hair, and the flock of geese behind her became a crowd of dainty pages, bearing her long train.

And as the king rose to greet her as his daughter, the trumpets sounded loudly in honor of the new princess, and the people outside in the street said to each other:

"Ah! Now the Prince has chosen for his wife the loveliest girl in all the land!"

The gooseherd was never seen again, and no one knew what became of him. The old lord went home once more to his palace by the sea, for he could not stay at court when he had sworn never to look on his granddaughter's face.

So there he still sits by his window, if you could only see him (as you someday may), weeping more bitterly than ever as he looks out over the sea.

## **Sleeping Beauty**

Long ago, there lived a King and Queen who said every day, "If only we had a child!" But for a long time, they had none.

One day, as the Queen was bathing in a spring and dreaming of a child, a frog crept out of the water and said to her, "Your wish shall be fulfilled. Before a year has passed, you shall bring a daughter into the world."

And since frogs are such magical creatures, it was no surprise that before a year had passed, the Queen had a baby girl. The child was so beautiful and sweet that the King could not contain himself for joy. He prepared a great feast and invited all his friends, family and neighbors. He invited the fairies, too, in order that they might be kind and good to the child. There were thirteen of them in his kingdom, but as the King only had twelve golden plates for them to eat from, one of the fairies had to be left out. None of the guests was saddened by this, as the thirteenth fairy was known to be cruel and spiteful.

An amazing feast was held, and when it came to an end, each of the fairies presented the child with a magic gift. One fairy gave her virtue, another beauty, a third riches, and so on—with everything in the world that anyone could wish for.

After eleven of the fairies had presented their gifts, the thirteenth suddenly appeared. She was angry and wanted to show her spite for not having been invited to the feast. Without hesitation, she called out in a loud voice,

"When she is fifteen years old, the Princess shall prick herself with a spindle and shall fall down dead!"

Then without another word, she turned and left the hall.

The guests were horrified and the Queen fell to the floor sobbing, but the twelfth fairy, whose wish was still not spoken, quietly stepped forward. Her magic could not remove the curse, but she could soften it, so she said,

"Nay, your daughter shall not die, but instead shall fall into a deep sleep that will last one hundred years."

Over the years, the promises of the fairies came true one by one. The Princess grew to be beautiful, modest, kind and clever. Everyone who saw her could not help but love her.

The King and Queen were determined to prevent the curse placed on the Princess by the spiteful fairy and sent out a command that all the spindles in the whole kingdom should be destroyed. No one in the kingdom was allowed to tell the Princess of the curse that had been placed upon her, for they did not want her to worry or be sad.

On the morning of her fifteenth birthday, the Princess awoke early, excited to be another year older. She was up so early in the morning that she realized everyone else still slept. The Princess roamed through the halls trying to keep herself occupied until the rest of the castle awoke. She wandered about the whole place, looking at rooms and halls as she pleased, and at last she came to an old tower. She climbed the narrow, winding staircase and reached a little door. A rusty key was sticking in the lock and when she turned it, the door flew open.

In a little room sat an old woman with a spindle, busily spinning her flax. The old woman was so deaf that she had never heard the King's command that all spindles should be destroyed.

"Good morning, Granny," said the Princess. "What are you doing?"

"I am spinning," said the old woman.

"What is the thing that whirls round so merrily?" asked the Princess, and she took the spindle and tried to spin, too.

But she had scarcely touched the spindle when it pricked her finger. At that moment, she fell upon the bed which was standing near and lay still in a deep sleep.

The King, Queen and servants had all started their morning routines and right in the midst of them fell asleep, too. The horses fell asleep in the stable, the dogs in the yard, the doves on the roof and the flies on the wall. Even the fire in the hearth grew still and went to sleep. The kitchen maid, who sat with a chicken before her, ready to pluck its feathers, fell asleep. The cook was in the midst of scolding the kitchen boy for a mess he'd made, but they both fell fast asleep. The wind died down and on the trees in front of the castle, not a leaf stirred.

Round the castle a hedge of brier roses began to grow up. Every year it grew higher until at last nothing could be seen of the sleeping castle.

There was a legend in the land about the lovely Sleeping Beauty, as the King's daughter was called, and from time to time, princes came and tried to force their way through the hedge and into the castle. But they found it impossible, for the thorns, as though they were alive, grabbed at them and would not let them through.

After many years, a prince came again to the country and heard an old man tell the tale of the castle behind the brier hedge and the beautiful princess who had slept within it for a hundred years. He heard also that many princes had tried to make it through the brier hedge, but none had succeeded, and many had been caught in it and died.

The young prince said, "I am not afraid. I must go and see this Sleeping Beauty."

The good old man did all in his power to persuade him not to go, but the Prince would not listen.

Now the hundred years were just ended. When the Prince approached the brier hedge, it was covered with beautiful large roses. The shrubs made way for him of their own accord and let him pass unharmed.

In the courtyard, the prince saw the horses and dogs lying asleep. On the roof sat the sleeping doves with their heads tucked under their wings. When he went into the house, the flies were asleep on the walls and the servants asleep in the halls. Near the throne lay the King and Queen, sleeping peacefully beside each other. In the kitchen the cook, the kitchen boy and the kitchen maid all slept with their heads resting on the table.

The Prince went on farther. All was so still that he could hear his own breathing. At last he reached the tower and opened the door into the little room where the Princess was asleep. There she lay, looking so beautiful that he could not take his eyes off her. He bent down and gave her a kiss. As he touched her, Sleeping Beauty opened her eyes and smiled up at him.

Throughout the castle, everyone and everything woke up and looked at each other with astonished eyes. Within the month, the Prince and Sleeping Beauty were married and lived happily all their lives.

## **Rapunzel**

One day a woman was standing by the window and looking down into the garden, when she saw a bed which was planted with the most tasty rapunzel. It looked so fresh and green that she longed for it and had the greatest desire to eat some. This desire increased every day. The woman knew that she could not get any of it and grew more pale and miserable each day.

Her husband was worried about her and asked, "What is wrong, my dear?"

"Ah," she replied, "If I can't eat some of the rapunzel from the garden behind our house, I think I shall die."

The man, who loved her, thought, "Sooner than let my lovely wife die, I will bring her some of the rapunzel myself, no matter what the cost."

In the twilight of the evening, he climbed over the wall into the garden of the witch, hastily grabbed a handful of rapunzel, and took it to his wife. She at once made herself a salad and ate it happily. She, however, liked it so 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 set out again; but when he had climbed over the wall he was terribly afraid, for he saw the witch standing before him.

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

"Ah," the frightened husband answered, "Please have mercy. I had to have the rapunzel. My wife saw it from the window and felt such a longing for it that she would have died if she had not gotten some to eat."

Then the witch allowed her anger to be softened, and said to him, "If this is true, I will allow you to take as much as you like, only I make one condition. You must give me the baby daughter your wife will bring into the world; she shall be well treated, and I will care for it like a mother." The man in his fear consented, and when the baby was born, the witch appeared at once, gave the child the name of Rapunzel, and took the baby away with her.

Rapunzel grew into the most beautiful child beneath the sun. When she was twelve years old, the witch shut her into a tower, which lay in a forest. The tower had no stairs or doors, but only a little window at the very top. When the witch wanted to go in, she stood beneath the window and cried,

"Rapunzel, Rapunzel, let down your hair!"

Rapunzel had magnificent long hair, fine as spun gold, and when she heard the voice of the witch she wound her braids round one of the hooks of the window, and then the hair fell down the side of the tower and the witch climbed up by it.

After a year or two, it came to pass that the Prince rode through the forest and went by the tower. He heard a song which was so lovely that he stood still and listened. This was Rapunzel, who in her loneliness passed her time singing. The Prince 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 standing behind a tree listening to Rapunzel's song, he saw the witch come and heard how she cried,

“Rapunzel, Rapunzel, let down your hair!”

Then Rapunzel let down the braids of her hair, and the witch climbed up to her.

“If that is the ladder by which one mounts, I will for once try my fortune,” thought the Prince. 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 Prince climbed up.

At first, Rapunzel was terribly frightened when a man such as her eyes had never seen came to her; but the Prince began to talk to her quite like a friend and told her that his heart had been so stirred by her singing that it had let him have no rest.

Then Rapunzel lost her fear, and when he asked her if she would take him for her husband—and she saw that he was kind and handsome, 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 a bit of silk with you every time you come, and I will weave a ladder with it. When that is ready, I will climb down, and we shall escape together.” They agreed that until that time he should come to her every evening, for the witch came by day.



The witch knew nothing of this, until once Rapunzel said in her distraction, "Oh my, you are so much heavier when you climb than the young Prince."

"Ah! You wicked child!" cried the witch. "What do I hear thee say! I thought I had separated you from all the world, but you have deceived me."

In her anger, she clutched Rapunzel's beautiful hair, seized a pair of scissors, and snip, snap—cut it all off. Rapunzel's lovely braids lay on the ground, but the witch was not through. She was so angry that she took poor Rapunzel into a desert, where she had to live in great grief and misery.

The witch rushed back to the tower and fastened the braids of hair to the hook of the window, and when the Prince came and cried,

"Rapunzel, Rapunzel, let down your hair!"

she let the hair down. The Prince climbed to the window. He did not find his dearest Rapunzel above, but the witch, who gazed at him with a wicked and venomous look.

"Aha!" she cried mockingly, "You've come for Rapunzel, 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 banished, and you will never see her again!"

The Prince was beside himself and in his despair, he fell 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 weep over the loss of his dearest Rapunzel.

In this way, the Prince roamed in misery for some months and at length came to the desert where the witch had banished Rapunzel. He heard a voice singing, and it seemed so familiar to him that he went towards it. When he approached, Rapunzel knew him and fell into his arms and wept.

Two of her tears fell on his eyes, and the Prince could see again. He led her to his kingdom, where he was joyfully received. They lived for a long time afterwards, happy and contented.