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READ ANYWHERE, ANYTIME

The spindle, the shuttle, and the needle

Brothers Grimm

Once upon a time, there was a girl who lost her parents when she was very young. Her godmother lived alone in a small cottage at the end of the village, earning her living by spinning, weaving, and sewing. The old woman took the little orphan in and gave her a good education.

When the girl turned fifteen, her godmother became sick. She called the girl to her bedside and said, "Dear daughter, my end is near. You will inherit my cottage so that you will have a roof over your head. I also give you my spindle, shuttle, and needle. With these, you can earn your bread."

Then she placed her hands on the girl's head and said, "Be wise and behave yourself, and everything will be fine." A little later, the old woman breathed her last breath. The girl was very sad and lived alone in the cottage from now on. She worked hard and spent the whole day spinning, weaving, and sewing.

Her old godmother's words seemed to come true. Everything went well. If the girl made a carpet, a shirt, or a linen blanket, she found a customer who paid her well. This enabled her to take good care of herself and even help people in need sometimes.

Now it so happened that around this time, the son of the King was touring the country looking for a bride. He did not want a poor woman, but he did not want a rich woman either. "I will marry the one who is both poor and rich at the same time," said the prince. When he reached the village of the girl, he asked who the richest and poorest women in the village were. The richest was named first, and the poorest, he was told, was the young girl who lived alone in the small cottage at the end of the village.



The rich girl sat in the doorway in her best clothes. When the prince passed by, she stood up and bowed deeply to him. He looked at her attentively, said nothing, and rode on. When he reached the poor girl's house, he did not find her in the doorway. She was hard at work in her room. The prince looked through the window and saw the girl spinning behind her wheel.

The girl looked up, and when she saw the King's son looking at her, she blushed. She lowered her eyes and continued to spin. Whether she did her work as neatly as usual, I cannot say, but she kept spinning until the King's son rode away. Then she walked to the window, opened the lattice, and said, "It's so hot in this room," and watched the prince until the white feather on his hat was completely out of sight.



Then the girl sat down again and began to spin. As she did so, a song came to her mind that her godmother always sang while working. "Spindle, my Spindle, haste, haste thee away, Here to my house bring the wooer, I pray."

And sure enough! The spindle jumped out of her hand, ran out of the room, and began to dance happily through the fields. A large, golden thread trailing behind it. Now that she had lost her spindle, the girl began to weave. Meanwhile, the spindle continued to dance, and just as it reached the end of the golden thread, it arrived at the prince.

"What is this now?" cried the King's son. "It seems like the spindle is trying to show me the way." So the prince mounted his horse and followed the golden thread. Meanwhile, the girl was weaving and singing, "Shuttle, my Shuttle, weave well this day, And guide the wooer to me, I pray."

The shuttle escaped from her hand and jumped outside. On the threshold, it began weaving the most beautiful carpet you will ever see. Roses and lilies bloomed on both sides, hares and rabbits ran through the bushes on the side, while songbirds sat on the arches. The shuttle flew from left to right, and it seemed like the carpet was building itself. Meanwhile, the girl continued to sew. She took her needle and sang, "Needle, my Needle, sharp-pointed and fine, Prepare for a wooer this house of mine."

And sure enough, the needle also jumped out of her fingers, and in no time, a green carpet lay on the tables and benches, the chairs were upholstered with velvet, and silk curtains hung on the windows. Just as the needle was finishing, the girl saw the white feather of the prince's hat outside her window. He had been led back to the girl's cottage by the spindle.

The prince dismounted his horse and walked into the house over the carpet. As he entered the room, the girl stood there blushing like a rose. "You are both the poorest and richest," said the prince. "Come with me, and we will marry."

The girl said nothing but extended her hand. The prince kissed her, took her outside, and lifted her onto his horse. Together they departed for the royal

palace. There, the wedding was celebrated grandly.

The spindle, shuttle, and needle were given a place of honor in the palace treasury.



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