

1812

**GRIMM'S FAIRY TALES
THE WONDERFUL GLASS**

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 Wonderful Glass (1812) - A man had so many children that when another came he had no one left to ask to be godfather. He then asked a stranger who had a wonderful glass that could see Death to sponsor his child.

THE WONDERFUL GLASS

A MAN once had so many children that all his friends had been asked to become sponsors, so when another child was born he had no one to ask, and knew not what to do.

One night when he had laid himself down to sleep in great trouble, he had a wonderful dream. He dreamed that a voice said to him, "Go out early tomorrow morning, and the first person you meet, ask him to be godfather." On awaking, he determined to follow the advice given in his dream, and, dressing himself quickly, he went out. Near his door he met a man, and immediately asked him to be sponsor for his child.

The stranger, before giving his consent, presented the man with a glass, and said, "This is a most wonderful glass. The water with which you fill it has the power of curing sick persons; you have only to observe where Death stands. If he stands by the head of the sick person then give him the water, and he will be soon well; but if he stands by the feet all your trouble will be useless, the sick person must die." So the stranger became sponsor for his child, and gave to the father the wonderful goblet, which endowed the water he put into it with such healing qualities.

Besides this, he could always tell whether the sick person would recover or not, and could therefore speak confidently about curing him. By this he made a great deal of money, and his fame spread far and wide.

Even the King sent for him, when one of his children was ill but as the wonderful doctor entered, he saw Death standing at the head of the bed, and knew that the child would recover after drinking the water in the magic glass; and so he did.

The second time he was sent for the same occurred; but on his third visit the doctor saw Death seated at the foot of the bed, and he told the parents that the child must die.

After a while this doctor became curious, and thought he should like to see where his child's godfather, who had given him such a valuable present, lived, and tell him how he was getting on. But when he reached the house the household quite startled him. On the first step a mop and a broom were quarreling together and fighting furiously. "Where shall I find the master of this house?" he asked. "A step higher," answered the broom.

But when he arrived on the second step, he saw a number of dead fingers lying together, and he inquired again, "Where is the master?" "A step higher," replied one of the fingers.

On the third step lay a heap of human heads, who directed him to go a step higher. On the fourth step he saw a fish frizzling in the pan, and cooking himself.

He spoke to the man and told him to go a step higher. On he went, and at last, on the fifth step he came upon the door of a room, and peeping through the keyhole, saw the godfather, and to his surprise, he had large horns; but as soon as he opened the door and went in, the strange man with the horns rushed away suddenly, laid himself on the bed, and drew the clothes over him.

Then said the man, "What is the meaning of this strange household, good sir? On the steps I met with all sorts of strange things, and was told to go up higher; and when I came to the door of this room, I peeped through the keyhole and saw you with a pair of horns on your head." "That is not true," cried the pretended godfather, in such a terrible voice that the man, in a fright, turned to run away; but no one knows what has become of him, for he has never been heard of since.

THE END