

Chapter VII - Prince Mud-Turtle Becomes Prince Melga

THE giant was as big around as ten men, and as tall as two; but, having no bones, he seemed pushed together, so that his skin wrinkled up like the sides of an accordeon, or a photograph camera, even his face being so wrinkled that his nose stuck out between two folds of flesh and his eyes from between two more. In one end of the kitchen was the great fireplace, above which hung an iron kettle with a big iron spoon in it. And at the other end was a table set for dinner.

As the giant was standing between the kettle and Twinkle, she could not do as the turtle had commanded, and throw him into the pot. So she hesitated, wondering how to obey the fairy. Just then the giant happened to turn around and see her.

"By the whiskers of Gammarog--who was one of my ancestors that was killed by Jack the Giant-Killer!" he cried, but in a very mild voice for so big a person. "Whom have we here?"

"I'm Twinkle," said the girl, drawing a long breath.

"Then, to pay you for your folly in entering my castle, I will make you my slave, and some day, if you're not good, I'll feed you to my seventeen-headed dog. I never eat little girls myself. I prefer mutton."

Twinkle's heart almost stopped beating when she heard these awful words. All she could do was to stand still and look imploringly at the giant. But she held the fairy mud-turtle clasped tight in her hand, so that the monster couldn't see it.

"Well, what are you staring at?" shouted the Corrugated Giant, angrily. "Blow up that fire this instant, slave!"

He stood aside for her to pass, and Twinkle ran at once to the fireplace. The pot was now before her, and within easy reach, and it was bubbling hot.

In an instant she reached out her hand and tossed the turtle into the boiling water; and then, with a cry of horror at her own action, she drew back to see what would happen.

The turtle was a fairy, all right; and he had known very well the best way to break the enchantment his enemy had put upon him. For no sooner had

Twinkle tossed him into the boiling pot than a great hissing was heard, and a cloud of steam hid for an instant the fireplace. Then, as it cleared away, a handsome young prince stepped forward, fully armed; for the turtle was again a fairy, and the kettle had changed into a strong shield which he bore upon his left arm, and the iron spoon was now a long and glittering sword.