

Water in the Basket

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1

There was once a widowed mother who married a widowed father. They each happened to have a daughter by their first marriage. The mother loved her own daughter, more than her husband's.

2

Daily, the mother would send both girls to fetch water from the river. She sent her own daughter for water with a jug. While her stepdaughter, she sent with the basket; but the water would all run out of the basket by the time she made it home. The stepmother was angry with her.

3

One day as the stepchild was filling her basket, it slipped out of her hands and was swept off by the stream. She began running downstream asking everyone she met, "Did you see my basket go by?" But they all told her, "Go further downstream and you'll find it."

4

She soon met an old woman sitting on a rock in the middle of the stream examining herself for fleas. "Have you seen my basket?" Asked the girl.
"Come here," replied the old woman. "I have your basket. But first be so good to look down my back and see what's biting me."

5

The girl killed the vermin, by the hundreds, but so as not to embarrass the old woman, she said, "Pearls and diamonds."

6

"You shall have pearls and diamonds yourself," replied the old woman. When all the fleas were off she said, "Come with me," and they went to her house, which was one big rubbish heap."

7

Do me a favor my girl, make my bed. Do you see anything in it?" It too was crawling with vermin, but the girl politely replied, "Roses and jasmynes."

8

"You shall have roses and jasmynes yourself. Do me another favor now and sweep the house. What do you sweep out?"

"Rubies and cherubs," answered the girl.

"You shall have rubies and cherubs yourself."

9

Then she opened a wardrobe containing all kinds of clothes and asked, "Do you want a silk dress or one of cotton?"

"I'm a poor girl as you can tell, so give me a cotton dress."

"I'm giving you the silk one." She gave her a beautiful gown of silk, and then opened a jewel case.

10

"Would you like gold or coral?"

"I'll take coral."

"But I'm giving you gold." And she slipped a gold necklace on her. "Do you wasn't crystal earrings, or diamond earrings?"

"Crystal."

11

"But I am giving you diamond ones," and she put them on her, adding, "You shall be beautiful, your hair shall be golden, and when you comb it, down one side shall pour roses and jasmines; down the other, pearls and rubies. Go home no, but don't turn around when the snakes hiss. When the clock crows, turn around."

12

The girl set out for home. The snakes hissed, but she didn't turn around. The clock crows, she turned around, and on her hair began to glow.

13

Her stepmother asked, "Who in the world gave you all those things?"

"An old woman, who'd found my basket, gave them to me for killing the fleas on her."

14

"Now I know I love you," said the stepmother. "Henceforth you'll go for water with the jug, while your sister takes the basket." To her own daughter she whispered, "Go for water with the basket, let it slip way from you in the stream, and go after it. And may you have the same luck as your sister!"

15

The stepsister marched off, threw the basket into the water, and then ran after it. Further downstream she met the old woman.

16

"Did you see my basket go by?"

"Come here, I have it, Look down my back and see what's biting me."

The girl began killing the vermin, and the old woman asked, "What is it?"

"Fleas and the itch."

"You shall have fleas and the itch yourself,"

17

She took the girl to make the bed. "What do you see there?"

"Bedbugs and lice."

"You shall Bedbugs and lice yourself."

18

She had her sweep the house. What do you see?"

"Disgusting filth!"

"You shall disgusting filth yourself."

19

Then she asked if she want a dress of sackcloth or one of silk.

"A silk dress!"

"But I am giving you sackcloth."

20

"A pearl necklace, or a necklace of rope?"

"Pearl!"

"But I am giving you rope."

21

"Golden earrings or tinsel?"

"Golden!"

"But I am giving you tinsel. Go home now and turn around when the snakes hiss, but don't turn around when the cock crows."

22

She went home, turned around then the snakes hissed, and her hair had vanished. Snakes began to slither above her head. It was useless to cutting them off; they only grew right back. The girl screamed and cried:

"Mamma, Mamma, for goodness sakes:

My hair has been replaced by snakes;

The more I cut it off, the more is aches."

23

As for the girl with the glowing hair, the King's son asked for her hand in marriage. On the day he was supposed to fetch her in his carriage, her stepmother said to her: "Since you are marrying the king's son, do me one last favor before you leave: wash out the barrel for me. Climb into it and I'll come and help you in a minute."

24

The girl climbed into the barrel. Her stepmother went off to get box of wild rats. Her plan was to throw them into the barrel her step daughter sat in. The wild rats would then nibble away at the stepdaughters' hair, in hopes that she would feel the same pain as her stepsister. The mother intended to dress the ugly girl in the wedding dress and take her to the king. The veil would conceal her face and snake hair so he couldn't tell the difference. After the vows are exchanged and the marriage is official, the veil will be removed, and the future King will realize the switch had been made.

25

Meanwhile the ugly girl walked by the barrel. “What are you doing in there?” she asked her half-sister.

“I’m here because I’m to marry the king’s son.”

“Let me get in, so I’ll be the one to wed him.”

As accommodating as ever, the beautiful girl climber out, while the ugly one took her place. The mother returned with the rats and released them into the barrel. Expecting the stepdaughters glowing hair to be eaten by rats, the mother was shocked when she heard the sound of snakes hissing coming from inside the barrel. Discovering it was her own child; she began screaming and crying at the top of her voice. The snakes on her head had eaten the rats and her daughter as well.

26

The beautiful daughter married the King’s son and lived happily ever after.