

**The Beautiful Daughter
&
The Little House**

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Russian Fairy Tales, Russian 0090
4/10/03

Long ago in the city of Murom a wealthy merchant lived alone with his daughter named Vasilisa. When Vasilisa's mother died she told her she would go through many hardships in life and to always wear a locket but to never look inside.

After a long time or a short time Vasilisa's father remarried a woman who had two daughters of her own. Vasilisa was not used to having any other women in the house. The family was happy until Vasilisa began to grow up. Each day that passed she became more beautiful than the day before. Her stepmother was jealous because she wanted her daughters to be just as beautiful but they would never come close to Vasilisa.

While Vasilisa was outside one day picking herbs from the garden a young suitor came and talked with her. Vasilisa's stepmother was watching them from the back door and grew angry with her because she was being courted before her older stepsisters. That night her stepmother had the nanny take the three girls to church. While at church two of the other servants dressed as nuns took Vasilisa far into the woods and dropped her off to perish. Vasilisa laid down in the woods and cried. She noticed a tapping noise, looked down and saw her locket hitting the stone she was leaning on. She sat up and held the locket in her hands and thought about her mother.

She lay quietly for a long time until she opened her eyes and saw a wolf staring back at her. The wolf told her that her mother sent him. He then asked her why she was sitting in the woods all alone, crying. The wolf told her to sit on his back so they could return to his den for the night. When they reached the den Vasilisa was so tired that she curled up in a ball and went to sleep.

The next morning when she awoke the den was empty and she was alone. She got up and began to explore around the forest until she reached a little house tucked away

in the hills. She knocked on the door and when no one answered she walked in. Inside was very rundown, the walls had moss growing up the sides, it had an odor that imitated the smell of rotten carcass, and the floors were covered in leaves and grass. It looked as though no one had lived there for many years. She was looking around and noticed even though the house was a mess the bed was perfectly made and a glass of water was sitting on the nightstand. She sat down at the kitchen table and waited for the person who lived there to return home.

Her stepmother was curious if Vasilisa was still alive so she sent one of her servants into the woods to look for her body. While the servant was exploring the woods he ran into the wolf that asked him if he had seen a beautiful girl named Vasilisa that had disappeared from his den that morning. The servant walked with the wolf for a long time or a short time until they reached the same little house in the hills, Vasilisa had discovered. The wolf and servant looked in the window and saw her sitting at the table. The wolf proceeded inside but the servant returned to the stepmother to report what he had seen. The stepmother grew angry and asked why he had not killed her while he had the chance. She decided then and there that she was going to have to do this job herself if she wanted done the right way.

The wolf entered the little house and walked over to Vasilisa. She asked him how he had found her this far away from the den. The wolf told her that her mother had guided him to her. Before he left he told her that if she ever needed him for help all she had to do was rub her locket and her mother would show him the way. He let Vasilisa fall asleep before he left the little house to return to his den.

No one returned that night so Vasilisa slept in the neatly made bed until morning came. When she awoke she cleaned the house from top to bottom because it was so dirty and untidy. In the middle of the afternoon she left to go pick berries for her lunch. When she returned to the little house an elderly man was sitting at the table skinning the game that he had brought home. He was very curious to know who she was and why his little house had been cleaned for him. The odor was gone, the walls no longer had moss growing on them, and the floors were spotless. He invited her to stay with him as long as she needed to. The two of them lived happily together for three weeks. The old man went hunting everyday in order to feed both of them dinner and Vasilisa did chores in the little house to keep it clean. Every night they would eat and drink their fill until they went to sleep.

The stepmother was at home the whole time devising her plan on how to kill Vasilisa. After three weeks had passed she made her way into the forest where she found Vasilisa in the field, a mile away from the little house, picking berries. Her stepmother was disguised as an old traveling woman with a large knapsack full of trinkets for sale. The old woman sat down and waited for Vasilisa to come to her, she knew that she would because of the girl's kind heart.

Vasilisa noticed an old woman sitting all alone off to one side of the field. She picked more berries than she needed so that she could give the old woman some of them. Vasilisa offered the woman her berries but the old woman would only take them if she could give her a small trinket in return. Vasilisa agreed because she really wanted to provide the woman with food. The old woman thanked her for the berries and gave her a small bushel of herbs for her to cook with. When she returned home the old man left a

note that said he had to leave town to go on a long journey. Vasilisa cooked herself dinner and used the herbs that the old woman had given her. Right before she went to sleep she pulled out her locket and talked to her mother, she had gotten into the habit of talking to her almost everyday.

The wolf went to her the next morning and discovered that he could not rouse the princess. He left the forest to go to the town that she came from in order to find help. He arrived just in time because the young prince that Vasilisa had told him so much about was marrying her stepsister the next day. He went into the prince's room that night and told him that Vasilisa was in the forest but could not be awakened. They left that very moment to travel to the little house in the forest to find Vasilisa. They arrived just before the sunrise. The prince knelt down beside her bed and wept at the loss of his love. He saw the locket around her neck, held her hand and rubbed the locket. The sun began to rise and Vasilisa awoke in the company of the prince with the wolf by his side. All of a sudden her locket popped open and filled the room with light. A glowing ring rolled out and landed on the bed beside her. The prince carried her back to town where they were married that day. They lived together from then on. Vasilisa has worn her mother's ring for the rest of her days.