

The Old Woman Who Lived in a Vinegar Bottle

There was once an old woman who lived in a vinegar bottle. Don't ask me why. It was a common old vinegar bottle. Unusually large, of course. Still, it did make a very small house.

Every day the old woman would sit on her step and complain.

"Oh, what a pity! What a pity, pity, pity! That I should live in a tiny little house such as this. Why, I should be living in a cottage with a thatched roof and roses growing up the walls. That's what I deserve!"

Just then a fair happened to be passing by.

"I could do that," thought the fairy. "If that's what she wants...that's what she'll get."

And to the old woman she said, "When you go to bed tonight, turn around three times and close your eyes. In the morning, see what you shall see."

The old woman thought the fairy was likely batty. But when she went to bed that night, she turned around three times and closed her eyes. In the morning she opened them again...

She was in a dear little cottage! With a thatched roof and roses growing up the walls!

"It's just what I've always wanted," she said. "How content I'll be living here."

But she said not a word of thanks to the fairy.

Well, the fairy went north and the fairy went south. The fairy went east and the fairy went west.

She did all the business she had to do. Then she started thinking...

"I wonder how that old woman is doing, the one who used to live in the vinegar bottle."

But when the fairy came near, there sat the old woman...complaining.

"Oh, what a pity! What a pity, pity, pity! That I should have to live in a tiny little cottage like this.

Why, I should be living in a fine row house with lace curtains at the windows and a brass knocker on the door!"

"I can do that," thought the fairy. "If that's what she wants...that's what she'll get."

And to the old woman she said, "When you go to bed tonight, turn around three times and close your eyes. In the morning, see what you shall see."

The old woman didn't have to be told twice. She went right to bed. She turned around three times and closed her eyes. In the morning when she opened them...

She was in a spanking new row house! With lace curtains at the window and a brass knocker on the door.

"It's just what I always wanted," said the old woman. "I'll be so contented here." But she never said a word of thanks to the fairy.

Well, the fairy went north and the fairy went south. The fairy went east and the fairy went west. She did all the business she had to do. Then she started thinking...

"I wonder how that old woman is doing these days... the one who used to live in the vinegar bottle."

But when the fairy came to the fine row house, there sat the old woman in her brand new rocking chair...complaining.

"Oh, what a pity! What a pity, pity, pity! That I should live in a row house like this, with common folk on either side. I should live in a mansion on a hill with servants to do my bidding. That's what I deserve."

When the fair heard that, she was much amazed. But she said, "Well, if that's what she wants...that's what she'll get. And to the old woman she said, "When you go to bed tonight, turn around three times and close your eyes. In the morning, see what you shall see."

The old woman turned around three times and hopped in to bed. She closed her eyes and in the morning, when she opened them again...

She was in a mansion on the hill!

"This is what I've always wanted," said the old woman. "How contented I will be here."

But it never occurred to her to thank the fairy.

Well, the fairy went north and the fairy went south. The fairy went east and the fairy went west. She did all the business she had to do. Then she remembered the old woman again.

"I wonder how that old woman is getting on now... the one who used to live in the vinegar bottle."

But when she came near, there sat the old woman in her velvet chair...complaining.

"Oh, what a pity! What a pity, pity, pity! That I should have to live in an old mansion like this. Why, I should be the queen living in the palace, with musicians to entertain me and courtiers to bow to me. That's what I deserve."

"Good heavens," thought the fairy. "Will she ever be content? "Well, if that's what she wants...that's what she'll get. To the old woman she said, "When you go to bed tonight, turn around three times and close your eyes. In the morning, see what you shall see."

The old woman hurried to bed. She turned around three times. She closed her eyes. In the morning...

She was in the palace! With musicians to entertain her and courtiers to bow and bow.

"This is just what I've always wanted," said the old woman. "I will be very contented now"
But she forgot entirely to thank the fairy.

Well, the fairy went north and the fairy went south. The fairy went east and the fairy went west. She did all the business she had to do. Then she started thinking...

"I wonder how that old woman is getting along... the one who used to live in the vinegar bottle."

But when she got to the palace, there sat the old woman on her throne...complaining!

"Oh, what a pity! What a pity, pity, pity! That I should be the queen of such a tiny kingdom. Why, I should be Empress of the Universe. Empress of the Universe! That's what I deserve!"

"I see!" said the fairy. "There's no pleasing some people. If that's what she wants...that's what she'll not get!"

And to the old woman she said, "When you go to bed tonight, turn around three times and close your eyes. In the morning, see what you shall see."

The old woman went right to bed. She turned around three times. She closed her eyes. And in the morning, when she opened them...

She was right back in her vinegar bottle!

"And there she shall stay," said the fairy. "If she's not content here, she won't be content there."

After all, happiness comes from the heart, not from the house.