



# HANSEL AND GRETEL

Brothers Grimm

In a great forest dwelt a poor wood-cutter with his wife and his two children. The boy was called Hansel and the girl Gretel. He had little to eat. Once when great dearth fell on the land, he thought over this by night in his bed, then groaned and said to his wife:

"What will become of us? How will we feed our poor children, when we no longer have anything even for ourselves?"

"I'll tell you what to do, husband", answered the woman, "early tomorrow morning we will take the children out into the forest. There we will light a fire for them, and give each of them a piece of bread. Then we will go to our work and leave them alone. They will not find the way home again, and **we shall be rid of them**<sup>1</sup>".

"No, wife," said the man, "I will not do that! How can I leave my children alone in the forest? The wild animals will soon come and tear them to pieces".

"O, you fool!" said she, "then we must all four **die of hunger**<sup>2</sup>. You may **plane the planks**<sup>3</sup> for our coffins!"

She left him no choice and he consented.

"But I feel very sorry for the poor children", said the man.

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<sup>1</sup> **we shall be rid of them** — мы избавимся от них

<sup>2</sup> **die of hunger** — умереть от голода

<sup>3</sup> **plane the planks** — строгать доски

The two children did not sleep, and heard what their stepmother said to their father. Gretel wept bitter tears, and said to Hansel:

"Now we will die".

"Be quiet, Gretel", said Hansel, "do not distress yourself, I will soon find a way to help us".

And when the old wood-cutter and his wife fell asleep, Hansel got up, put on his little coat, opened the door below, and crept outside. The moon shone brightly, and the white pebbles in front of the house glittered like real silver pennies. Hansel stooped and stuffed the little pocket of his coat with as many as he could get in. Then he went back and said to Gretel:

"**Be comforted**<sup>1</sup>, dear little sister, and sleep in peace. God will not forsake us".

Then he lay down again in his bed. When day dawned, the woman came and awoke the two children. She said:

"Get up, you sluggards! We will go into the forest to fetch wood".

She gave each a little piece of bread, and said:

"There is something for your dinner, but do not eat it fast. You will get nothing else".

Gretel took the bread under her apron, as Hansel had the pebbles in his pocket. Then they all went together to the forest.

Soon Hansel stood still and peeped back at the house, and did so again and again. His father said: "Hansel, what do you do? Go! Do not forget how to use your legs".

"Ah, father", said Hansel, "I look at my little white cat, which is on the roof. The cat wants to say goodbye to me".

The wife said:

"Fool, that is not your little cat, that is the morning sun on the chimneys".

Hansel, however, did not look back at the cat, but threw one of the white pebble-stones out of his pocket on the road.

When they reached the middle of the forest, the father said:

"Now, children, pile up some wood, and I will light a fire".

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<sup>1</sup> **be comforted** — успокойся

Hansel and Gretel gathered brushwood together, as high as a little hill. The brushwood was lighted, and when the flames burnt very high, the woman said:

"Now, children, lay yourselves down by the fire and rest, we will go into the forest and cut some wood. When we do it, we will come back and fetch you away".

Hansel and Gretel sat by the fire, and when noon came, each ate a little piece of bread. As they heard the strokes of the wood-axe, they believed that their father was near. It was not the axe, however, but a branch.

And as they sat a long time, their eyes closed with fatigue, and they fell fast asleep. When at last they awoke, it was already dark night. Gretel began to cry and said:

"How will we get out of the forest?"

But Hansel comforted her and said:

"Just wait a little, until the moon rises. Then we will soon find the way".

And when the full moon rose, Hansel took his little sister by the hand, and followed the pebbles which shone like silver pieces, and showed them the way.

They walked the whole night long, and by break of day came once more to their father's house. They knocked at the door, and when the woman opened it and saw that it was Hansel and Gretel, she said:

"You naughty children, why do you sleep so long in the forest? We thought you stayed there for ever!"

The father, however, rejoiced, for he was very sorry for his children.

Not long afterwards, there was once more great dearth throughout the land. The children's stepmother said at night to their father:

"We have nothing to eat. We have one half loaf left, and that is the end. The children must go, we will take them farther into the wood, so that they will not find their way out again. There is no other means!"

The man's heart was heavy, and he thought:

"It will be better for you to share the last mouthful with your children".

The woman, however, did not listen to him, but scolded and reproached him. But he who says A must say B.

The children, however, were still awake and heard the conversation. When the old wood-cutter and his wife were asleep, Hansel again got up, and wanted to go out and pick up pebbles. But the door was locked, and Hansel could not get out. Nevertheless he comforted his little sister, and said:

"Do not cry, Gretel, go to sleep quietly, the good God will help us".

Early in the morning came the woman, and took the children out of their beds. She gave them their piece of bread, but it was still smaller than the time before. On the way into the forest Hansel crumbled his in his pocket, and often stood still and threw a morsel on the ground.

"Hansel, why do you stop and look round?" said the father, "go on!"

"I want to look back at my little pigeon which is on the roof, and wants to say goodbye to me".

"Fool!" said the woman, "that is not your little pigeon, that is the morning sun on the chimney". Hansel, however little by little, threw all the crumbs on the path.

The woman led the children still deeper into the forest. Then they made a great fire again, and

the stepmother said:

"Just sit there, you children, and when you are tired you may sleep a little. We will go into the forest to cut wood. We will come in the evening and fetch you away".

When it was noon, Gretel shared her piece of bread with Hansel, who scattered his by the way. Then they fell asleep and evening passed, but no one came to the poor children. They did not awake until it was dark night. Hansel comforted his little sister and said:

"Just wait, Gretel, until the moon rises, and then we shall see the crumbs of bread. They will show us our way home again".

When the moon came they set out, but they found no crumbs, for the many thousands of birds which fly about in the woods and fields picked them all up. Hansel said to Gretel:

'We shall soon find the way,' but they did not find it.

They walked the whole night and all the next day too from morning till evening, but they did not get out of the

forest. They were very hungry, for they had nothing to eat but two or three berries, which grew on the ground. And as they were so weary that their legs carried them no longer, they lay down beneath a tree and fell asleep.

They spent three mornings in the wood. They began to walk again, but they always came deeper into the forest. If help doesn't come soon, they will die of hunger and weariness!

When it was midday, they saw a beautiful snow-white bird on a bough. The bird sang so delightfully that they stood still and listened to it. And when its song was over, it spread its wings and flew away before them. The children followed it until they reached a little house, on the roof of which it alighted. When they approached the little house they saw that it was built of bread and covered with cakes, but that the windows were of clear sugar.

"We **will set to work on that**<sup>1</sup>", said Hansel, "and have a good meal. I will eat a bit of the roof, and you Gretel, can eat some of the window, it will taste sweet".

Hansel reached up above, and broke off a little of the roof to try how it tasted. Gretel leant against the window and nibbled at the panes. Then a soft voice cried from the parlour:

*'Nibble, nibble, gnaw,  
Who is at my little house?'*

The children answered:

*'The wind, the wind,  
The heaven-born wind,'*

and continued to eat. Hansel, who liked the taste of the roof, tore down a great piece of it. Gretel pushed out the whole of one round window-pane, sat down, and enjoyed herself with it. Suddenly the door opened, and an old woman, who supported herself on crutches, came out. Hansel and Gretel were so terribly frightened that they **let fall**<sup>2</sup> what they had in their hands. The old woman, however, nodded her head, and said:

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<sup>1</sup> **will set to work on that** — примемся за это

<sup>2</sup> **let fall** — уронили

"Oh, you dear children, who brought you here? Come in, and stay with me. No harm will happen to you".

She took them both by the hand, and led them into her little house. Then she gave them good food, milk and pancakes, with sugar, apples, and nuts. Afterwards she covered two pretty little beds with clean white linen for them. Hansel and Gretel lay down in them, and thought they were in heaven.

But the old woman only pretended to be so kind. She was actually a wicked witch, who **lay in wait for**<sup>1</sup> children. She only built the little house of bread in order to entice them there. When a child fell into her power, she killed it, cooked and ate it, and that was a feast day with her. Witches have red eyes, and cannot see far, but they have a keen scent like the beasts, and are aware when human beings draw near.

When Hansel and Gretel came into her neighbourhood, she laughed with malice, and said mockingly:

"I got them, they won't escape me again!"

Early in the morning before the children were awake, she was already up. The children looked so pretty, with their plump and rosy cheeks, that the witch muttered to herself:

"That will be a dainty mouthful!"

Then she seized Hansel with her shriveled hand, carried him into a little stable, and locked him in behind a grated door. He cried and screamed, but it did not help him.

Then the witch went to Gretel, shook her till she awoke, and cried:

"Get up, lazy bones, fetch some water, and cook something good for your brother. He is in the stable outside, and he must be fat. When he is fat, I will eat him".

Gretel began to weep bitterly, but it was all in vain.

And now the best food was cooked for poor Hansel, but Gretel got nothing but crab-shells. Every morning the woman crept to the little stable, and cried:

"Hansel, stretch out your finger to see whether you are fat enough".

Hansel, however, stretched out a little bone to her, and the old woman, who had dim eyes, could not see it, and

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<sup>1</sup> **lay in wait for** — подстерегала

thought it was Hansel's finger. She was astonished that the boy still was not fat.

When four weeks passed by, and Hansel still remained thin, the witch became impatient and did not want to wait any longer.

"Now, then, Gretel", she cried to the girl, "bring some water. Fast! Let Hansel be fat or lean, tomorrow I will kill him, and cook him".

Ah, how the poor little sister lamented when she fetched the water! How her tears flew down her cheeks!

"Dear God, help us!" she cried. "If the wild beasts in the forest devoured us, we at any rate died together".

"**Shut up!**"<sup>1</sup> said the old woman, "it won't help you at all".

Early in the morning, the witch told Gretel to go out and hang up the cauldron with the water, and light the fire.

"We will bake first", said the old woman, "I heated the oven, and kneaded the dough".

She pushed poor Gretel out to the oven, from which flames of fire darted.

"Creep in", said the witch, "and see if it is properly heated, so that we can put the bread in".

And once Gretel was inside, she intended to shut the oven and bake the girl. Then the witch wanted to eat her, too.

But Gretel understood this, and said:

"I do not know how to do it. How do I get in?"

"Silly goose", said the old woman. "The door is big enough; just look, I can get in myself!"

And the witch crept up and thrust her head into the oven. Then Gretel pushed the witch far into it, and shut the iron door, and fastened the bolt. Oh! Then the witch began to howl quite horribly, but Gretel ran away and the witch was burnt to death.

Gretel, however, ran like lightning to Hansel, opened his little stable, and cried:

"Hansel, we are saved! The old witch is dead!"

Then Hansel sprang like a bird from its cage when the door is opened. How they rejoiced and embraced each

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<sup>1</sup> **Shut up!** — Заткнись!

other! How they danced about and kissed each other! And as they had no longer any need to fear her, they went into the witch's house. In every corner there stood chests full of pearls and jewels.

"These are far better than pebbles!" said Hansel, and thrust the pearls and jewels into his pockets.

Gretel said:

"I, too, will take something home with me", and filled her pinafore full.

"But now we must go away", said Hansel, "to get out of the witch's forest".

They walked for two hours, and they came to a great stretch of water.

"We cannot cross it", said Hansel, "I see no plank, and no bridge".

"And there is also no ferry", answered Gretel, "but I see a white duck. I ask it, and it will help us".

Then Gretel cried:

*'Little duck, little duck, do you see,  
Hansel and Gretel are here?  
There's not a plank, or bridge in sight,  
Take us across on your back so white.'*

The duck came to them, and Hansel seated himself on its back, and told his sister to sit by him.

"No", replied Gretel, "that will be too heavy for the little duck. The duck will take us across, one after the other".

The good little duck did so, and when they were once safely across and walked for a short time, the forest was more and more familiar to them. **At length**<sup>1</sup> they saw from afar their father's house. Then they began to run, rushed into the parlour, and threw themselves round their father's neck. The man was very happy to see them again. The stepwoman, however, was dead. Gretel emptied her pinafore until pearls and precious stones ran about the room. Hansel threw one handful after another out of his pocket to add to them. Then they lived together in perfect happiness.

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<sup>1</sup> **at length** — наконец

# THE GIRL WITHOUT HANDS

Brothers Grimm

A certain miller was very poor, and had nothing but his mill and a large apple-tree behind it. Once when he went into the forest to fetch wood, an old man stepped up to him, and said,

“Why do you plague yourself with this wood? I will make you rich, if you promise me what is behind your mill”.

“What can that be? It’s my apple-tree”, thought the miller, and said, “Yes”.

So he gave a promise to the stranger. The old man, however, laughed mockingly and said,

“When three years pass, I will come and carry away what belongs to me”, and then he went.

When the miller got home, his wife came to meet him and said,

“Tell me, miller, from whence comes this sudden wealth into our house? All at once every box and chest was filled! No one brought it in, and I don’t know how it happened”.

He answered,

“It comes from a stranger who met me in the forest, and promised me great treasure. I, in return, promised him what stands behind the mill. We can very well give him the big apple-tree for it”.

"Ah, husband," said the terrified wife, "that was the devil! He did not mean the apple-tree, but our daughter, who is behind the mill!"

The miller's daughter was a beautiful, pious girl, and lived through the three years in the fear of God and without sin. When therefore the time was over, and the day came, she washed herself clean, and made a circle round herself with chalk. The devil appeared quite early, but he could not come near to her. Angrily, he said to the miller,

"Take all water away from her, that she may no longer be able to wash herself. Otherwise I have no power over her".

The miller was afraid, and did so. The next morning the devil came again, but the girl wept on her hands, and they were quite clean. Again he could not get near her, and furiously said to the miller,

"Cut her hands off, or else I cannot get her!"

The miller was shocked and answered,

"How can I cut off my own child's hands?"

Then the devil threatened him and said,

"If you do not do it, you are mine, and I will take you instead!"

The father became alarmed, and promised to obey him. So he went to the girl and said,

"My child, if I do not cut off both your hands, the devil will carry me away. In my terror I promised to do it. Help me in my need, and forgive me the harm".

She replied,

"Dear father, do with me what you will, I am your child".

Thereupon she laid down both her hands, and her father cut them off. The devil came for the third time, but she wept so long and so much on the stumps, that after all they were quite clean.

Then the devil **gave in**<sup>1</sup>, and lost all power over her.

The miller said to the girl,

"Thanks to you, I received such great wealth. I will keep you most delicately as long as you live".

But she replied,

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<sup>1</sup> **gave in** — отступил

"Here I cannot stay, I will go forth, compassionate people will give me as much as I require".

Thereupon she asked to tie her arms to her back, and by sunrise she set out on her way. She walked the whole day until night fell. Then she came to a royal garden. She saw that trees are covered with beautiful fruits, but she could not enter, for there was much water round about it. And as she was very tired, and hunger tormented her, she thought,

"Ah, I want **to find myself**<sup>1</sup> inside and eat the fruit! Or I'll die of hunger!"

Then she knelt down, called on the Lord, and prayed. And suddenly an angel came towards her, who made a dam in the water. The moat became dry and she could walk through it.

She went into the garden and the angel went with her. She saw a tree with beautiful pears. Then she went to them, and ate one with her mouth from the tree. The gardener watched it; but as the angel was nearby, he was afraid and thought the maiden was a spirit, and was silent. He dare not to cry out, or to speak to the spirit.

When the girl ate the pear, she was satisfied. She went and concealed herself among the bushes. The King to whom the garden belonged, came down to it next morning, and counted. He saw that one of the pears **was missing**<sup>2</sup>. The King asked the gardener about the pear. The gardener answered,

"Last night, a spirit came in, who had no hands, and ate off one of the pears with its mouth".

The King said,

"How did the spirit get over the water? Where did it go after that?"

The gardener answered,

"Someone came in a snow-white garment from heaven who made a dam, and kept back the water. So the spirit walked through the moat. And as it was an angel, I was afraid, and asked no questions, and did not cry out. When the spirit ate the pear, it went back again".

The King said,

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<sup>1</sup> **to find myself** — оказаться

<sup>2</sup> **was missing** — отсутствовала