

The Old Witch

There was once a little girl who was very willful and who never obeyed when her elders spoke to her - so how could she be happy?

One day she said to her parents, "I have heard so much of the old witch that I will go and see her. People say she is a wonderful old woman, and has many marvelous things in her house, and I am very curious to see them."

But her parents forbade her going, saying, "The witch is a wicked old woman, who performs many godless deeds - and if you go near her, you are no longer a child of ours."

The girl, however, would not turn back at her parents' command, but went to the witch's house. When she arrived there the old woman asked her:

"Why are you so pale?"

"Ah," she replied, trembling all over, "I have frightened myself so with what I have just seen."

"And what did you see?" inquired the old witch.

"I saw a black man on your steps."

"That was a collier," replied she.

"Then I saw a gray man."

"That was a sportsman," said the old woman.

"After him I saw a blood-red man."

"That was a butcher," replied the old woman.

"But, oh, I was most terrified," continued the girl, "when I peeped through your window, and saw not you, but a creature with a fiery head."

"Then you have seen the witch in her proper dress," said the old woman.

"For you I have long waited, and now you shall give me light."

So saying the witch changed the little girl into a block of wood, and then threw it on the fire. When it was fully alight, she sat down on the hearth and warmed herself, saying:

"How good I feel! The fire has not burned like this for a long time!"

