

Description ATU - Type 545 & ...

545 The Cat as Helper.

This type refers to a cycle of related tales; it combines episodes from types 545A and 545B.

Remarks: Many catalogs refer to this type although the contents of the texts belong either to Type 545A or (and) to Type 545B.

545A The Cat Castle.

A poor girl reaches the king's castle with the help of a cat (dog) [B211.1.8, B422, B421, B435.1, B581.1.2], (her sole inheritance [N411.1.1]). On the cat's advice she pretends to be the princess of the castle of the cats. The prince falls in love with her (the royal couple receives her). When she looks out of the window and sees her parents quarreling of a pot of porridge, she laughs. Being asked why, she does not want to reveal her humble origin, so she pretends to have been laughing at the poor condition of the king's castle.

The girl's noble origin is tested. When she says she possesses a castle more beautiful than that of the king, she is asked to show it. The cat goes to the castle of a troll (giant, giantess) [F771.4.1] and kills him (by making him look into the sun). The girl becomes the owner of the castle and marries the king (guests are received: The cat demands to be killed by the girl and turns into a prince [D711]. He marries the girl) [B582.1.2]. Cf. Type 505.

Remarks: Very similar to Type 545B, esp. in its single motifs. Variants of Types 545A and 545B are often mixed with each other or they are not clearly differentiated. Occurs mostly in northern Europe.

545B Puss in Boots.

An animal (cat [B211.1.8, B422], fox [B435.1], jackal [B435.2], monkey [B441.1], etc.) intends to help a poor man (out of obligation) to become rich (by marrying him to the princess) [B580, B581, B582.1.1]. In order to gain the emperor's confidence, the animal tells him that the poor man is very wealthy [K1917.3]. When the poorly dressed future bridegroom travels to his bride's residence, the animal simulates an accident (robbery), in which all his clothes (horses, bride presents, wedding guests) are lost [K1952. 1.1]. Thereupon the king gives the poor man good clothes and he is accepted as a bridegroom.

When the man has to display his property, the animal leaves before him and coerces the shepherds and farmers to say that their herds and farmland belong to the poor man. The animal kills the real owner of the properties, a demon (dragon, ogre, giant, witch, magician)

by burning, slaying, shooting or through a trick [F771.4.1, K722]. When the bride arrives with her entourage, the bridegroom presents himself as the real owner of the property.

The animal tests the gratitude of the poor man by feigning death (it becomes a human when it is decapitated [D711]).

In some variants the man behaves ungrateful or does not keep his promise.

Remarks: Very similar to Type 545A, esp. in its single motifs. Variants of Types 545A and 5458 are often mixed with each other or they are not clearly differentiated. Earliest literary versions see Basile, *Pentamerone* (II,4) and Straparola, *Piacevoli notti* (XI,1); important literary version see Charles Perrault, *Le Maître de Chat ou Le Chat Botté* (1697).

545A * The Magic Castle.

(Including the previous Type 512* .) A poor girl gives all her food to an animal (cat, dog, fox) or to an old beggar (Christ). Afraid that her grandmother (mother, aunt) will punish her, she runs away and comes to a castle. (On the way, supernatural beings transform her adornments from flowers, snail shells, etc. into precious jewels.)

She becomes queen. The grandmother comes and demands the food that she had given away. But the grandmother is pushed off the balcony (ladder), dies, and turns into a grapevine (tree), which continues to question the queen about the missing food. The queen laughs at this and her husband demands that she should explain why she laughed. She replies hastily that the toilet brush is more beautiful than his beard (her own castle or garment is more beautiful than his). The animal (supernatural being) helps her to prove this by giving her a bejeweled toilet brush (castle).

In some variants a girl is cast out by her older sisters. On the advice of an old man, she goes to work in a castle. When the owner's son asks to see the girl's own castle, the old man helps her to produce one. (Previously Type 512*.)

545C* See Type 545D*.

545D* The Pea King

(previously The Bean King). (Including the previous Type 545C*.) A poor boy finds a pea (bean) and imagines how many peas might grow from it. He goes to the king and asks for storehouses and sacks for his coming crops. The king is impressed and believes the boy is wealthy. He tests his noble origin by a bed-test (cf. Type 704). The boy is unable to sleep on the hard couch because he is worried about his lost pea.

He marries the king's daughter. When the king wants to see the property of his son-in-law, the young man meets an ogre (devil, grateful ghost) who offers to give him his castle, but only if he can solve some riddles. The ogre tells all the farmers and shepherds on the way to pretend to be employees of the poor boy. An old man helps him solve the riddles. The ogre and his brothers burst, and the poor man becomes the owner of the castle and its land. Cf. Type 859.

Combinations: 545A, 812, and 1430.