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Diamonds and Toads

Charles Perrault

Once upon a time, there was a widow who had two daughters. The eldest resembled her so much in her face and humor that everyone who looked at the daughter thought they saw the mother. She was so unpleasant and arrogant that living with her was impossible.

The youngest, who was the image of her father in terms of politeness and gentleness, was also one of the most beautiful girls ever seen. Because people naturally love those who are like them, the mother was completely fond of her eldest daughter but had a terrible aversion to the youngest. She made her eat in the kitchen and she had to work constantly.

Among other things, this poor child was forced to fetch water twice a day from a fountain one and a half kilometers from the house and carry a jug full of it back home. One day, when she was at the fountain, a poor woman came to her and begged her to let her drink.

"Oh, yes, dear poor woman, of course you may drink," said the beautiful little girl from the bottom of her heart. She immediately rinsed the jug, took some of the clearest water from the fountain, and gave it to her. She held the jug up the whole time so that the woman could drink more easily.



When the good woman had drunk, she said to her, "You are very beautiful, my dear, and so good and polite that I cannot help but want to give you a gift." The woman was actually a fairy who had taken on the form of a poor country woman. She wanted to see how far the politeness and good manners of this beautiful girl would go. "I will give you as a gift," the Fairy continued, "that with every word you speak, a flower or a diamond will come out of your mouth."

When the beautiful girl came home, her mother scolded her for staying so long at the fountain. "Excuse me, Mama," said the poor girl, "that I did not hurry." And as she spoke these words, two Roses, two Pearls, and two Diamonds came out of her mouth. "What do I see there?" said her mother, highly surprised. "I think I see Pearls and Diamonds coming out of this girl's mouth! How is this possible, child?"



This was the first time she had called her child. The poor girl told her everything honestly, and an endless number of Diamonds came out of her mouth. "Oh, Heavenly Grace," cried the mother, "I must send my other child there too. Come here, Fanny, and see what comes out of your sister's mouth when she speaks. Wouldn't you be happy, my dearest child, to receive the same gift? You only have to go and fetch water from the fountain and if a certain poor woman asks you to let her drink, give her the water. Be very polite."

"That would indeed be a very nice sight," said this poorly raised, rude girl, "to see me fetch water." "You will go, you impudent one," said the mother, "and right away too." The girl took the best silver cup from home and went grumbling along.

She had not yet reached the fountain when she saw a lady coming out of the woods who was beautifully dressed. The lady came to her and asked if she could drink. Now you must know that this was actually the fairy who had appeared to the sister. But she was now dressed as a princess and had taken on a royal attitude to see how far the rudeness of this girl would go.



"Did I come all the way here just to provide you with water, I hope not," said the proud, rude girl. "I had to bring the silver cup just because you are a lady? But you can drink from it, do as you please."

"You are not exactly polite," answered the fairy, without a sign of compassion. "And since you are so poorly raised and disobedient, I give you as a gift that with every word you speak, a Snake or a Toad will come out of your mouth."

As soon as her mother saw her daughter return, she called out: "And Daughter?" "Well, Mother," answered the defiant girl, and two adders and two toads came out of her mouth. "Oh Heavenly Grace," cried the mother, "what do I see now? Oh oh! It's that miserable sister of yours who has caused all this, but she will pay for it." And immediately she ran to her to give her a few strong slaps. The poor

child ran away from her and hid in a forest nearby.

A Prince, who was returning from hunting, saw the beautiful girl and asked her why she was there alone and why she was crying. "My mother has sent me away, sir," the girl sobbed. The Prince, who saw five or six Pearls and as many Diamonds come out of her mouth, asked her to tell him everything that had happened. She told him the whole story. Meanwhile, the Prince was falling more and more in love with her. After careful consideration, he realized that such a gift was worth more than any dowry, so he took her to the palace of his father the king. There, he married her.



As for her sister, she made herself so hated that even her own mother had enough of her. This miserable wretch, who had wandered around the world for a while without anyone paying attention to her, found a quiet spot in the forest and died there.



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