

## 480 The Kind and the Unkind Girls

(previously The Spinning- Women by the Spring. The Kind and the Unkind Girls) [Q2].

A girl is mistreated by her stepmother [S31] and has to work very hard [H934.3]. This tale exists chiefly in two different forms:

(1) A girl loses an object which is carried off by a river (blown away by the wind), and runs after it (a spindle [N777.4]) [N777.2, N791]. She comes upon an old woman (ogress) who asks her to clean (disarrange) and to louse her head [H935, Q41.2, G466]. When the old woman lets her choose a box as her reward, she chooses the plain one [L211].

(2) A girl falls into a well (is pushed in, jumps in after an object she has dropped [N777]), or follows a rolling cake (ball of yarn, etc. [H1226]). She encounters various animals, objects, or people who ask her for help: e.g. a cow wants to be milked, an old man or woman to be loused or fed, an oven to be emptied of bread, an apple tree to be shaken [D1658.1.5]. The girl helps them all.

Then she arrives at the house of an old woman (Frau Holle, old man, supernatural beings like a giant or the twelve months) where she is assigned tasks [G204, H935]: e.g. she has to do the household or farm work, has to feed or louse the demon [G466], has to comb the hair of fairies [H1192], has to carry water in a sieve [H1023.2] or wash black wool white [H1023.6]. She is very helpful and hard-working. In the end she is rewarded [Q41] with gold, jewels, etc., becomes more beautiful [D1860], or jewels fall from her mouth [D1454.2]. Or, she can choose her reward and is very modest but the reward changes into wealth when she reaches home.

In some variants she is forbidden to enter a certain room [C611].

When she breaks this rule, she becomes covered with gold and flees. The grateful animals [B350], objects [D1658], and people of her outward journey help her escape from the demon.

After she arrives home, her envious stepmother sends her own daughter on the same journey. This girl goes through the same situations but she refuses help, disobeys, and is unkind. She is punished severely (frogs fall from her mouth [M431.2], horns grow on her head, or she is disfigured, beaten or killed). In some variants the stepmother is also punished.

In the end the kind young woman often marries a prince. Cf. Types 431, 480A, and 1180.

Combinations: This type is usually combined with episodes of one or more other types, esp. 403, 510A, and also 313, 408, 428, 431, 510, 511, 511A, and 709.

Remarks: Elements of the tale are documented in 1595 in the comedy *The Old Wives' Tale* by G. Peele.