

“Oh no!” cried the parson, “I have a lame foot, and I cannot go out to get rid of him.”

“Then I will carry you on my back,” said the man.

Just as they arrived in the field, Catherine got up and drew herself up to her full height.

“Oh! It is the Evil One!” cried the parson, and both he and the man hurried away. Catherine found herself all alone. So having nothing else to do, she headed back to her home.



CATHERINE AND FREDERICK



By The Brothers Grimm



A LearningIsland.org
15 - Minute Book

Editor: Jennifer Robinson

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Catherine and Frederick/ Wilhelm and Jakob Grimm

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“I want to know if Catherine is inside!” she said.

“Yes, yes!” answered Fred. “She must be inside, fast asleep.”

“Then I am at home,” she said, and ran away.

Standing outside Catherine found some thieves, waiting to steal something. She went up to them and said, “I will help you.”

At this the thieves were very glad. They thought she knew where some gold was. But Catherine stepped out in front of the houses. She called out in a loud voice, “Good people, what have you that we can steal?”

At this the thieves said, “You will get us caught!” To get rid of her they said, “The parson has some carrots in his field. Go and fetch some.”

Catherine did as she was told, and began to dig up the carrots. Soon she made herself very dirty with the earth.

A man came by and saw her. He thought it was the Evil One who was grovelling among the roots. He ran into the village and up to the house of the parson. He told him the Evil One was in his field, digging up the carrots.

“Then let it go!” cried Fred, while it fell crashing through the branches. The rogues below thought the Evil One was coming down the tree. They ran off, leaving everything behind them.

Early in the morning, Fred and his wife climbed down and found all their gold under the tree.

As soon as they got home again, Fred said, “Now, Catherine, you must work very hard.”

“Yes, my dear husband,” she said. “I will go into the fields to cut corn.” When she got to the field, she said to herself, “Shall I eat before I cut, or sleep before I cut?”

She decided to eat. After her meal, she became very sleepy. When she began to cut, she did not pay attention. Soon she had cut off half her clothes—gown, petticoat and all. Then she fell fast asleep.

When Catherine woke up, she got up half-naked. “Am I myself or am I not?” she asked. “Ah! I am not myself.” By and by night came on, and Catherine ran into the village. She knocked at her husband's window and called, “Fred!”

“What is the matter?” cried he.



CATHERINE AND FREDERICK

Once upon a time there was a youth named Frederick and a girl called Catherine. They had married and lived together as a young couple.

One day Fred said, “I am now going into the fields, dear Catherine. By the time I return let there be something hot upon the table, for I will be

hungry. I should like something to drink, too, for I shall be thirsty.”

“Very well, dear Fred,” she said. “Go at once, and I will make it all for you.”

When dinnertime approached, she took down a sausage out of the chimney. She put it in a frying pan with batter and set it over the fire. Soon the sausage began to sizzle and spit.

Catherine stood by holding the handle of the pan and thinking. Among other things, she thought that while the sausage was getting ready she might go into the cellar and draw some beer.

So she took a can and went down into the cellar to draw the beer. While it ran into the can, she thought that perhaps the dog might steal the sausage out of the pan, and so up the cellar stairs she ran. But it was too late, for the rogue had already got the meat in his mouth and was sneaking off. Catherine chased the dog for a long way over the fields, but the beast was quicker than she was. It would not let the sausage go, but bolted off at a great speed.

“Enough is enough!” said Catherine, and turned around. Being very tired and hot, she went home slowly to cool herself.





All this while the beer was running out of the cask, for Catherine had forgotten to turn the tap off. So, as soon as the can was full, the liquor ran over the floor of the cellar until the cask was empty.

Catherine saw the mess at the top of the steps. “My gracious!” she exclaimed; “what shall I do that Fred may not find this out?”

She thought about it for some time. Then she remembered that a sack of fine malt was left over from the last brewing.

“Yes,” she said, “it was spared at the right time to be useful to me now.” She rushed over and pulled the sack down. But she was in such a hurry that she tipped over the can of beer for Fred.

“It is all right,” she sighed. “Where one part is, the other should be.” Then she threw the malt over the whole cellar. When it was done, she was quite overjoyed at her work. “How clean and neat it does look, to be sure!” she said.

At noontime, Fred returned. “Now, wife, what have you ready for me?” he asked. “Ah, my dear Fred,” she replied, “I would have fried you a sausage, but while I drew the beer the dog stole it out of the pan. And while I hunted the dog the beer

all ran out, and as I was about to dry up the beer with the malt I overturned your can. But be happy, the cellar is quite dry again now.”

“Oh, Catherine, Catherine!” said Fred. “You should not have done this! To let the sausage be stolen and the beer run out! And worst of all to spill our best sack of malt!”

“Well, Fred,” said she, “I did not know that; you should have told me.”

But the husband thought to himself, if my wife acts like this I must look after things myself.

Now, he had collected a number of silver dollars. Soon he changed them into gold coins. Then he told his wife, “Do you see these yellow counters. I will put them in a pot and bury it in the stable under the cow's stall. But make sure you do not meddle with it, or you will bring us to harm.”

Catherine promised to do what he said, but as soon as Fred was gone some sellers came into the village. They had clay pots for sale, and they asked her if she would buy anything.

“Ah, good people,” said Catherine, “I have no money, and cannot buy anything. But if you can make use of yellow counters I will buy your pots with them.”

“No, Catherine,” said he, “not now, they might find us.”

But they are so heavy.”

“Well, then, do it!” cried Fred.

As the apples fell down the rogues said, “Ah! The birds are pulling off the leaves.”

A little while after Catherine said, “Oh! Fred, I must pour out the vinegar, it is so heavy.”

“No, no!” he said, “they will find us.”

“But I must, Fred. It is very heavy,” said Catherine.

“Well, then, do it!” cried Fred.

So she poured out the vinegar. As it dropped on them the thieves said, “Ah! The dew is beginning to fall.”

Soon after Catherine found the door was still very heavy. She said to Fred, “Now I must throw down this door.”

“No, Catherine,” said he, “they would certainly find us then.”

“But I must. It presses me so terribly.”

“No, Catherine dear! Do hold it fast,” said Fred.

“There—it is gone!” said she.

“The door I will carry,” replied Catherine, “but the apples and the vinegar will be too heavy. I shall hang them on the door and make that carry them!”

Soon after that they came into a wood and looked about for the thieves. But they could not find them. When it became dark they climbed up into a tree to spend the night.

But they had barely done this when up came the thieves. They laid themselves down right under the same tree that Fred and Catherine were in.

The thieves made a fire and started to share their booty.

Fred slipped down on the other side of the tree. He grabbed some stones, then quickly climbed back up. He threw the stones down on the thieves, but the stones did them no harm. Instead, the thieves called out, “Ah! It will soon be morning, for the wind is shaking down the chestnuts.”

All this while Catherine still had the door on her shoulder. It was very heavy, and she thought the dried apples were at fault. She said to Fred, “I must throw down these apples.”

“Yellow counters! Why not? Let us look at them,” they said.

“Go into the stable,” she replied, “and dig under the cows stall. There you will find the yellow counters. I dare not go myself. I told my husband I would not touch them.”

The rogues went at once, and soon dug up the shining gold which they quickly pocketed. Then they ran off, leaving behind them their pots and dishes in the house.

Catherine thought she might as well make use of the new pottery. Since she didn’t need anything in the kitchen, she set out each pot on the ground. Then she put others on the top of the fence that went around the house. They made wonderful decorations.

When Fred returned, he saw the fresh decorations. He asked Catherine what she had done.

“I have bought them, Fred,” she said. “I used the yellow counters which lay under the cow's stall. But I did not dig them up myself; the peddlers did that.”



“Then go back and lock up the house before we go farther. Bring something to eat with you, and I will wait here for you.”

Back went Catherine, thinking, “Ah! Fred will like something else to eat. Butter and cheese will not do. I will bring a bag of dried apples and a mug of vinegar to drink.” When she had put these things together she locked the upper half of the door, but the bottom half she lifted up and carried away on her shoulder. Certainly the house was well protected if she took such good care of the door!

Catherine walked along very slowly. “That way,” she said to herself, “Fred will have a longer rest!” As soon as she reached him she gave him the door, saying, “There, Fred, now you have the house door and you can take care of the house yourself.”

“My goodness,” exclaimed the husband, “what a clever wife I have! She has bolted the top door, but brought away the bottom part, where any one can creep through! Now it is too late to go back to the house, but since you brought the door here you may carry it.”

no! I shall go on and you can follow me. Your legs are younger than mine.”

So Catherine walked on and caught up with Fred. He was waiting for her, because he wanted something to eat.

“Give me what you brought,” he said to her. She handed him the dry bread.

“Where are the butter and cheese?” cried her husband.

“Oh, Fred, dear,” she replied, “I have smeared the ruts with the butter. And the cheeses will soon come, but one ran away, and I sent the others after it to call it back!”

“It was silly of you to do so,” said Fred, “To grease the roads with butter, and to roll cheese down the hill!”

“If you had but told me so,” said Catherine, angrily.

So they ate the dry bread in silence. Soon Fred said, “Catherine, did you lock the door at home before you came out?”

“No, Fred,” she said, “you did not tell me.”



“Ah, wife, what have you done?” cried Fred. “They were not counters, but bright gold. That was all the money we had. You should not have done this.”

“Well, dear Fred,” replied his wife, “you should have told me so before. I did not know that.”

Catherine stood thinking for a while. Finally she said, “Come, Fred, we will soon get the gold back again. Let us go after the thieves.”

“Well, come along,” said Fred; “we can try. But take butter and cheese with you, so we can have something to eat on our journey.”

“Yes, Fred,” she said. Soon she was ready and they set off. Her husband was a good walker and soon she lagged behind.

“Ah!” said she, “this is lucky. When we turn around I shall be a good bit ahead.”

Soon she came to a hill that had deep ruts on both sides. “Oh, look!” she said. “The poor earth is torn and wounded. It will never be well again all its life!” And out of compassion, she took out her butter, and greased the ruts over right and left. “That will let the wheels run more easily,” she thought. But while she was stooped down to do

this, a cheese rolled out of her pocket and down the mountain.

When Catherine saw it she said, “I have already climbed up here once. I am not coming down after you. Instead I shall send another round of cheese down to fetch you.”

She took another cheese out of her pocket and rolled it down the hill; but as it did not return.

“Perhaps they are waiting for a friend and don't like to come alone,” she thought. So she took the third cheese from her pocket and rolled it down the hill.

Still all three stayed. She said, “I don't understand. Maybe the third cheese has lost his way. I will send a fourth, so he can call to him as he goes by.” But this cheese acted no better than the others did. None of the cheeses came back up the hill.

Catherine became so upset that she threw down a fifth and a sixth cheese also, and they were the last. For a long time after this she waited, hoping they would come. When they did not she cried out, “You are horrible cheeses! You take your own sweet time! Do you think I shall wait for you? Oh,