

533 - The Speaking Horsehead.

A princess is sent to her fiancé, a prince of a foreign country. Her mother orders a maidservant to accompany her, and gives her a small rag with some drops of her mother's blood to protect her and sends a speaking horse to take care of her.

When during the journey the princess loses her mother's charm, the waiting-maid gains control of the princess [K2252, K1911.1.1], forces her to change clothes and roles [K1934], and to swear an oath of secrecy [K1933].

The prince unwittingly marries the maidservant, and the real princess is employed as a goose-girl [K1816.5]. When the false wife orders the horse to be killed [B335], the princess persuades a farmhand to hang the horsehead on the wall by a gate where she passes daily. Every day she greets the horsehead with a formula, and it answers regretting the injury that is being done to her [D1011, B133.3].

When she speaks a magic formula to make the hat of a goose-boy fly away (to keep an obtrusive goose-boy away from her), he complains to the king. Thereupon the old king starts observing her and finally makes her tell her life story to a stove [H13.2.7] (her dog [H13. 1.2]) (cf. Types 870,894). The truth comes to light, the real bride marries the prince, and the maidservant is punished (she unwittingly declares her own judgment). Cf. Types 403, 425A.

Combinations: 403.

Remarks: For tales in which the bride is blinded (which Liungman 1961, 149ff. treated under Type 533) cf. Type 404. For literary precursors see the French *Legend of Berte* and Basile, *Pentamerone* (IV,7).