Ririro
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The Bear in the Forest Hut

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Once upon a time, there was an old man who was a widower. He lived with an old woman who was also a widow. They each had a daughter from their first marriage. The old man was a kind and gentle man, while the woman was the opposite - mean and wicked. The daughter of the old man was just like her father, kind and gentle. The daughter of the old woman was just like her mother, wicked and mean. The stepmother hated the daughter of the old man, but loved her own daughter dearly.

One day, she kicked the stepdaughter out of the house. She said to the old man, "Your worthless daughter is good for nothing. Leave her in the forest. Come back without her. If you don't, you'll regret it!"



The poor old man obeyed his wife. He was terrified of her. With a heavy heart, he took his daughter to the forest and left her there alone. The daughter wandered through the forest for a long time until she saw a little hut. She knocked on the door, but no one answered. She carefully opened the door and found no one inside. There was a table and bench, a stove, and a spinning wheel. Next to the spinning wheel was a basket filled with wool. She sat down at the spinning wheel to eat the strawberries she had picked in the forest.

It started to get dark when she heard a voice outside. "Who is visiting me? Let it not be a thief! Let it not be a thief!"

When the voice stopped, she replied, "I have been left alone in the forest, but I am not a thief! Please let me stay here for the night."

Soon after, the door opened, and who came in? It was a bear! The girl was naturally frightened, but when the bear said, "Good evening, girl," she felt less uneasy. "Good evening, whoever you are," she replied.

"How did you get here?" the bear asked. "Did you come here of your own free will or were you forced to?"

The girl tearfully told him everything. The bear sat down next to her and stroked her face with his paw.

"Don't cry, fair maiden. You will be happy someday. But for now, you must do exactly what I ask of you. Do you see the basket of wool? You must spin the wool into thread. Then you must weave the thread into a piece of cloth. You must bleach the cloth. From the bleached cloth, you must sew a shirt for me. I will come back tomorrow at exactly the same time. It must be ready by then. If it is, I will reward you. Until tomorrow!" said the bear. He then made a deep bow to the girl and left.

"How can I do all of that in twenty-four hours?" the girl wondered. "Spin all the wool into thread? Then weave the thread and bleach the cloth? And then sew a shirt from the cloth? But I must do it, and I will do it. Let me start right away!"

And so she took the wool and began spinning it by the light of the moon. Time passed quickly, and the thread was spun before the sun rose. She was surprised to see how fast it had gone. But now she had to find a loom to continue her task. Where could she find a loom? Thinking, she fell asleep.

The sun was already high in the sky when she woke up. There was breakfast ready on the table and a loom under the window. She quickly ate her breakfast and sat down at the loom. It didn't take her long to weave a piece of fabric. She took the fabric to a meadow and soaked it in a brook. Then she spread the fabric out in the sun. Within an hour, the fabric had been bleached. She then took the fabric back to the hut, cut out a shirt, and began to sew diligently. Dusk fell, and she wasn't yet finished with the shirt when the door opened and the bear walked in.

"Is the shirt ready?" the bear asked.

She gave it to him.

"Thank you!" said the bear. "Now I must reward you. You said you have a bad stepmother. If you want, I can send my bears to tear her and her daughter into pieces."

"Oh, no! Please don't do that! I don't want to be so cruel!" she replied, horrified.

"Very well!" said the bear. "Make me some porridge. It's my dinner. You'll find everything you need to make it in the kitchen. Meanwhile, I'll get my bedding. I'll be sleeping at home tonight."

The bear left the room, and the girl lit the fire in the stove and began to make the porridge. At that moment, she heard a noise under the bench. A skinny, little mouse ran out from underneath it, stood on its hind legs, and with a human voice said, "Mistress, help me before I die of hunger. Please give me something

to eat!"

The girl felt sorry for the mouse and gave him a spoonful of porridge. The mouse ate it, thanked her, and ran back to his hole. Soon after, the bear came in, carrying a load of wood and stones. He placed them on the stove. He ate the porridge and lay down on the stove on top of the wood and stones. He took out a keyring and gave it to the girl.

"Take this keyring and put out the fire. You must walk around the room with the keys all night and keep ringing them until I wake up in the morning. If you're still alive, then you'll be very lucky."

The bear started snoring, and the old man's daughter kept walking around the hut, ringing the keys. Soon, the mouse ran out of his hole and said, "Give me the keys, mistress, and I'll ring them for you. You must hide behind the stove all night to protect yourself from the flying stones."

So the mouse began running up and down the wall, under the bench. The girl hid behind the stove. Around midnight, the bear woke up and threw a stone in the middle of the room. But the mouse kept running and ringing the keys.

The bear asked, "Are you still alive?"

"Yes, I am," answered the girl, hiding behind the stove. The bear started throwing stones and blocks of wood quickly and fiercely from the stove, and every time he did, he asked, "Are you still alive?"

This went on until morning.

The mouse gave the keyring back to the girl and ran back to his hole. The old man's daughter began walking around the room, ringing the keys. The bear woke up and climbed off the stove.

"Oh daughter of the old man. I am so glad that I met you. I am a king, but I was enchanted and turned into a bear. The enchantment could only be broken if a living soul spent two nights in this forest hut and completed the tasks that I had to assign. Soon, I will return to my human form in a few days. I will go back to my kingdom where I would love to marry you. Please look into my right ear."

The girl did as she was told and saw a beautiful land with millions of people, tall mountains, deep rivers, meadows with sheep, and rich cities.

"What do you see?" the bear asked.

"I see a beautiful land," she answered.

"That is my kingdom. Look into my left ear."

She looked and couldn't admire enough of what she saw: a beautiful palace, with

many carriages and horses in the courtyard, and in the carriages, rich garments, jewels, and all kinds of rarities.

"What do you see?" the bear asked.

She described it all.

"Which carriage do you find the most beautiful?" the bear asked.

"The one with four horses," she replied.

"Then it is yours," the bear said.

Shortly after, a golden carriage stopped at the cottage, pulled by four beautiful horses. The bear also gave her a gown made of golden cloth and diamond earrings.

"Your father will come to pick you up soon. In a few days, when the power of the enchantment is over and I am a king again, I will come to you and take you to my kingdom."

After this, the bear disappeared into the forest. The daughter looked out the window to see if her father would come. Three days ago, the old man had returned from the forest when he had left his daughter there alone. On the third day, he went back to pick up his daughter.

In the evening, the old woman and her daughter looked out the window. A dog barked at them. It was the favorite of the old man's daughter. "The old man has picked up his daughter," the dog barked. "She is wearing a golden dress and diamonds!"

The old woman gave the dog an angry kick. "You lie, you big ugly dog! He is bringing home his daughter's bones!"

Then they walked to the courtyard and could not believe their eyes. There was a golden carriage with the old man's daughter, dressed all in gold. The old woman pretended to be overjoyed to see her stepdaughter and asked her where she had gotten all those rich and beautiful things.

The girl told her that she had received them all from the bear in the forest hut.

The next day, the old woman baked delicious cakes, gave them to her own daughter, and said to the old man, "If your worthless daughter has had so much luck, I am sure that my sweet, beautiful treasure will receive much more from the bear. Take her to the forest and come back without her."

So, the old man took his stepdaughter to the forest and left her alone at the forest hut. Confident in the power of her charms, she immediately entered the hut. There was no one inside. In the corner was the same table. There were the

same benches, and the stove was by the door, and the spinning wheel was under the window. The basket next to it was filled with wool.

She sat on one of the benches and ate the cakes one by one.

It became dark when she heard a voice say, "Who visits me? Let it not be a thief! Let it not be a thief!"

When the voice stopped, she replied, "I am certainly not a thief. I was just abandoned in the forest. Let me spend the night here."

Then the door opened and the bear came in. The girl stood up, gave him her best smile, and waited for him to bow first. The bear looked at her sternly, made a bow, and said, "Welcome, young lady, but I don't have much time to stay here. I need to go back to the forest. To sleep here, you must spin a thread from the wool in the basket, weave a cloth from the thread, wash and bleach the fabric, and then sew a shirt from it."

Having said this, the bear turned around and went back into the forest.

"I did not come here for that," sighed the girl, "to spin, weave, and sew." After that, she made herself comfortable on one of the benches and fell asleep.

The next day, at dusk, the bear returned and asked, "Is the shirt ready?"

She gave no answer.

"Prepare my dinner immediately. You will find everything you need in the kitchen. I have to go get my bedding because tonight I will sleep at home."

The bear went outside, and the old woman's daughter lit the fire in the stove and began making porridge. Then the mouse came out, stood on his hind legs, and said, "Young lady, please help me and give me something to eat, or I will die of hunger."

But the unfriendly girl only grabbed a spoon and threw it at the poor mouse, who ran away in fright.

The bear soon returned with a huge load of stones and wood. He placed them on the stove. After eating his porridge, he lay down on the stones and wood. "Here, take these keys and walk through the hut all night, jingling them. If you are still alive in the morning, you will be happy."

The bear immediately began snoring, and the girl walked drowsily up and down, jingling the keys. But around midnight, the bear woke up and threw a stone to where he heard the jingling. It hit the daughter of the old woman, and she fell dead on the ground.

The next morning, the bear woke up and saw the dead girl. He opened the door

of the forest hut and stamped on the threshold three times. It thundered and lightning flashed, and in an instant, the bear became a handsome, young king. A carriage stopped at the door, pulled by six horses. The king got into the carriage and drove away from the forest, back to his kingdom.

On the third day, the old woman asked the old man to bring her daughter back. "By now, she has undoubtedly married a king, which means I will be the mother of a queen."

The old man, obedient as always, set out immediately. When evening fell, the old woman looked out the window. The dog began to bark. "The old man is coming back with nothing but your daughter's bones," the dog barked at her.

"You are a liar," the old woman cried, and she ran out of the house to the courtyard to greet her daughter.

"Where is my dearest daughter?" she asked the old man.



The old man scratched his head and replied, "She had an accident. All I have left are her bones. She was probably eaten by wolves."

The old woman, overcome with grief, took the bones to bury them at a nearby crossroads. Then she fell with her face on the grave and turned to stone.

Meanwhile, a royal carriage stopped in the courtyard. The king took both the old man and his daughter into the carriage, and they rode away to his kingdom, where the wedding took place immediately. The old man lived happily in his final years, as the father-in-law of a king, with his dear daughter, who now had a beautiful and happy life. The life of a queen!

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