

1812

**GRIMM'S FAIRY TALES
THE SPIDER AND THE FLEA**

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 Spider and the Flea (1812) - One day the Spider who lives with the Flea scalds herself. The Flea screams and the Door, the Broom, the Cart, the Ashes, the Tree, the little Girl, and the Stream react in turn.

SPIDER AND FLEA

A SPIDER and a Flea dwelt together in one house, and brewed their beer in an egg-shell. One day, when the Spider was stirring it up, she fell in and scalded herself. Thereupon the Flea began to scream. And then the Door asked, "Why are you screaming, Flea?" "Because little Spider has scalded herself in the beer-tub," replied she.

Thereupon the Door began to creak as if it were in pain; and a Broom, which stood in the corner, asked, "What are you creaking for, Door?" "May I not creak?" it replied, "The little Spider's scalded herself, And the Flea weeps." So the Broom began to sweep industriously, and presently a little Cart came by, and asked the reason. "May I not sweep?" replied the Broom, "The little Spider's scalded herself, And the Flea weeps; The little Door creaks with the pain." Thereupon the little Cart said, "So will I run," and began to run very fast past a heap of Ashes, which cried out, "Why do you run, little Cart?" "Because," replied the Cart, "The little Spider's scalded herself, And the Flea weeps; The little Door creaks with the pain, And the Broom sweeps." "Then," said the Ashes, "I will burn furiously." Now, next the Ashes there grew a Tree, which asked, "Little heap, why do you burn?" "Because," was the reply, "The little Spider's scalded herself, And the Flea weeps; The little Door creaks with the pain, And the Broom sweeps; The little Cart runs on so fast." Thereupon the Tree cried, "I will shake myself!" and went on shaking till all its leaves fell off.

A little girl passing by with a water-pitcher saw it shaking, and asked, "Why do you shake yourself, little Tree?" "Why may I not?" said the Tree, "The little Spider's scalded herself, And the Flea weeps; The little Door creaks with the pain, And the Broom sweeps; The little Cart runs on so fast, And the Ashes burn." Then the Maiden said, "If so, I will break my pitcher"; and she threw it down and broke it.

At this the Streamlet, from which she drew the water, asked, "Why do you break your pitcher, my little Girl?" "Why may I not?" she replied; for "The little Spider's scalded herself, And the Flea weeps; The little Door creaks with the pain, And the Broom sweeps; The little Cart runs on so fast, And the Ashes burn; The little Tree shakes down its leaves! Now it is my turn!" "Ah, then," said the Streamlet, "now must I begin to flow." And it flowed and flowed along, in a great stream, which kept getting bigger and bigger, until at last it swallowed up the little Girl, the little Tree, the Ashes, the Cart, the Broom, the Door, the Flea and, last of all, the Spider, all together. - -

THE END