

Stith Thompson - The Folktale - 95-96

The other tale, *The Prince Whose Wishes Always Came True* (Type 652), has a good deal of complication, and it is only after we are half through the story that we encounter the carnation-girl. The story opens with an incident rather common in folktales, the choice of a godfather for the king's son. This is done by chance, and the first person to arrive is given the high office. After a few years the old man who has been chosen as godfather takes the boy secretly to a church, gives him his blessing, and along with it the power to make all his wishes come true. A treacherous servant has concealed himself and overhears what has happened. He steals the boy, smears blood on the queen's mouth, and accuses her of killing and eating him. She is walled up in a tower.

The boy is reared by a forester. He falls in love with the forester's daughter, who tells him who he is. When the treacherous servant comes to take him away, the prince uses his powers and transforms the servant into a dog and his sweetheart into a carnation. He now takes the dog and the carnation to his father's court, where he enters service as a huntsman. He always gets his food by wishing and changes the carnation to her human form whenever he desires. When the king asks him for the carnation, the boy tells him everything. The queen is thereupon released, the servant imprisoned; and the prince and his sweetheart are married.

Neither of these two tales of girls transformed into flowers is widely known. The first has been reported only five times outside the Grimm collection and can hardly be said to have established a real oral tradition. As for the second of these tales, it is well known and fairly popular in the Baltic states, Germany, and Scandinavia, as well as in southeastern Europe. Analogues have been noted in Turkey, India, and Farther India, but the tale has not traveled to other continents. It is closely related and frequently confused with a common legend of southeast Europe, *The Devil's Bride*, in which a prince plucks a flower from the grave of a maiden who has turned into a vampire. Thereupon she assumes her human form. (16) The handing down of this tale has also been somewhat confused by a very similar story given currency through Basile's *Pentamerone* (Day 1, No, 2) in which a woman, through a curse, gives birth to a plant which she puts in a pot and keeps in her room. The prince buys the pot and takes it into his own room, where the plant assumes the form of a maiden. The prince and the girl live happily together until her envious rival enters the room in the prince's absence and tears up the plant. The versions of the story of the carnation girl cited above as coming

from southeastern Europe and Asia may belong more properly to the tradition of Basile's story than to that contained in the Grimms' collection.

(16). For the distribution of this legend, see Bolte-Polivka, II, 126.