

431 The House in the Forest.

Three sisters one after the other go to a house in the forest where an old man lives with his three animals [D1890, D166.1.1, D166.1, D133.1]. The two older girls cook and make a bed only for the man, not for the animals, nor do they wait for the old man to go to bed before they do [Q2]. He shuts them up in his cellar.

The youngest girl takes care of the animals, feeds them [L54] and takes the leftovers for herself, and goes to bed only after the old man is settled down for the night. She wakes up in a palace. Instead of the old man, she finds a young prince, who, together with his three servants, had been enchanted by a witch. The girl and the prince marry [L162], and the sisters must serve as maids until they prove themselves to be sympathetic to animals.

In some variants a woman spoils her lazy, bad-tempered daughter and mistreats the industrious stepsister, giving her only a little food. She follows a rolling loaf of bread to a (enchanted) house in the forest. She shares her food with animals who live there (whom she has brought with her) and is kind to an old man or an animal-man (forest spirit). On the advice of the animals, she takes the man to bed with her, and he is disenchanted (along with the animals) [D731]. She marries the man or is given a reward. The jealous sister comes to the house with good food, but does not share it with the animals, so they do not give her advice. She is unkind to the old man (spirit) and is (severely) punished. Cf. Type 480.

Combinations: 480, 510A.

Remarks: Documented in the 19th century.