



Ririro

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The Little Sister Of The Giants

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Once upon a time there was a little girl who was very beautiful. Her eyes were like the eyes of the gazelle; her hair hid in its soft waves the deep shadows of the night; her smile was like the sunrise. Each year as she grew older she grew also more and more beautiful. Her name was Angelita.

The little girl's mother was dead, and her father, the image-maker, had married a second time. The step-mother was a woman who was renowned in the city for her great beauty. As her little step-daughter grew more and more lovely each day of her life she soon became jealous of the child. Each night she asked the image-maker, "Who is more beautiful, your wife or your child?"

The image-maker was a wise man and knew all too well his wife's jealous disposition. He always responded, "You, my wife, are absolutely peerless."

One day the image-maker suddenly died, and the step-mother and step-daughter were left alone in the world. They both mourned deeply the passing of the kind image-maker.

One day as they were leaning over the balcony two passers-by observed them, and one said to the other, "Do you notice those beautiful women in the balcony? The mother is beautiful, but the daughter is far more beautiful." The step-mother had always been jealous of the daughter's loveliness, but now her jealousy was fanned into a burning flame. The wise image-maker was no longer there to tell her that she was peerless.

The next day the mother and daughter again leaned over the balcony. Two soldiers passed by and one said to the other: "Do you observe those two beautiful women in the balcony? The mother is beautiful, but the daughter is far more beautiful." The step-mother flew into a terrible rage. She now knew that it was true as she had long feared. The girl was more beautiful than she. Her jealousy knew no bounds. She seized her step-daughter roughly and shut her up in a little room in the attic.

The little room in the attic had just one tiny window high up in the wall. The window was shut, but Angelita climbed up to open it in order to get a little air. The next afternoon she grew weary of the confinement of the little room, so she dug a foothold in the wall where she could stand and look out of the window. Her step-mother was leaning over the balcony all alone when two cavalheiros passed

by. One said to the other, "Do you observe the beautiful woman in the balcony?" "Yes," replied the other. "She is a beautiful woman, but the little maid who is kept a prisoner in the attic is far more beautiful."

The step-mother became desperate. She ordered the old negro servant to carry the girl into the jungle and kill her. "Be sure that you bring back the tip of Angelita's tongue, so that I may know that you have obeyed my order," she said.

Angelita was very happy to be taken out of the little attic room, and set out for a walk with the old negro with a light heart. They walked through the city streets and out into the open country. Soon they had reached the deep jungle. "Where are we going?" the girl asked in surprise.

"We are taking a walk for our health, yayazinha," replied the old negro.

Soon they were so far in the jungle that the path was entirely overgrown. No ray of light penetrated through the deep foliage. Angelita became frightened. "I'll not go another step if you do not tell me where you are taking me," she said as she stamped her little foot upon the ground.

The old negro burst into tears and told Angelita all that her step-mother had commanded. "I could not hurt one hair of your lovely head, much less cut off the tip of your little tongue, yayazinha," sobbed the old man.

Angelita stood still and thought. "Go back to my step-mother," she said to the old man. "On the way you will see plenty of dogs. Cut off the tip of a little dog's tongue and carry it home to my step-mother."

This is what the old negro did. The step-mother believed him and thought that he had slain her step-daughter according to her command.

Angelita, in the meantime, wandered on and on through the jungle. The big snakes glided swiftly out of her path. The monkeys and the parrots chattered to keep her from being lonely. She wandered on and on until finally she came to an enormous palace. The front door was wide open. She went from room to room, but the palace was entirely deserted. There was not a neat, orderly room in the entire palace.

"I can make these lovely rooms neat and clean," said Angelita. "They surely need some one to do it!" She found a broom and went to work at once. Soon the whole palace was in order once more. Everything was clean and bright.

Just as Angelita was finishing her task she heard a great noise. She looked out of the door, and there were three enormous giants entering the house. She had never dreamed that giants could be so big. She was frightened nearly to death and scrambled under a chair as fast as she could.

When the giants came into the house they were amazed to find everything in

such splendid order. "This is a different looking place from what we left," said the biggest giant.

"What dirty, disorderly giants we have been, living here all by ourselves," said the middle-sized giant. "I just realize it, now that I see what our house looks like when it is neat and clean."

"What kind fairy could have done all this work while we were away?" said the littlest giant, who was not little at all, but almost as big as his enormous brothers.

The three giants fell to discussing the question. They could not guess how their house could have been made so clean. Their voices were so very kind, in spite of being so loud and heavy, that Angelita decided she dare come out from under the chair and let them see who had done the work for them. She quickly crawled out from her hiding place.

"What lovely fairy is this?" asked the biggest giant, looking at her kindly. He thought that she really was a fairy.

"This is the loveliest fairy I ever saw in all my life," said the middle-sized giant.

"How did such a lovely fairy ever happen to find our dirty, disorderly palace?" asked the littlest giant who was not little at all.

Angelita told the three giants her story. Her beauty and her sweet ways completely entranced them.

"Please live with us always here in our palace in the jungle and be our little sister," said the biggest giant, and the middle-sized giant and the littlest giant, speaking all at once. Their three big deep voices all together made a noise like thunder.

Angelita lived in the palace with the three giants after that. Every day when they went out to hunt she would take the broom and make the palace neat and clean. They called her "little sister" and loved her with all their big giant hearts.



All was well until a little bird went and told Angelita's step-mother that she was alive and living in the depths of the jungle with the three giants. When the step-mother heard about it she was so angry that she thought she could never be happy as long as Angelita was living in the world. She consulted a wicked witch as soon as she could find her shawl.

The wicked witch gave the step-mother some poisoned slippers. "These will

cause the immediate death of any person who puts them on," said the wicked witch. Then she showed the step-mother just how to reach the palace where Angelita lived in the depths of the jungle with the three giants.

Angelita's step-mother followed the directions which the witch had given her and easily found the giants' palace. Angelita was so happy living with the giants and keeping house for them that she had forgotten what fear was like. She was not frightened at all when she heard some one clap hands before the door one day when the giants were away. She went to the door; and, though she was very much surprised to see her step-mother, she invited her into the house. Her step-mother gave her a loving embrace and kissed her upon both cheeks. "Dear child, it is a long time since I have seen you," she said. "I have brought you a little gift to show you that I have not forgotten you. It is only a poor, mean little gift, but it is the best I could bring."

Angelita was touched at her step-mother's gift and accepted it with hearty thanks. As soon as her step-mother had gone she untied the red ribbon around the package and opened it. Inside was a pair of leather slippers. Angelita looked at the little slippers. They were like the slippers which her dear father, the image-maker, had once brought home to her. "How kind it was in my step-mother to bring these slippers to me," she said as she put them on.

As soon as the slippers were on Angelita's feet, she fell dead just as the wicked witch had promised the step-mother she would do. Her step-mother was watching through the window, and when she saw Angelita dead she hurried home in joy. "Now I, alone, am the peerless beauty," she said.

When the three giants came home to dinner they knew at once that there was something wrong. There were dirty tracks on the floor and dirty finger prints upon the door. "Who made these dirty marks?" said the biggest giant.

"What has happened to our dear little sister that she has not cleaned them away?" asked the middle-sized giant.

"I am afraid there is something wrong with little sister," said the littlest giant who was not little at all.

They clapped their big hands before the door, but no smiling little sister ran to meet them. They entered the big hall of the palace with a bound. There in the middle of the floor lay Angelita, just as she had fallen when she put on the poisoned slippers which her step-mother had given her.

"What evil, has befallen our dear little sister?" said the biggest giant.

"Who could have slain our little sister whom we loved so much?" said the middle-sized giant.

“Who will keep house for us now that our dear little sister is dead?” asked the littlest giant.

Then the biggest giant and the middle-sized giant and the littlest giant all began to sob so loud that it shook the earth. “Our dear little sister is dead! What shall we do! What shall we do!”

The giants could not go into the city to give their little sister Christian burial, but they built a beautiful casket out of silver and carried it to the path which led to the city. Then they hid themselves to watch and make sure that some one found it to carry to the burying place.

Soon a handsome prince passed by on horseback. He noticed the silver casket at once and opened it. The girl whose still form lay inside was the most beautiful maid he had ever gazed upon. “This dead maid is my own true love,” he said and he carried the silver casket home to his own palace.

He commanded that no one should enter the room where he placed the silver casket, and this aroused the curiosity of his little sister at once. At the very first opportunity she slipped into the room. She opened the casket and was surprised to see the beautiful quiet maid. “You are very lovely,” she said to the still form, “all except your slippers. I think they are very ugly.” With these words she pulled off the leather slippers.

Angelita gave a deep sigh, opened her beautiful eyes, and asked for a drink of water.

The little sister called the prince at once. When he saw Angelita was really alive he could hardly believe the good fortune. He asked that the wedding night be celebrated immediately.

Angelita begged that she might go back into the deep jungle and invite the three giants to the wedding. The biggest giant, the middle-sized giant, and the littlest giant who was not little at all, came to the wedding feast. After that they visited their little sister often at her new home; and, when she had children of her own, it was the funniest sight one ever saw to see the biggest giant hold the tiny babes upon his knee.

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