

The Folk- and Fairy-Tales of Ludwig Bechstein: **Oda and the Snake**



Once upon a time there was a man who had three daughters and the youngest of them was called Oda. Now one day the father of these three was to go to the fair, and he asked his daughters what he should bring them back. The eldest asked for a golden spinning-wheel, the second daughter for a golden reel, but Oda said: "Bring back for me what passes under your cart when you're on your way home." The father bought what the older girls had asked for then set off for home, and behold – a snake passed under the cart. The man caught it and brought it back for Oda. He threw it down into the cart, and then before the front door, where he left it lying. Now when Oda came out, the snake began to speak: "Oda! Dear Oda! May I not come in to the hallway?" "What?" said Oda, "my father has brought you right to our front door, and now you want to go into the hallway?" But she let it come in. Now as Oda walked towards her chamber, the snake cried again: "Oda, dear Oda! May I not lie before your chamber door?" – "Now look here!" said Oda, "My father brought you right to our front door, I let you come into the hallway, and now you want to lie before my chamber door? Well, no

matter!” – Now when Oda was about to enter her chamber, the snake cried again, as she was opening the door: “Oh Oda, dear Oda! May I not come into your chamber?” – “What?” cried Oda. “Didn’t my father bring you right to our front door? Didn’t I let you into the hallway and lie before my chamber door? And now you want to come with me into my chamber? – But, if this will finally satisfy you, come on in, but lie still, I’m telling you!” So saying, Oda let the snake in and began to undress. When she was just about to climb into bed, the snake cried yet again: “Oh Oda, dearest Oda! May I not come into your bed with you?” – “Now this is really *too much!*” Oda angrily exclaimed. “My father brought you right to our front door; I let you into the hallway, and then before my chamber door, and then into my chamber – and now you’re wanting to come into my bed beside me? But you’re freezing, I suppose? Well then, come in with me and warm yourself, you poor worm!” And then good Oda reached out her soft warm hand and lifted the snake up into the bed beside her. All of a sudden the snake was transformed – it had been bewitched for a long time and could be released from the spell only if everything that had just befallen it came to pass – into a handsome young Prince, who instantly took good Oda to wife.