

**1812**

## **GRIMM'S FAIRY TALES**

### **FRED AND KATE**

#### ***Jacob Ludwig Grimm and Wilhelm Carl Grimm***

Grimm, Jacob (1785-1863) and Wilhelm (1786-1859) - German philologists whose collection "Kinder- und Hausmarchen," known in English as "Grimm's Fairy Tales," is a timeless literary masterpiece. The brothers transcribed these tales directly from folk and fairy stories told to them by common villagers. Fred and Kate (1812) - Fred and Kate are married. Kate, simple and absent-minded, allows a dog to carry off Fred's supper, lets all the beer out of the tap, gives Fred's gold to some robbers, and at last forgets who she is.

### **FRED AND KATE**

THERE WERE once a young husband and wife, and their names were Fred and Kate. One day said Fred, "I must go now to my work in the fields, Kate, and when I come back you must have on the table some roast meat to satisfy my hunger, and some cool drink to quench my thirst." "All right, Fred," answered Kate; "be off with you, I will see to it." When dinner-time began to draw near, she took down a sausage from the chimney, put it in a frying-pan with some butter, and stood it over the fire. The sausage began to frizzle and fry, and Kate stood holding the handle of the pan, and fell into deep thought. At last she said to herself, "While the sausage is cooking I might as well be drawing the beer in the cellar." So she saw that the frying-pan was standing firmly, and then took a can and went down into the cellar to draw the beer. Now, while Kate was watching the beer run into the can, a sudden thought came into her mind.

"Holloa! the dog is not fastened up; he may perhaps get at the sausage," and in a trice she was up the cellar steps: but already the dog had it in his mouth, and was making off with it. Then Kate, with all haste, followed after him and chased him a good way into the fields, but the dog was quicker than Kate, and, never letting slip the sausage, was soon at a great distance. "Well, it can't be helped!" said Kate turning back, and as she had tired herself with

running, she took her time about going home, and walked slowly to cool herself.

All this time the beer was running out of the cask, for Kate had not turned off the tap, and as the can was soon full, it began to run over on the cellar floor, and ran, and ran, until the cask was empty. Kate stood on the steps and saw the misfortune. "Dear me!" cried she, "what am I to do to prevent Fred from noticing it!" She considered for a while, and then remembered that there was remaining in the loft from the last fair time a sack of fine wheat-flour; she determined to bring it down, and strew it over the beer. "To be sure," said she, "those who know how to save have somewhat in time of necessity." And going up to the loft, she dragged the sack down and threw it right upon the can full of beer, so that Fred's drink ran about the cellar with the rest. "It is all right," said Kate; "where some goes the rest must follow," and she strewed the meal all over the cellar. When all was done, she was highly pleased, and thought how clean and neat it looked.

At dinner-time home came Fred. "Now, wife, what have you got for me?" said he.

"O Fred," answered she, "I was going to cook a sausage for you, but while I was drawing the beer the dog got it out of the pan, and while I was running after the dog the beer all ran away, and as I was going to stop up the beer with the wheat-meal I knocked over the can: but it is all right now; the cellar is quite dry again." But said Fred, "O Kate, Kate! what have you been about, letting the sausage be carried off, and the beer run out of the cask, and then to waste all our good meal into the bargain?" "Well, Fred, I did not know; you should have told me," said Kate.

So the husband thought to himself, "If my wife is like this, I must look after things a little better." Now he had saved a very pretty sum of money, and he changed it all to gold, and said to Kate, "Do you see these yellow counters? I am going to make a hole in the stable underneath the cows' manger and bury them; see that you do not meddle with them, or it will be the worse for you." And she said, "Oh no, Fred, certainly I won't." Now, one day when Fred was away, there came some peddlers to the village, with earthen pots and basins to sell, and they asked the young wife if she had nothing to give in exchange for them.

"O my good men," said Kate, "I have no money to buy anything with, but if you had any use for yellow counters, I might do some business with you." "Yellow counters! why not? We might as well see them," said they. "Then go into the stable and dig under the

cows' manger, and you will find them; but I dare not go near the place."

So those rogues went and dug, and found the gold accordingly. And they seized it quickly, and ran off with it, leaving the pots and pans behind them in the house. Kate thought she must make some use of her new possessions, so, as she had no need of them in the kitchen, she spread them out on the ground, and then stuck them, one after another, for ornament, on the fence which ran round the house.

When Fred came home and saw the new decorations, he said, "Kate, what have you been doing?" "I bought them every one, Fred, with those yellow counters that were buried under the manger, and I did not go there myself; the peddlers had to dig them up for themselves." "O wife!" cried Fred, "what have you done? They were not counters, but pure gold, and all our capital; you should not have done so." "Well, Fred, I did not know; you should have told me that before," answered Kate.

Then Kate stood still a little while to consider, and at last she said, "Listen, Fred, we may be able to get the gold back again. Let us run after the thieves." "Very well," said Fred, "we will try; only let us take some bread and cheese with us, that we may have something to eat on the way." "All right," she answered.

So they set out, and as Fred was a better walker than Kate, she was soon left behind. "All the better for me," said she, "for when we turn back I shall have so much the less distance to go."

And they came to a mountain where on both sides of the road there were deep cart-ruts. And Kate said to herself, "How sad to see the poor earth torn, and vexed, and oppressed in this way! It will never be healed again in all its life." And with a compassionate heart, she took out her butter and smeared the cartruts right and left, so that they might not be so cut by the wheels; and as she was stooping to perform this merciful act a cheese fell out of her pocket and rolled down the mountain.

And Kate said, "I have walked over the ground once, and I am not going to do it again, but another shall run after that cheese, and bring it back." So saying, she took another cheese, and rolled it after the first one; and as it did not seem to be coming back again, she sent a third racing after them, thinking, "Perhaps they are waiting for company, and are not used to traveling alone." But when they all three delayed coming, she said, "I can't think what this means! Perhaps it is that the third one has lost his way, so I

will send a fourth that he may call out to him as he goes by." But it went no better with the fourth than with the third. And Kate lost all patience and threw down the fifth and sixth, and that was all.

A long while she stood and waited for them to come up, but as still they did not come, she said, "Oh, it's like sending good money after bad; there is no getting you back again. If you suppose I am going to wait for you any longer, you are very much mistaken: I shall go on my way and you may overtake me; your legs are younger than mine." Kate then went on until she overtook Fred, who was standing still and waiting, as he wanted something to eat.

"Now, be quick," he said, "and hand over what you have brought." And she handed him the dry bread. "Now for the butter and the cheese," said the man.

"O Fred," said Kate, "I anointed the cart-ruts with the butter, and the cheeses will soon be here, they are upon the road; one of them ran away, and I sent the others to fetch it back." Then said Fred, "It was very wrong of you, Kate, to waste the butter, and roll the cheeses down the hill." And Kate answered, "Well then, you should have told me so." As they were eating the dry bread together, Fred said, "Kate, did you lock up the house before leaving?" "No, Fred; you ought to have told me that before." And her husband answered, "Well, you must go home at once and lock up the house before we go any farther, and you might as well bring something more to eat with you, and I will wait for you here." So Kate went, and she thought to herself, "As Fred wants something more to eat, and he does not care much about butter and cheese, I will bring some dried apples and a jug of vinegar back with me." Then she bolted the front door, but the back door she took off its hinges, and lifted it on her shoulders, thinking that if she had the door all safe no harm could come to the house. And she took her time on the way back, and thought to herself, "Fred will have so much the longer to rest." So when she got back to him, she called out, "Fred, if the house-door is safe, no harm can come to the house!" "Oh dear!" cried he, "what a prudent wife have I! To carry away the backdoor, so that any one may get in, and to bolt the front door! It is too late now to go home, but as you have brought the door so far, you may carry it on farther." "All right, I will carry the door, Fred," said she, "but the dried apples and the vinegar will be too heavy for me; I will hang them on the door and make it carry them." Now they went into the wood to look for the thieves, but they could not find them. When it grew dark they got up into a tree to pass the night there. No sooner had they settled down when up came the peddlers, some of those fellows who carry away what

should not go with them, and who find things before they are lost. They laid themselves down directly under the tree where Fred and Kate were, and they made a fire, and began to divide their spoil.

Then Fred got down on the farther side of the tree and gathered together some stones, and then got up again, intending to stone the robbers to death with them.

The stones, however, did not hit them, and they said, "It will soon be morning; the wind is rising and shaking down the fir-cones." Now all the time Kate had the door on her shoulder, and as it weighed upon her heavily, she thought it must be the dried apples, and she said, "Fred, I must throw down the dried apples." "No, Kate, not now," answered he; "we might be discovered." "Oh dear, Fred, but I must! They weigh me down so!" said she.

"Well then, do it, if you must, in the name of all that's tormenting!" cried he.

And down rolled the apples between the boughs; and the robbers cried, "There are birds in this tree!" After a while, as the door still weighed her down heavily, Kate said, "O Fred, I must pour away the vinegar"; and he answered, "No, Kate, you must not do that; we might be discovered." "Oh dear me, Fred, but I must! it weighs me down so!" "Then do it, if you must, in the name of all that's tormenting!" And she poured out the vinegar, so that the men were all besprinkled. And they said one to another, "The morning dew is beginning to fall already." At last Kate began to think that it must really be the door that weighed so heavy, and she said, "Fred, I must throw down the door"; and he answered, "No, Kate, not now; we might be discovered." "Oh dear me, Fred, but I must! It weighs me down so." "No, Kate, you must hold it fast." "O Fred, it's slipping, it's falling!" "Well then, let it fall in the name of torment!" cried Fred in a passion.

And so it fell with a great crash, and the thieves below cried, "There is something wrong about this tree!" and they got up in a great hurry and ran off, leaving their spoil behind them. And early in the morning when Fred and Kate came down from the tree they got all their gold again and carried it home.

And when they reached their house again Fred said, "Now, Kate, you must fall to and be very industrious and work hard." "All right, Fred, I will go into the field and cut corn," said she.

And when she came into the field she said to herself, "Shall I eat before I cut, or shall I sleep before I cut? Well, I will eat first." And so she ate, and after that she felt sleepy, but she began to cut and

went on half asleep cutting her own clothes, skirts, gown, and all, and when she at last woke up and found herself in rags, she said to herself, "Is this really I or not? Oh dear, it is not I!" After a while night came on, and Kate ran into the village and knocked at her husband's door calling out, "Fred!" "What is it?" said he. "I want to know if Kate is at home," said she. "Oh yes," he answered, "she is lying here fast asleep." So she said to herself, "All right then, I am certainly at home," and she ran on farther.

Soon she came upon some thieves who were looking about for something to steal, and she went up to them and offered to help them, and the thieves thought she knew of a good place and opportunity, and were glad of her offer. But Kate walked in front of the houses calling out, "Good people, what have you for us to steal?" So the thieves thought to themselves, "This will never do," and wished themselves quit of her. At last they said to her, "Just at the end of the village there are some turnips in the parson's field; go and fetch us some."

So Kate went into the field and began to pull some up, but very lazily, and never raised herself. Presently came by a man who saw her, and thought she was some evil thing grubbing for the turnips. So he ran quickly into the village and said to the parson, "O parson, some evil creature is grubbing in your turnip-field!" "Oh dear!" answered the parson, "I have a lame foot, I cannot go to drive it away." And the man at once offered to take him on his back, and he did so.

Just as they reached the field Kate got up and stood upright.

"Oh, the devil!" cried the parson, and both took to their heels, and the parson was able, out of his great fear, to run faster with his lame foot than the man who had carried him on his back with both legs sound.

**THE END**