Ririro
READ ANYWHERE, ANYTIME

Snow-white and Rose-red

Brothers Grimm

There was once a poor widowed woman who lived in a lonely cottage. In front of the cottage was a garden where stood two rose-trees, one of which had white roses and the other red roses. She had two children who were like the two rose-trees, and one was called Snow-white, and the other Rose-red. They were good, happy, busy and cheerful children. They were often alone in the forest and gathered berries, and no animals hurt them, because they were so kind. The little hare would eat a cabbage-leaf out of their hands, the roe grazed by their side and the stag leapt merrily by them.

Snow-white and Rose-red kept their mother's little cottage so neat that it was a pleasure to look inside it. In the summer Rose-red took care of the house. In the winter Snow-white did. She lit the fire and hung the kettle on the hob. In the evening, when the snowflakes fell, the mother said: 'Go, Snow-white, lock the door,' and then they sat round the fireplace, and the mother took her glasses and read out of a book, and the two girls listened as they sat and spun.



One evening, as they were sitting comfortably together, someone knocked at the door. The mother said: 'Quick, Rose-red, open the door, it must be a traveller who is seeking shelter.' Rose-red opened the door and there was a bear that stuck his big head in the door. Rose-red screamed and jumped back and Snow-white hid herself behind her mother's bed. But the bear began to talk and said: 'Do not be afraid, I will do you no harm! I am half-frozen, and only want to warm myself a little beside you.'

'Poor bear,' said the mother, 'lie down by the fire, only take care that you do not burn your coat.' Then she cried: 'Snow-white, Rose-red, come out, the bear will do you no harm, he means well.' So they both came out. The bear said: 'Here, children, knock the snow out of my coat a little'; so they brought the broom and swept the bear's fur clean; and he stretched himself by the fire and growled contentedly. And soon the bear became a friend. They tugged his hair with their hands, put their feet upon his back and rolled him about.

When it was bed-time, and the others went to bed, the mother said to the bear:

‘You can lie there by the fireplace, and then you will be safe from the cold and the bad weather.’ In the morning the two girls let the bear out and he trotted across the snow into the forest.

The bear came every evening at the same time, laid himself down by the fireplace, and let the children amuse themselves with him as much as they liked; and they got so used to him that the doors were never locked until their friend had arrived.

When spring had come, the bear said one morning to Snow-white: ‘I must go away, and can't come back the whole summer.’ ‘Where are you going, dear bear?’ asked Snow-white. ‘I must go into the forest and guard my treasures from the wicked dwarfs. In the winter, when the earth is frozen hard, they are obliged to stay below and cannot work their way through; but now, when the sun has warmed the earth, they break through it, and come out to steal.’ Snow-white was sad to see him go and as she opened the door for him, and the bear was hurrying out, his fur got caught on the doorhandle and a piece of his hairy coat was torn off, and it seemed to Snow-white as if she had seen gold shining through it, but she was not sure about it. The bear ran away quickly, and was soon out of sight behind the trees.

A short time afterwards the mother sent her children into the forest to get firewood. They found a big tree fallen on the ground, and close by the trunk something was jumping backwards and forwards in the grass, but they could not make out what it was. When they came nearer they saw a dwarf with an old withered face and a snow-white beard. The end of the beard was caught in the tree, and the little fellow was jumping about like a dog tied to a rope, and did not know what to do. He looked at the girls with his fiery red eyes and cried: ‘Why do you stand there? Can you not come here and help me?’ ‘What are you up to, little man?’ asked Rose-red. ‘You stupid, prying goose!’ answered the dwarf: ‘I was going to split the tree to get a little wood for cooking. But it went wrong and now I'm stuck!'

The children tried very hard, but they could not pull the beard out. ‘I will run and fetch someone,’ said Rose-red. ‘You senseless goose!’ snarled the dwarf.’ ‘Don’t be impatient,’ said Snow-white, ‘I will help you,’ and she pulled her scissors out of her pocket, and cut off the end of the beard. As soon as the dwarf was free, he grabbed a bag which was full of gold and grumbled to himself: 'To cut off a piece of my fine beard. Bad luck to you!’ and then he swung the bag upon his back, and went off without even once looking at the children.



Some time afterwards Snow-white and Rose-red went to catch fish. As they came near the brook they saw something like a large grasshopper jumping towards the water. They ran to it and found it was the dwarf. ‘Where are you going?’ said Rose-red; ‘you surely don’t want to go into the water?’ ‘I am not such a fool!’ cried the dwarf; ‘don’t you see that the fish wants to pull me in?’ The little man had been sitting there fishing, and unluckily the wind had tangled up his beard with the fishing-line; a moment later a big fish made a bite; the fish kept the upper hand and pulled the dwarf towards him. He held on, but it was of little good, for he was forced to follow the movements of the fish, and was in urgent danger of being dragged into the water.



The girls came just in time; they held him fast and tried to free his beard from the line. There was nothing to do but to bring out the scissors and cut the beard. When the dwarf saw that he screamed out: ‘Was it not enough to clip off the end of my beard? Now you have cut off the best part of it.’ Then he took out a sack of pearls which lay in the grass, and without another word he dragged it away and disappeared behind a stone.

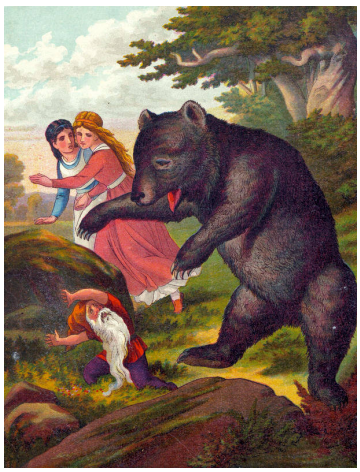
It happened that soon afterwards the mother sent the two children to the town. They noticed a large bird hovering in the air, flying slowly round and round above them; it sank lower and lower, and at last settled near a rock not far away. Immediately they heard a loud cry. They saw with horror that the eagle had seized their old acquaintance the dwarf, and was going to carry him off.



The children grabbed the little man tightly and pulled against the eagle so long that it let go. As soon as the dwarf had recovered from his first fright he cried with his shrill voice: ‘Could you not have done it more carefully! You dragged at my brown coat so that it is all torn and full of holes, you clumsy creatures!’ Then he took up a sack full of precious stones, and slipped away again under the rock into his hole. The girls, who by this time were used to his ingratitude, went on their way and did their business in town.

On their way back home they came across the dwarf again, who had laid out all his precious stones. The evening sun shone upon the brilliant stones; they glittered and sparkled with all colours so beautifully that the children stood still and stared at them. ‘Why do you stand gaping there?’ cried the dwarf, and his face became red with rage. He was still cursing when a loud growling was heard, and a bear came trotting towards them out of the forest. The dwarf sprang up in a fright, but he could not reach his cave, for the bear was already close. Then he cried: ‘Dear Mr Bear, spare me, I will give you all my treasures; look, the beautiful jewels lying there! Come, take these two girls, for mercy’s sake eat them!’ The bear ignored the dwarf and slapped the creature with his paw. Thy dwarf flew through the air and was never seen again.

The girls had run away, but the bear called to them: ‘Snow-white and Rose-red, do not be afraid.’ Then they recognized his voice and waited, and when he came up to them suddenly his bearskin fell off, and he stood there a handsome man, clothed all in gold. ‘I am a king’s son,’ he said, ‘and I was bewitched by that wicked dwarf, who had stolen my treasures; I have had to run about the forest as a savage bear until I was freed.



Snow-white married him, and Rose-red married his brother, and they divided between them the great treasure which the dwarf had gathered in his cave. The old mother lived peacefully and happily with her children for many years. She took the two rose-trees with her, and they stood before her window, and every year bore the most beautiful roses, white and red.



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