

1812

**GRIMM'S FAIRY TALES
THE PINK**

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. The Pink (1812) - The queen's son, who has the power of wishing, is stolen by a cook; the queen, accused of letting animals kill the boy, is locked in a tower. The prince later uses his power to punish the cook and return home.

PINK

THERE WAS once a Queen, who had not been blessed with children. As she walked in her garden, she prayed every morning that a son or a daughter might be given to her. One day an Angel came and said to her, "Be content; you shall have a son, and he shall be endowed with the power of wishing, so that whatsoever he wishes for shall be granted to him." She hurried to the King, and told him the joyful news; and when the time came a son was born to them, and they were filled with delight.

Every morning the Queen used to take her little son into the gardens, where the wild animals were kept, to wash him in a clear, sparkling fountain. It happened one day, when the child was a little older, that as she sat with him on her lap she fell asleep.

The old cook, who knew that the child had the power of wishing, came by and stole the infant. He also killed a chicken and dropped some of its blood on the Queen's garments. He took the child away to a secret place, where he placed it out to be nursed. Then he ran back to the King, and accused the Queen of having allowed her child to be carried off by a wild animal.

When the King saw the blood on the Queen's garments he believed the story, and was overwhelmed with anger. He caused a high tower to be built, into which neither the sun nor the moon could penetrate. Then he ordered his wife to be shut up in it, and the door walled up. She was to stay there for seven years, without eating or drinking, so as gradually to pine away. But two Angels

from heaven, in the shape of white doves, came to her, bringing food twice a day till the seven years were ended.

But the cook thought, "If the child really has the power of wishing, and I stay here, I might easily fall into disgrace." So he left the palace, and went to the boy, who was old enough to talk now, and said to him, "Wish for a beautiful castle, with a garden, and everything belonging to it." Hardly had the words passed the boy's lips than all that he had asked for was there. After a time the cook said, "It is not good for you to be so much alone; wish for a beautiful maiden to be your companion." The Prince uttered the wish, and immediately a maiden stood before them, more beautiful than any painter could paint. So they grew very fond of each other, and played together, while the cook went out hunting like any grand gentleman.

But the idea came to him one day that the Prince might wish to go to his father some time, and he would thereby be placed in a very awkward position. So he took the maiden aside, and said to her, "Tonight, when the boy is asleep, go and drive this knife into his heart. Then bring me his heart and his tongue. If you fail to do it, you will lose your own life." Then he went away; but when the next day came, the maiden had not yet obeyed his command, and she said, "Why should I shed his innocent blood, when he has never done any harm to a creature in his life?"

The cook again said, "If you do not obey me, you will lose your own life." When he had gone away, she ordered a young hind to be brought and killed; then she cut out its heart and its tongue, and put them on a dish. When she saw the old man coming she said to the boy, "Get into bed, and cover yourself right over." The old scoundrel came in and said, "Where are the tongue and the heart of the boy?" The maiden gave him the dish; but the Prince threw off the coverings, and said, "You old sinner, why did you want to kill me? Now bear your sentence. You shall be turned into a black poodle, with a gold chain round your neck, and you shall be made to eat live coals, so that flames of fire may come out of your mouth." As he said the words, the old man was changed into black poodle, with gold chain round his neck; and the scullions brought out live coals, which he had to eat till the flames poured out his mouth.

The Prince stayed on at the castle for a time, thinking of his mother, and wondering if she was still alive. At last he said to the maiden, "I am going into my own country. If you like you can go with me; I will take you." She answered, "Alas! it is so far off, and what should I do in a strange country where I know no one?"

As she did not wish to go, and yet they could not bear to be parted, he changed her into a beautiful pink, which he took with him.

Then he set out on his journey, and the poodle was made to run alongside till the Prince reached his own country.

Arrived there, he went straight to the tower where his mother was imprisoned, and as the tower was so high he wished for a ladder to reach the top. Then he climbed up, looked in, and cried, "Dearest mother, lady Queen, are you still alive?" She, thinking it was the Angels who brought her food come back, said, "I have just eaten; I do not want anything more." Then he said, "I am your own dear son whom the wild animals were supposed to have devoured; but I am still alive, and I shall soon come and rescue you." Then he got down and went to his father. He had himself announced as a strange huntsman, anxious to take service with the King, who said, "Yes; if you are skilled in game preserving, and can procure plenty of venison, I will engage you. But there has never before been any game in the whole district." The huntsman promised to procure as much game as the King could possibly require for the royal table.

Then he called the whole hunt together, and ordered them all into the forest with him. He caused a great circle to be enclosed, with only one outlet; then he took his place in the middle, and began to wish as hard as he could. Immediately over two hundred head of game came running into the enclosure. These the huntsmen had to shoot, and then they were piled on to sixty country wagons, and driven home to the King. So for once he was able to load his board with game, after having had none for many years.

The King was much pleased, and commanded his whole court to a banquet on the following day. When they were all assembled, he said to the huntsman, "You shall sit by me as you are so clever." He answered, "My Lord and King, may it please your Majesty, I am only a poor huntsman!" The King, however, insisted, and said, "I command you to sit by me." As he sat there, his thoughts wandered to his dear mother, and he wished one of the courtiers would speak of her. Hardly had he wished it than the Lord High Marshal said, "Your Majesty, we are all rejoicing here, how fares it with Her Majesty the Queen? Is she still alive in the tower, or has she perished?" But the King answered, "She allowed my beloved son to be devoured by wild animals, and I do not wish to hear anything about her." Then the huntsman stood up and said, "Gracious father, she is still alive, and I am her son. He was not devoured by wild animals; he was taken away by the scoundrel of a cook. He stole me while my mother was asleep, and sprinkled

her garments with the blood of a chicken.” Then he brought up the black poodle with the golden chain, and said, “This is the villain.”

He ordered some live coals to be brought, which he made the dog eat in the sight of all the people all the flames poured out of his mouth. Then he asked the King if he would like to see the cook in his true shape, and wished him back, and there he stood in his white apron, with his knife at his side. The King was furious when he saw him, and ordered him to be thrown into the deepest dungeon.

Then the huntsman said further, “My father, would you like to see the maiden who so tenderly saved my life when she was ordered to kill me, although by so doing she might have lost her own life?” The King answered, “Yes, I will gladly see her.” Then his son said, “Gracious father, I will show her to you first in the guise of a beautiful flower.” He put his hand into his pocket, and brought out the pink. It was a finer one than the King had ever seen before. Then his son said, “Now, I will show her to you in her true form.” In a moment after his wish was uttered, she stood before them in all her beauty, which was greater than any artist could paint.

The King sent ladies and gentlemen-in-waiting to the tower to bring the Queen back to his royal table. But when they reached the tower they found that she would no longer eat or drink, and she said, “The merciful God, who has preserved my life so long, will soon release me now.”

Three days after she died. At her burial the two white doves which had brought her food during her captivity, followed and hovered over her grave.

The old King caused the wicked cook to be torn into four quarters; but his own heart was filled with grief and remorse, and he died soon after.

His son married the beautiful maiden he had brought home with him as a flower, and, for all I know, they may be living still.

THE END