

501 The Three Old Spinning Women

(previously The Three Old Women Helpers).

Through a false boast of her mother [H914] or of a young woman herself [H915], she is compelled to spin an impossible amount of thread [H1092]. If she is successful a prince will marry her.

She receives help from three old women who are deformed from too much spinning: the first has an enormous foot, the second has drooping lips, and the third has a thick thumb [G201.1, G244, D2183].

In payment she must invite them to her wedding. The prince sees them and exclaims in disgust. They tell him that their deformities come from spinning. He swears that he will never let his wife spin again.

Combinations: 500.

Remarks: Early literary versions, see Basile, Pentamerone (IV,4) and J. Praetorius, Abentheuerlicher Gluecks-Topf (1669).