

**“My Fairytale”
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In a certain country and town there lived a wealthy salesman, his wife, and their daughter. The daughter was named Natasha. Natasha was the most beautiful girl in the town from birth. One day the wife died, and the father decided to remarry. He married a woman named Julia. A long time or a short time passed, and Julia gave birth to two girls; Maria and Anna. From birth the girls were not very attractive and certainly not smart. Most people in the town referred to them as homely, and even ugly.

It did not take long for the two stepsisters and stepmother to become very jealous of beautiful Natasha. The town talked about her beauty all the time and there was not a man in town who did not know of her and her beauty. The father did not make matters easier, because he loved her much. As punishment, the stepmother made Natasha do much of the house work and clean up after her wretched stepsisters. The poor girl had to vacuum, dust the whole house, and even clean the bathrooms.

One night the father was called away on an urgent sales trip to a far off country. The stepmother thought to herself, "This will be my chance to rid myself of that wretched girl once and for all." The stepsisters had no chance of a decent marriage with Natasha living in the same house. Every time the stepsisters tried to get attention from local men, they were not only turned down but also laughed at. They hated Natasha for her beauty and brains more and more every day. One day the most handsome and wealthiest man in the town asked for Natasha's hand in marriage, and she accepted. This drove the stepmother and stepsisters insane with jealousy. "I must get rid of her so that he will realize how wonderful my daughters are and marry one of them instead!" The very next day the stepmother made an announcement at breakfast; she stated that all three girls

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were to go on a camping trip in the woods for the whole weekend. At first it seemed easy enough, but then she added a few tasks. She said they each had to find a gold necklace hanging from a birch tree and bring it back with them. If they failed, they would be disowned and thrown out of the house and the town. What Natasha did not know was that the stepmother put a gold necklace in each of the stepsisters' pockets. They were going to cheat and have Natasha thrown out for good.

On the day of the camping trip, Natasha sat, very worried and scared and even started to cry. "How can I possibly find something like that in the middle of nowhere in the woods?" she thought to herself. She decided to go for a walk in the yard before the departure to clear her mind and calm herself down. When she rounded the corner of the house, she noticed a tree that she had never seen before. It was a tall birch tree, just like the kind her mother loved to look at. She knelt down beside it and began to weep and pray, "Oh mighty tree, I wish I could only be as strong as you, but I am not, and I am afraid that this trip will be the end of me." Out of nowhere the tree began to grumble and sway, and out from it jumped a cute furry little rabbit. The rabbit looked up at the lovely maiden and asked, "Why is such a beautiful girl so sad?" Natasha explained her awful situation between her sobs, and the rabbit listened carefully. The rabbit told her not to worry, that she would help her through this difficult time as long as the girl did exactly what the rabbit said. He instructed her that when she arrives at the camping spot to set up her tent under a birch tree. Then she is to go along with daily normal chores until nightfall. At nightfall, she was to leave the campsite and go in search of Baba Yaga's hut. Natasha had heard horrible stories about the crazy old lady, but she said she would

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do as the rabbit advised.

They set out early that morning. The two ugly stepsisters and Natasha arrived at the campsite late that afternoon. Very weary from their travels, the two stepsisters laid down in the grass without putting up their tents or preparing anything else for night fall. However, Natasha did as the rabbit told her and began her chores. She put up her tent, started a nice camp fire, and roasted some hot dogs. She went to the stream and filled up her bottle of water as well. Dusk soon approached, and Natasha became nervous at the thought of having to leave the campsite after sundown. Suddenly the rabbit jumped out of the river and told her not to worry. “When you get to the old woman’s hut, tell her your troubles and offer to help her with her house work. Tell her you will stay tonight and return two more nights, and that each night you will do all of her house work for her.” Natasha agreed and went back to her tent. Her stepsisters were now awake and eating the rest of the hot dogs she had cooked for herself. They appeared to be laughing and snickering about something, but hurriedly hushed each other as Natasha came closer. “Go away, you nasty little brat, we have work to do. We are not going to be kicked out of our house, and everyone will see what a failure you are.”

Natasha packed some bread and water and set out in search of Baba Yaga’s house. She walked for a long time or a short time, but eventually saw a hut in the distance. It stood on chicken legs and looked very scary. Natasha was tired and cold so she decided to enter it. She called to the hut, “Turn around little hut, show your front to me and your back to the woods.” The hut did as she asked and then she rang the door bell. An old, ugly woman with bony legs answered door and screamed, “What do you

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want?” Natasha told her she was in need of her help and that she was told to come to the old woman’s hut. She explained her troubles and the deal of doing all her house work for three nights. Baba Yaga agreed to it. So Natasha set off doing her work. She worked diligently all night, and at sunrise returned to the campsite weary and sleepy.

The stepsisters woke up and saw that their sister had returned. “Where has she been all night?” Natasha came back and went right to sleep. She slept through much of the afternoon and woke up early evening. She did some chores around the campsite, and set off to Baba Yaga’s once again. The sisters did not even realize she had run off. But they vowed to follow her the next night. Natasha arrived at Baba Yaga’s and once again said, “Turn around little hut, show your front to me and your back to the woods.” The hut did as she asked and then she rang the door bell. The old woman answered the door, and the lovely maiden entered. For the second night she did chores for the old lady worked herself weary. At sunrise she went back to her campsite. She slept the day away and awoke in time to do some chores and eat.

Now for the third night she set off to Baba Yaga’s. This time, the evil sisters quietly followed her without Natasha’s knowledge. They reached the hut and once more she said, “Turn around little hut, show your front to me and your back to the woods.” The hut did as she asked and then she rang the door bell. The old woman answered the door, and the lovely maiden entered. For the third night Natasha did all the chores. Outside, the stepsisters looked into the windows to see what treachery the pretty sister had up her sleeve. Natasha finished all her work for the third night, and as she was about to leave the old witch handed her a beautiful gold necklace. Natasha thanked her

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gratefully and left to go back to the campsite. The evil stepsisters plotted amongst each other, “Why don’t we ask the ugly old hag to give us one as well, that way we can give these ugly necklaces back but keep the nice ones for ourselves?” So they rang the door bell, and the witch opened the door and said, “What are you two ugly wenches doing in my hut!” Well, not only were the stepsisters bitter to begin with, but this also insulted and angered them. “Listen you old hag, give each of us a gold necklace or we will tell the whole town where you live and you will get evicted!” “All right, my dears, come in.” The two sisters entered the hut, proud of themselves for their clever scheme. All of a sudden the old witch scooped both of them up and through them into her stove and locked the door. “Now my house is clean and I shall have dinner.”

Natasha made it back to the campsite and went to sleep. She woke up early the next afternoon and was excited to get back home. She wondered where her sisters went, but packed up and left for home. When she arrived, she handed her stepmother the beautiful necklace, and the stepmother flew into a frightful rage. Not only was she enraged about the necklace but also because news of how the stepsisters perished had reached her. The stepmother ran to Baba Yaga’s house in order to have her revenge. She called out, “turn around little hut, show your front to me and your back to the woods.” The hut did as she asked and then she banged on the door. The old, ugly woman with bony legs answered door and screamed, “What do you want?” The stepmother entered the hut and said she was there to avenge her daughters’ deaths, but as the town soon found out, she met her demise the same way as her daughters did.

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Soon after, Natasha's father returned from his business trip and was happy to see everything was right again. A long time or a short time later, Natasha was married to her suitor and never worried about anything ever again. They lived peacefully to the end of their days. I was at the wedding, the wine ran down my chin, but did not go into my mouth.